

California Walnut Board

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CALIFORNIA WALNUT COMMISSION

INTRA INDUSTRY COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, June 5, 2013

The California Walnut Commission Intra Industry Communications Committee met via teleconference on Wednesday, June 5, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Chairperson David Keyawa who attended the meeting in person at the CWC office in Folsom, CA. Ms. Steindorf called the roll and the following committee members were present:

David Keyawa, Chairperson
Bert Crane
Jonathan Graves
Todd Ramos

Ms. Steindorf informed Chairperson Keyawa that a quorum was present. Committee members Mat Conant, Ray Perez and Nacho Martin were absent. Also in attendance were grower/members Jack Gilbert and Pat Mecklenburg and CWC staff members Dennis Balint, Jennifer Olmstead, and Dana Steindorf.

The first order of business was the approval of the minutes of the previous Intra Industry Communications Committee meeting on December 4, 2012. Mr. Crane made a motion to approve those minutes as mailed, Mr. Ramos seconded the motion and it carried unanimously via roll call vote.

Chairperson Keyawa asked Ms. Jennifer Olmstead to proceed with the next agenda item, Grower Survey. Ms. Olmstead stated that when the Committee met back in December, we talked about doing a grower survey; the reason for doing the survey is to learn how to better communicate with growers, learn about what channels are working and find ways to improve upon communications and also understand what communications are resonating with them. Since that meeting, Ms. Olmstead has solicited bids from market research agencies that have experience in doing this type of research with agricultural commodities, and one of the questions that came up during the process was will we offer survey incentives.

Ms. Olmstead stated that from the grower list of just over 4,100 names, we have about 1,900 phone numbers and 500 email addresses. The majority of the email addresses are duplicates of the phone numbers. Based on these numbers, the recommendations for the survey have been a combination of phone and possibly email. Email would be the most cost effective, but we do not have enough email addresses to get a large enough sample of the complete list. To ensure that we get enough completions with the phone survey, one of the recommendations was to pay growers \$20 to complete the survey; another incentive we have offered in the past is to enter them into a drawing for a \$500 Visa gift card or something similar. Ms. Olmstead would like to have the Committee's input on what they think would be the best incentive for getting the most survey completions.

Mr. Graves asked if a mail survey is an option. Mr. Balint stated that the response rate to a mail survey would be 1/10th of what it would be for phone or email. Also, the market research

companies estimate that we would get 10% completion on a phone survey; our hope is to complete a minimum of 200 phone interviews.

Mr. Crane suggested entering the respondents into a drawing to win a quad vehicle (OHV); he stated that they are not going to complete the survey for a hat or a pocketknife, it has to be something of value to them. Mr. Ramos commented that \$20 is not the right approach to growers; if he were to get a phone call offering him \$20 for a 15 minute phone survey, he would not be interested. He agrees that a drawing with a bigger incentive is a better approach. Ms. Mecklenburg stated that a standard OHV costs around \$3,800. Mr. Gilbert asked if there is a way to advertise that the survey will be forthcoming and how important it is for them to respond. Mr. Balint stated that depending on the timing, we can probably get an article in some of the industry magazines and newsletters.

Mr. Ramos suggested that when the research company talks to the growers, they can ask if the grower can refer them to other growers. Mr. Ramos said that every grower knows at least five or ten other growers that he or she can refer. Mr. Balint stated that it is a great idea, but we would have to check with CDFA to see if we can solicit grower information that way. Also, Ms. Mecklenburg suggested that the growers be alerted via mail that they will be receiving a call, approximately when the call will be and what it will be about; she said that if they had a heads up they will be more likely to be receptive to the call.

Mr. Graves commented that he can't imagine that the survey call will take 15 minutes; he would hope that the research firm could achieve what they needed in 5-10 minutes. Mr. Balint stated that some of the questions will lead into further questions and discussion; the time is an estimate. Mr. Graves also suggested that there be other prizes besides the OHV – some lower level prizes. Some of the Committee suggestions were Visa or American Express gift cards in amounts ranging from \$100 to \$500, air compressor, camera, generator, weather station, and irrigation monitoring device.

Ms. Olmstead stated that if we send a preliminary letter to growers, we can provide a phone number for them to call if they want to participate in the survey or a link to an on-line survey. The Committee discussed options for how to get phone number and email information from the growers in the future.

Mr. Balint summarized the objectives of the grower survey. We want to start communicating with growers about the upcoming Board referendum right after September 1 so that we can build momentum and interest in what the Board and Commission are doing. The continuation referendum will be conducted in April 2014. We will, once the referendum has been completed, go back out and try to get better and more information from the growers on the list; the first thing we may do is survey the handlers as they may be withholding information.

Mr. Crane made a motion to give the authority to staff to use incentives for completion of the grower survey, including, but not limited to, a quad (OHV) and lesser awards. Mr. Graves seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Under other business, Ms. Olmstead stated that for the next issue of the print newsletter, we are conducting a grower recipe contest; we are soliciting recipes and the grand prize is a \$500 gift card, with the runners up receiving \$100 and \$50. The winning recipe will be featured in the fall newsletter. Also, we have just received the newest version of walnut ties. The ties come in dark blue, light blue and burgundy with a inshell and shelled walnut stitched in contrasting or coordinating thread at the bottom of the tie. The ties will sell for \$36 and we will have order forms at the upcoming Spring and Fall meetings as well as an order form available on our website and in the newsletter.

There was no further business to discuss. The time and place of the next meeting will be determined at a later date. No closed session was necessary. The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Keyawa at 10:55 a.m.