



California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP)

Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board (FIAB)

Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC)

HYBRID TELECONFERENCE MEETING

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2025
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Teleconference Locations: Center for Analytical Chemistry
3292 Meadowview Road
Sacramento, CA 95823

Desert Research and Extension Center
Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of California
1004 Holton Road
Holtville, CA 92250

California Polytechnic State University
Building 180-415, 1 Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93402

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Shogren
Dan Cook
Daniel Rodrigues
Dave McEuen
Dr. Charlotte Decock
Dr. Jairo Diaz
Dr. Mike Almasri
Dr. Sebastian Saa
Dr. Tom Bottoms
Ehsan Toosi
Franklin Gaudi

CDFA STAFF

Dr. Emad Jahanzad
Jenna Leal
Jennifer Harmon
Karen Adler
Maria Tenorio Alfred
Mark Cady

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Tom Bottoms, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM. Introductions were made and a quorum was established.

REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES

Dr. Bottoms requested TASC review the minutes of the February 18, 2025, meeting.

MOTION: Chris Shogren moved to approve the February 18, 2025, meeting minutes as submitted. Dr. Franklin Gaudi seconded; the motion passed unanimously with a vote of 11-0.

DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, AND BRANCH UPDATES

Jenna Leal updated TASC on the Governor's May budget revisions, which includes an eight percent cut across the board and 10,000 unfilled positions being cut statewide. The branch lost one position from the Commercial Feed Regulatory Program (CFRP). The branch is also working to backfill Mark Cady's position, since he was placed in a temporary position. Leal discussed the CFRP's involvement in enteric methane issues.

Leal also reiterated TASC members' responsibilities as part of the subcommittee, including abstaining from proposal review discussions and voting if there is a conflict of interest. Leal discussed baseline rules for a public meeting with members representing a government agency. Any TASC members who are Principal Investigators (PI) or Co-PI's, or have written a letter of support for a particular proposal, must recuse themselves from the discussion and vote for that proposal. Furthermore, members are required to step out of the room if attending in-person or turn off their camera and mute their microphone if attending virtually. If a TASC member's company writes a letter of support for a project proposal, versus the member themselves, the member can be included in discussion but should abstain from voting if the proposal would benefit the member's company. Leal also clarified that proposals cannot be voted on as a group, each proposal must be voted on one by one by roll call vote.

Dr. Bottoms asked for clarification on how many proposals the program can fund this year. Leal and Cady spoke about the budget and directed the group to aim to fund about six proposals, or approximately \$1.7 million.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Cady updated the TASC with the intent to schedule the final meeting of the year following the annual FREP/Western Plant Heath Nutrient Management Conference on October 30, 2025, in Fresno, California. Furthermore, a short meeting to discuss TASC vacancies will take place sometime in September. A doodle poll will be sent following the scheduling of the next FIAB meeting. Cady spoke about FREP team members Karen Adler and Maria Tenorio Alfred attending a grant writing training course at the end of April. Cady also reminded TASC that he will be retiring as of May 30, 2025, and TASC can contact the FREP team for any needs.

Adler updated the TASC on the Nitrogen Irrigation Initiative (NII). Adler gave a brief description of NII and used the recently updated report to go over data and funding mechanisms. FIAB created a subcommittee for NII to further understand the workings of the initiative and its needs. Adler will be presenting the updated report to the FIAB at the upcoming meeting in June.

Cady urged the TASC members to subscribe to the FREP newsletter for updates on the program and for the latest updates on research grant project reports.

2025 REGULAR FULL PROPOSALS

Dr. Bottoms led the discussion in reviewing and voting on the nine submitted full proposals. After discussing each full proposal, six were recommended to be funded, which totaled \$1.7 million:

TASC voted yes on the following 2025 Full Proposals:

- Developing Tools and Information to Enhance Water-Nitrogen Use Efficiency and Sustainability of Avocado Production Systems- *Montazar, A., Faber, B., Cahn, M.*
 - Passed with a 7-4 vote
- Advancing Irrigation and Nitrogen Management of Cantaloupe in Southern California Using Field Experiments and Remote Sensing – *Verdi, A., Geisseler, D., Diaz, J., Scudiero, E.*
 - Passed with a 6-4 vote and Dr. Jairo Diaz abstained
- Nitrogen Fate in Nursery Production Systems – *Shogren, C., Spinelli, G., Pitton, B.*
 - Passed with a 7-3 vote and Dr. Chris Shogren abstained
- Nutrient Management: A Collaborative Approach between Agriculture and Regulatory Programs in the San Diego Region – *Mellano, V., Spinelli, G., et al.*
 - Passed with 9-2 vote
- Development of Diagnostic Tools to Support Site-Specific N Management Decisions in Organic Cropping Systems – *Zerbe, P., Decock, C., Grieshop, M., et al.*
 - Passed with 5-4 vote and Mr. Ehsan Toosi and Dr. Charlotte Decock abstaining
- Reducing Orchard Nitrate Leaching to Groundwater with HFLC and AgMAR: Ground-Truthing and Guiding the ILRP Assessment Tool – *Harter, T., Kisekka, I., Dahlke, H., Brown, P., et al.*
 - Passed with 9-2 vote

TASC voted No on the following Full Proposals:

- A Nitrogen Balance Approach to Confirm Best Management Practices for Central Coast Nursery Crop Species– *Buchanan, M., Johnson, M., Klassen, P., Jallo, C.*
 - Failed to pass with 7-4 vote
- Quantifying the Value of Automation – *Hillyer, C., Bailey, B.*
 - Failed to pass with 9-1 vote and Dr. Sebastian Saa abstained
- Development of Date Palm N fertilization rates and nutrient demand curves – 2025 – *Wright, G.*
 - Failed to pass with 6-5 vote

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Agenda items for the next meeting include TASC member applications for vacancies, expectations and responsibilities for new members, and TASC bylaw revisions.

NEXT MEETING

A doodle poll will be sent for a September meeting.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Dr. Gaudi moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Shogren seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY JENNA LEAL

Jenna Leal

Environmental Program Manager II

Feed, Fertilizer, Livestock Drugs Regulatory Services Branch

Date: 5/20/2025