



**Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP)  
Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC)**  
California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)  
2399 Gateway Oaks, Ste. 200, Sacramento, CA 95833

HYBRID TELECONFERENCE MEETING

**August 23, 2022  
9:00 AM**

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Daniel Rodrigues  
David McEuen  
Dr. Ben Faber  
Dr. Jan Hopmans  
Dr. Jerome Pier, Chair  
Dr. Rob Mikkelsen  
Dr. Tom Bottoms

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dr. Jairo Diaz  
Dr. Lisa Hunt  
Dr. Sebastian Saa  
Edgar Macias

**CDFA STAFF**

Dr. Amadou Ba  
Dr. Emad Jahanzad  
Dr. Martin Burger  
Jennifer Harmon  
Maria Tenorio Alfred  
Mark Cady

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Dr. Jerome Pier, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM. Introductions were made.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES**

Dr. Pier requested the subcommittee review the minutes of the June 6, 2022, meeting after a quorum was established at 11:12 AM.

**MOTION:** Dan Rodrigues moved to approve the June 6, 2022 minutes as written; Dr. Rob Mikkelsen seconded. The motion passed by present subcommittee members with a vote of 7- 0.

**DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, AND BRANCH UPDATES**

Dr. Amadou Ba provided updates for the Division and Branch. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is holding several public forums across the state seeking input from farmers, ranchers and other stakeholders on priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill provides federal funding nationwide to support a variety of food and agricultural programs, including crop insurance, conservation, nutrition and trade; it also ensures a robust farm safety net, promotes farming and ranching practices that are environmentally sound, and provides important nutritional funding for Americans.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) welcomed the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, which will deliver \$19.5 billion in new conservation funding to support climate-smart agriculture. This historic funding will bolster the new steps that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will take to improve opportunities for nutrient management. NRCS will launch a new outreach campaign to promote nutrient management's economic benefits, in addition to expanding partnerships to develop nutrient management plans. This is part of USDA's broader effort to address future fertilizer availability and cost challenges for U.S. producers. The CDFA's Executive Office is encouraging programs to be nimble in bringing federal dollars; the Conservation Innovation Grant obtained by FREP is a good road map. FREP has the opportunity to stay engaged with our partners such Certified Crop Advisors (CCA), University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and California Conservation Districts, to meet the nutrient management challenge.

In Branch updates, Dr. Ba discussed that CDFA's Fertilizing Materials Inspection Program (FMIP) and California State Organic Program announced that a penalty of \$1.89 million has been issued to Agro Research International LLC of Sorrento, FL, for adulteration and mislabeling of the registered organic input material AGRO GOLD WS. The product was found to contain the synthetic herbicides diquat and glyphosate. CDFA initiated an investigation into AGRO GOLD WS – distributed within a box co-packaged with organic herbicide WEED SLAYER in August 2020.

The CDFA's Commercial Feed Regulatory Program (CFRP) promulgated regulations to support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by redirecting human food by-products to livestock feed, instead of going to waste and adding to methane emissions. CalRecycle reports that Californians throw away approximately six million tons of food per year. The CFRP's new regulations promote a decrease in food waste by redirecting food by-products to livestock feed, as long as the by-products are properly stored and handled and retain nutritional value. Examples of by-products are wet citrus pulp, tomato pomace, expired bakery products, wet distiller's grains, restaurant leftovers, and fruits and vegetables that do not meet market expectations.

Dr. Ba also discussed changes in staffing for the Division. Steve Patton, Branch Chief of Inspection and Compliance, is retiring. Marcee Yount has been selected to replace him.

Marilyn Boehnke, Associate Governmental Program Analyst within the Feed, Fertilizer, and Livestock Drugs Regulatory Services branch is retiring at the end of this month.

Within the FMIP, Dr. Martin Burger has conducted the interview process and made offers for three Environmental Scientist positions.

### **PROGRAM UPDATES**

Mark Cady discussed two FREP project initiatives: grower training and Nitrogen and Irrigation Initiative. Within FREP's Grower Training program, Nicole Nunes has taken the lead in revamping the program's curriculum and building a self-study platform.

Nunes formed an Ad Hoc committee that has advised on new curriculum, based on the Irrigation and Nitrogen Management Worksheet (INMP) required by the Regional Water Boards. The INMP must be certified by a CCA with or self-certified by the grower who must take and pass this training program. A meeting with coalitions will take place Wednesday, August 24, 2022, to unveil the new grower training program and platform. Online self-study and testing are currently available through links on the FREP website. In-person trainings will begin in late fall.

Cady provided updates on the Nitrogen and Irrigation Initiative. Six new Staff Research Associates (SRAs) and a project scientist will soon be hired. All the new staff have gone through the CCA nitrogen training and an in-person irrigation training in Salinas. Irrigation and nitrogen management data supplied by growers to coalitions will be integral to the program impact analysis performed by UC Davis researchers. Coalitions will combine outreach participation data with nitrogen use efficiency data, scrub the personal identification information and send the anonymized data sets to the researchers for analysis.

The three Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC) recommended FREP grant proposals have been approved by the Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board (FIAB) and have moved toward funding.

### **2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DOCUMENT**

Dr. Emad Jahanzad led the review of the 2023 Request for Proposals (RFP); revisions were made in an effort to broaden the focus of proposals and attract a larger pool of researchers and technical service providers. These changes will be reflected in the final RFP to be released in November 2022.

### **TASC VACANCY APPLICATIONS**

TASC reviewed the ten applicants that were received for two positions, and the FIAB designated member. Members with terms concluding in December are Chair, Dr. Jerome Pier, Dr. Lisa Hunt and FIAB member David McEuen. FREP recommended and TASC members present unanimously agreed that Mike Almasri and Charlotte Decock be recommended to the FIAB for appointment, with Patrick Troy as an alternate.

Discussion ensued regarding Chair of the TASC. Dr. Pier recommended that Dr. Tom Bottoms become Chair of TASC effective January 1, 2023.

**MOTION:** Dan Rodrigues moved that Dr. Tom Bottoms become Chair of the TASC, as of January 1, 2023; Dr. Ben Faber seconded. The motion passed by present subcommittee members on a vote of 6- 0.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments.

**AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Election of the Vice Chair for the TASC.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be in January 2023; date and location will be decided by doodle poll.

**ADJOURN**

**MOTION:** Dr. Jan Hopmans moved to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Ben Faber seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY MARK CADY**

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

Date 08/29/2022