



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

California Department of Food and Agriculture
2800 Gateway Oaks, Conference Room 101
Sacramento, CA 95833

**July 9, 2014
8:30 PM to 1:30 PM**

MINUTES

TASC MEMBERS

Mr. Jack Wackerman, Chair
Dr. Jerome Pier, Vice Chair
Dr. Michael Cahn
Dr. Dennis Chessman
Dr. Eric Ellison
Mr. Charles Hornung
Dr. Marja Koivunen
Dr. Holly Little (*not present*)
Dr. Robert Mikkelsen
Mr. Stephen Spangler
Dr. Doug West

CDFA STAFF

Dr. Amadou Ba
Ms. Marilyn Boehnke
Mr. Mark Cady
Dr. Barzin Moradi

INTERESTED PARTIES

Ms. Mary Junqueiro
Ms. Renee Pinel
Mr. John Salmonson

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Wackerman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and welcomed the subcommittee. Self-introductions were made and a quorum was established.

REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES

Mr. Jack Wackerman requested the subcommittee review the minutes of the February 27, 2014 meeting.

MOTION: Dr. Eric Ellison moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Dr. Robert Mikkelsen 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 position of Deputy Secretary for Administration and Finance, which was previously held by Mr. Nate Dechoretz who retired, was filled with Mr. Kevin Masuhara. Mr. Masuhara was previously the Director for the CDFA Marketing Services Division.

Dr. Ba reported in the proposed Governor's Budget, \$20 million from Cap and Trade revenues were earmarked for the Department. Of these funds, \$5 million was expected to go to FFLDRS Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP) for agricultural research related to greenhouse gas emissions from fertilizer application and agriculture management practices that reduce those emissions. The Department received \$15 million, not the anticipated \$20 million; FREP did not receive any Cap and Trade funds.

Dr. Eric Ellison asked where the money went. Dr. Ba stated there was a disagreement in the Legislature over the use of the funds. The final decision was for the funds to go to areas that would actually reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) rather than to research. Dr. Ba informed the subcommittee that the Department defended the \$5 million for research, but did not succeed in swaying the Legislature.

Dr. Ba stated the Department received \$10 million to promote efficient water use due to the drought. The money will be allotted through grant proposals to make better use of water; research falls in line behind actual efficiency.

Dr. Ba reported six of the seven positions in the Fertilizing Materials Inspection Program (FMIP) staffing trailer bill have been filled. Two of these positions are allocated for FREP. He introduced Dr. Barzin Moradi, the new Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor), and Mark Cady, the new Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist). Dr. Ba further reported that interviews were scheduled to fill the Research Analyst I position vacated by Ms. Erika Lewis for the FREP.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION OF 2014 FULL PROPOSALS

Dr. Doug West reported of the 12 proposals FREP received for 2014, six scored 80 percent or higher.

Mr. Wackerman led discussion in reviewing the 12 proposals, and the subcommittee voted on every project after discussion of the merits.

A break was taken from 10:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Four proposals were selected. The recommendations were unanimous. No priority was assigned to the project proposals. Comments and suggestions were recorded to provide feedback to the project authors.

The project proposals recommended for funding approval are:

- *Field Evaluation and Demonstration of Controlled Release N Fertilizers in the Western United States*
Charles A. Sanchez, Richard Smith, Sam Wang, and Eric Ellison
- *California Certified Crop Adviser FREP Educational Project*
Terry W. Stark and Dan Putnam
- *A Data Driven Nitrate Hazard Index and BMP Assessment Tool*
Anthony Toby O'Geen and Jan Hopmans
- *Plant Nutrients in the Classroom*
Judy Culbertson

A break was taken from 11:20 a.m. to 11:40 a.m.

FREP staff will send a letter to each of the project leaders informing them whether their proposal was selected for funding, pending the final decision of the Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board (FIAB) and the CDFA Secretary.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED TASC BYLAWS

Dr. West reported the TASC elected to form a working group to review and revise the TASC bylaws. The working group consists of Mr. Wackerman, Dr. Robert Mikkelsen, and Dr. Holly Little. He went over the proposed amendments with the subcommittee. He reported that the proposed amendment to Article I, Section 1 of the bylaws removes the summary of Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) Section 14611 (b) and replaces it with the complete text of the current FAC Section 14611 (b).

Ms. Renee Pinel stated FAC Section 14611 (b) appears to eliminate the future opportunity to fund purely agronomic research, unless there is an environmental benefit. Dr. Ba stated it has to be changed through legislation; if TASC members have verbiage they would like to propose for the bylaws, it would be this subcommittee's task to put the changes forward.

Dr. West stated the change to Article II, Section 3 of the TASC bylaws had been discussed previously by the subcommittee. It changes the review process of project proposals and final reports from the TASC to CDFA staff, who would request advice from TASC members as needed. Reports would be provided to TASC upon request.

Dr. West reported the next proposed change is an amendment to Article III, Sections 1 and 2 of the TASC bylaws.

Mr. John Salmonson expressed his objection to the amendment recommending a Master's degree and a minimum of 5 years experience in field and statistical research. Dr. Marja Koivunen stated it would limit the pool of applicants.

Dr. West stated the members without degrees may not have adequate research background to be able to critique research proposals on their technical merit. Technical expertise is the main TASC focus, while industry representation is the focus of the FIAB. Dr. Moradi agreed that a degree is beneficial for evaluating proposals, but commented this language would exclude or make it difficult for a grower to become a subcommittee member.

Discussion ensued. Members felt the proposed language would shift the composition of the TASC from a group with diverse backgrounds in favor of appointing more academically focused. Dr. Koivunen expressed concern about the strikeout of the language regarding the members representing major segments of the industry that pay for the program. Consensus was reached that additional parameters for membership were unnecessary because the TASC and the FIAB review every resume to assess the overall strength and abilities of each candidate.

MOTION: Dr. Robert Mikkelsen moved to keep the proposed strikeout in Article III, Section 2 regarding the industry and farming community, and to keep the language as written to remove the proposed sentence recommending a Master's degree. Mr. Steve Spangler seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. West reported the final proposed changes are to Article IV. In Section 1, term limits would be added to the positions of Chair and Vice-chair; in Section 2, the first phrase, "TASC meetings are considered public" would have the word "considered" removed, and Section V would be removed.

MOTION: Dr. Robert Mikkelsen moved to adopt the amendments in Article IV as proposed; Mr. Steve Spangler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Dr. West informed the subcommittee the 2014 FREP and Western Plant Health Association Annual Conference "Managing Agricultural Nutrients: Challenges of Nutrient Efficiency for the Future," will be held October 29-30, 2014 at the Doubletree Hotel in Modesto, CA.

Dr. West reminded the TASC members that research priorities need to be set, which will be released in December 2014 for the next Request for Proposals (RFP). The members added a new priority to the 2014 priorities: Fertilizer Optimization through Irrigation Management.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be to discuss and recommend 2015 research concept proposals. It is scheduled for February 18, 2015, in Sacramento.

Mr. Wackerman adjourned the meeting at 1:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Amadou Ba
Environmental Program Manager II

Date