



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)**

**May 19, 2020
Meeting Minutes
Teleconference**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bryce Bannatyne – Chair
John Schaap – Vice Chair
Mark Fallini
Stewart Lockwood
Keith Blanchard
Salvador Dominguez
Wayne Brydon
Aaruni Thakur

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

INTERESTED PARTIES

Tim Spann, California Avocado
Commission (CAC)
Tom Bellamore, CAC
Monica Arnett, CAC
April Aymami, CAC
Ken Melban, CAC
Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia, University
of California Riverside

CDFA

Marcee Yount
Sam Santander
Stacey Hughes
Steve Patton
Mitchell King

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Bryce Bannatyne, Chair, at 11:01 AM and introductions were made. Roll was called by Mitchell King and a quorum was established. Aaruni Thakur arrived at 11:11 AM during the Review of the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020/21.

ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ITEM 3: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT

King provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. The Committee currently has no vacancies. King also provided the names of members eligible for reappointment as of May 30, 2020.

ITEM 4: REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY 2020/21

Stacey Hughes presented the Proposed Budget for FY 2020/21. Total personnel services are \$169,933; operating expenses and equipment total \$60,800; with a gas tax credit of \$2,460 and a cash adjustment of \$12,957; the total projected expenses for FY 2020/21 are \$241,229. Hughes explained changes in the cash adjustment in the Proposed Budget were due to pro rata costs and the effects of Senate Bill 84 (Public Employees Retirement Fund, Statutes of 2017).

Chair Bannatyne requested a motion to approve the Proposed Budget for FY 2020/21 as presented.

MOTION: Salvador Dominguez moved to approve the Proposed Budget for FY 2020/21 as presented. John Schaap seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

ITEM 5: PROGRAM UPDATES

Steve Patton provided a brief update on the Produce Safety Program (PSP). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PSP has adjusted protocols for all routine Inspections on priority commodities that have been identified by the Food and Drug Administration. Patton also informed the Committee that CDFA is working to adjust for budget cuts that will be imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Patton explained that CDFA expects a 10 percent reduction to salaries and a five percent budget reduction, with the latter expected to take effect in FY 2021/22.

Chair Bannatyne asked Patton if CDFA could provide suggestions to the Committee to help meet the expected five percent budget reduction. Patton explained that because the budget for the Avocado Inspection Program is in the form of a contract with the California Avocado Commission (CAC), there are limits to what actions can be taken toward reductions. Patton noted that possible reductions will be examined.

Sam Santander provided an update on the work of the Avocado Inspection Program since the beginning of the season in November 2019. Santander reported that at this time, the Program certified 119,367,052 pounds of avocados; performed 4,623 size count tests for weight requirements; issued 80 Notices of Non-Compliance for a total of 107,900 pounds of fruit; conducted 35 official maturity tests with nine notices of non-compliance for a total of 7,375 pounds of fruit; 250 informational maturity tests were conducted; 163 exemption permits were issued for farmers' markets; and 199 certifications were performed by district offices.

There was discussion between the Committee and Santander regarding inspections and ongoing efforts. The Committee commended Avocado Inspection Program staff for their professionalism and continuing efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ITEM 6: GEM RELEASE DATES

Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia of University of California Riverside presented data from ongoing GEM variety research. During the presentation, Dr. Arpaia described data collection methods, results to date, trends, and referenced a packet with graphs and summaries of the research. Dr. Arpaia noted that there have been significant differences in the data gathered in 2018/19 and the data currently being collected. Dr. Arpaia stated that the variance in the data necessitates a third year of data to help determine an appropriate GEM release date.

There was discussion between Dr. Arpaia and the Committee regarding the necessary GEM variety size for maturity. Dr. Arpaia reiterated that due to the differences in data

from the first and second year of GEM data, a third year of data is necessary before making a final decision. The Committee also agreed with this assessment. Monica Arnett of CAC informed the Committee that they have not yet approved funds for a third year of research and that such funds would have to be approved at the next Committee meeting. Arnett stated that Dr. Arpaia would need to provide a scope of work and budgetary requirements to the Committee at the next meeting.

ITEM 7: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The Committee requested that Dr. Arpaia bring the budget and scope of work for a third year of GEM variety research to the next meeting.

Schaap asked that Dr. Arpaia also provide data from other countries on GEM variety if possible.

The next meeting will be held on September 22, 2020 at 1:00 PM in Santa Paula California at the Limoneira Company.

ITEM 8: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 PM by Chair Bannatyne.

Respectfully submitted by:



for
Sam Santander, Program Supervisor
Avocado Inspection Program
Inspection and Compliance Branch