



**Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP)
Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC)**
California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
2800 Gateway Oaks Drive, Room 101
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 900-5022

**January 30, 2019
9:00 AM**

MINUTES

TASC Members

Dr. Jerome Pier
Dr. Tom Bottoms
Dr. Eric Ellison
DD Levine
Dr. Marja Koivunen
Dr. Steve Petrie
Jenny Rempel

CDFA Staff

Dr. Amadou Ba
Dr. Martin Burger
Mark Cady
Nicole Crouch
Brooke Elliott
Natalie Jacuzzi

Interested Parties

Richard Smith
Denise Mullinax

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Jerome Pier, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM and welcomed the subcommittee. Rex Dufour, Dr. Suduan Gao, Chuck Hornung, and David McEuen were 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 November 16, 2018, meeting.

MOTION: DD Levine moved to approve the November 16, 2018, minutes; Tom Bottoms seconded. The motion passed by present subcommittee members with a vote of 7 – 0.

DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, AND BRANCH UPDATES

Dr. Amadou Ba began with updates about the new administration. The governor, Gavin Newsom, reappointed the CDFA Secretary, Karen Ross, based on her leadership on

state, national, and international agriculture issues. The new administration included funding for safe and affordable drinking water in the governor's proposed budget, making quality drinking water a high priority. Governor Newsom took his cabinet on a tour of impacted communities to highlight the impact of poor drinking water quality on underserved communities.

Safe and affordable drinking water was addressed in Senate Bill (SB) 623 last year, but it did not continue to the floor for a vote. SB 623 was not supported by water purveyors or the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) because the bill included a tax on residential water deliveries. ACWA proposed that the program should be supported with general funds. Last year, the funds were proposed at \$30 million from the agricultural industry and about \$110 million through water tax.

CDFA recently engaged in emergency issues. Virulent Newcastle Disease (vND), a viral disease that affects poultry and other birds, was found in commercial venues in Southern California. There is no remedy for vND, and birds who carry the disease are euthanized. Three fertilizer investigators are helping to find and eradicate vND in Southern California. Several staff members, including Nicole Crouch from FREP, also helped with recovery from the Camp Fire in Butte County.

In the Feed, Fertilizer and Livestock Drugs Regulatory Services, there are three new staff members. In administration, Rob English was promoted to Office Assistant. In the Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship (AUS) program, Valerie Brott is a new Environmental Scientist. In the Feed program, Dr. Sadia Naseem is a new Environmental Scientist, categorizing byproducts that can be used for animal feed.

For the past five years, Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) nutrient management training, funded by FREP, has been conducted in various locations throughout California (CA). The next CCA training will be in Fresno, CA, on March 12-13, 2019.

NITROGEN MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN CENTRAL COAST VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

Richard Smith, Farm Advisor at the University of California Cooperative Extension in Monterey County, presented the issues of agricultural production in the Salinas area, as well as the results from his research. In the Central Coast, fertilizer has a relatively low cost, about 5% of the total cost of vegetable crop production. Growers plant two or more vegetables in annual rotations. However, leafy greens are shallow-rooted and can leave significant nitrogen in the soil after harvest.

Growers are likely to change practices by working one-on-one with farm advisors and consultants, and when they hear from neighbors who have experienced success with new practices. Regulations requiring increased nitrogen use efficiency may motivate more growers to implement changes. Ultimately, growers must trust the people who

make agricultural recommendations and must find ways to offset the costs of adopting new practices.

To build on current research results, future projects must show that increases in nitrogen efficiency will come with no loss of market or income, and virtually eliminate the risk of yield loss.

2019 SPECIAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS PRIORITIES

Dr. Ba explained that the new administration could request a special proposal or research direction in the coming months. The FREP budget for research is typically \$1.9 million per year.

Discussion included these topics:

- Converting data from projects to best management practices.
- Grower panels with speakers who will candidly tell their experiences.
- Offsetting the costs of equipment for growers.
- Short instructional videos and quick assessments for growers.
- Nitrogen inhibitors and slow-release fertilizers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Denise Mullinax, Interim Director of the California Dairy Research Foundation (CDRF), stated that the CDRF is funded directly by dairy producers. CDRF is focusing more research funds on sustainability and environmental issues, specifically with air and water. She suggested that because dairies grow feed with a combination of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer and manure, FREP and CDRF could collaborate on projects to benefit agriculture.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will include discussion about and voting on the 2019 concept proposals. Information about FREP-funded projects on grower practices and decision making could also be presented.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be scheduled in early March via Doodle poll.

ADJOURN

Dr. Pier adjourned the meeting at 12:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed by Mark Cady

2/22/19

Mark Cady
Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory)
Fertilizer Research and Education Program

Date