



**Fertilizer Research and Education Program
Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC)**

Stanislaus County Farm Bureau
1201 L Street
Modesto, CA 95353

**October 30, 2014
1:00 PM to 3:30 PM**

MINUTES

TASC Members

Mr. Jack Wackerman, Chair
Dr. Jerome Pier, Vice Chair
Dr. Dennis Chessman
Mr. Rex Dufour
Dr. Eric Ellison
Mr. Charles Hornung
Dr. Marja Koivunen
Dr. Marc Los Huertos
Dr. Robert Mikkelsen

Mr. Steve Spangler
Dr. Doug West

CDFA Staff

Dr. Amadou Ba
Mr. Mark Cady
Ms. Brooke Elliott
Dr. Barzin Moradi

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Jerome Pier called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and welcomed the subcommittee. Dr. Pier acted as Chair because Mr. Jack Wackerman was not present. Dr. Dennis Chessman, Mr. Charles Hornung, Dr. Marja Koivunen, and Dr. Marc Los Huertos were also not able to attend the meeting. Self-introductions were made and a quorum was established.

REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES

Dr. Pier requested the subcommittee review the minutes of the July 9, 2014 meeting.

MOTION: Dr. Robert Mikkelsen moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Dr. Doug West seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, AND BRANCH UPDATES

Dr. Amadou Ba provided the subcommittee with Division and Branch updates. He reported that the undersecretary, Ms. Sandra Schubert, resigned last month. Nineteen people applied for four Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC) vacancies. Dr. Michael Cahn and Dr. Holly Little are no longer on the TASC; new TASC members are Mr. Rex Dufour and Dr. Marc Los Huertos. Mr. Jay Yost and Mr. John Salmonson are

no longer on the Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board (FIAB), and the new members will be confirmed after the secretary reviews the FIAB recommendations and makes a decision. At the Branch level, the Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP) Research Analyst I position, which was previously held by Ms. Erika Lewis, was filled with Ms. Brooke Elliott.

Responding to Dr. Mikkelsen's question pertaining to Cap and Trade funds for FREP, Dr. Ba stated in the Governor's Budget, \$20 million was allocated to CDFA, with \$5 million slanted for FREP to fund research on issues pertaining to N₂O. However, the Legislature decided to allocate the Cap and Trade funds to areas that will create plans to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG), rather than to research. Dairy Digesters and Measurement Standards are able to provide more information on specific metrics and new energy sources, such as hydrogen fuel. \$15 million was granted to CDFA, and the \$5 million slanted for FREP was not received.

FREP STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR 2015

Dr. Ba explained program funding, stating the entire Fertilizer Program has \$7.5 million. \$5.4 million of the \$7.5 million is mill assessment revenue. Fiscal year 2013-14 was a label renewal year, and much of the label registration revenue came from the Organic Input Material Program, because organic labels cost more than conventional labels. Registration revenue was \$882 thousand, and licensing revenue was nearly \$92 thousand. Total revenue was \$13.9 million. Total expenses were about \$5.5 million. Per policy, \$2.7 million is kept in reserve for cash flow, as well as in case the program closes and contracts and salary need to be paid. The 2013-14 carry-out is \$5.5 million.

In the 2014-15 fiscal year, the program is starting with \$8.3 million. The revenue projection from the mill assessment is estimated to be \$6.2 million. The start of the new fiscal year begins a licensing cycle. Total funds available is estimated to be \$15.1 million; contracted obligations for research are pegged at \$2.85 million; expenditures are estimated to be \$6.3 million; the 6-month reserve will be about \$3.1 million. \$2.7 million is estimated to be available to fund research this fiscal year.

Dr. Barzin Moradi explained the FREP should be more proactively engaged with the issues facing agriculture. There are many aspects of a crop nutrient plan, including the type of crop, weather, climate, irrigation type, and water movement. As various data from research is gathered over the years, the FREP will be able to compile the findings into a customized comprehensive nutrient management plan, which could help in the decision-making process for providing plants with necessary nutrients. It could empower Certified Crop Advisors and farmers with useful information.

Mr. Steve Spangler added that the FREP is a non-biased authority of reliable, non-proprietary information. There currently is no authority or public-use tool for complete

nutrient management planning. The FREP has a credible research background and the support of the university and various people in the agricultural industry.

Dr. Mikkelsen stated that university and industry currently do not join to create a consistent nutrient plan, and a FREP nutrient plan could unite the two sources of agriculture information. Another important component of the project is outreach, getting the information to people who will use the tool.

Discussion ensued, and Dr. Ba concluded that a comprehensive nutrient management tool would be a long-term project for FREP.

FORMING A WORKING GROUP

Dr. Moradi stated the working group, with the goal of creating a nutrient management planning tool, should consist of four people with different agricultural backgrounds. Jerome Pier, Eric Ellison, Steve Spangler, and Rex Dufour volunteered to be part of the working group.

MOTION: Mr. Steve Spangler moved to create a strategic planning working group; Dr. Eric Ellison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AND SPECIAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

FREP initiatives for regular RFP and special RFP were presented to TASC and discussed. Dr. Pier informed the subcommittee that only the most critical special RFPs should be selected each year, and special RFPs are able to have several sources of funding.

A. PRIORITY AREAS

Dr. Pier explained the subcommittee needs to reach out proactively to receive proposals that meet special RFP requirements, which are designed to encourage specific information that fill gaps in current knowledge.

B. TIMELINE

TASC agreed on the RFPs, and it was decided that additional comments and suggestions about the priorities for special RFPs are due November 28, 2014. FREP will send a reminder to TASC members. Dr. Ba presented the CDFA-CalRecycle research concept proposal – 4th CA Assessment, and the TASC agreed to review the full proposal and schedule a meeting to provide inputs on the full proposal.

Discussion ensued regarding the annual proposal and grant process. A perennial complaint of researchers is that the amount of time between the concept and the start of funding is one year, but the reason is both, the TASC and the FIAB, must approve the proposals before the funding can begin. Fortunately, research that receives approval for the second phase has a great chance of getting funded.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Dr. Mikkelsen stated demonstration projects are a good method for giving agricultural information to growers. It is difficult to get large amounts of people to attend demonstrations; more outreach is needed. He suggested recording demonstrations via video, photos, or writing in order to distribute information to more growers.

Discussion ensued regarding methods of outreach.

Dr. West stated the TASC had a minimum score requirement in the past. In the last year, the minimum requirements were not taken into consideration when making the final decisions. An official score was posted after both, individual scoring and the group discussion of the proposals, because group discussions provide valuable input about the individual scores.

Dr. Moradi suggested the TASC provides more complete feedback about acceptance and rejection of proposals, to better help the FIAB and the researchers.

TASC members usually get one month to review proposals before meeting to discuss them. TASC members see peer reviews, but currently, principle investigators do not.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting to discuss and recommend 2015 research concept proposals is tentatively scheduled for the beginning of March 2015. Some of the TASC is not present, so an online poll will be conducted to decide the date of the next meeting.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Mr. Steve Spangler moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Rex Dufour seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Pier adjourned the meeting at 3:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Barzin Moradi
Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor)
Fertilizer Research and Education Program

Date