



## WASHINGTON BLUEBERRY COMMISSION

*Serving the Blueberry Industry of Washington*

### WASHINGTON BLUEBERRY COMMISSION

**WSU Mt. Vernon**

**April 21, 2016**

Interim Chair Rob Dhaliwal called the meeting to order at 10.35 AM

#### **Introduction**

Commissioners present: Rob Dhaliwal, Andy Enfield, Leif Olsen, Rebecca Weber, Todd Van Mersbergen, and Brenton Roy.

Administrative staff present: Alan Schreiber and Lori L. Anderson.

Guests- Craig Ford, Terry Dorsing, Dave Ransom, Gordan Scheenh.

Roll call of board members and introduction of guests.

#### **Approval of previous minutes**

Interim Chair Rob Dhaliwal asked for approval of the meeting minutes.

*Andy moved to approve previous minutes. Todd seconded the motion. Motion to approve previous meeting minutes passed unanimously.*

#### **Position 4**

This position is currently held by Rob Dhaliwal.

#### **Position 3**

Andy's time on the board will be up at the end of June, does anyone on the board know of anyone that would be interested in his Position 3? There is a vacancy on the board at this time, the board consulted with Brian on this and asked the Commission if we have an idea on who we want to nominate for the opening?

Gordon thought that you have to be a US citizen because of collecting assessments. Canadian's growing fruit in WA, how can we get a Canadian on the board? We have to ask the state for a change in that bill.

Alan reports back and asks Rebecca to really listen about this issue, regarding the state requirements; a legislative change is the only way to change the law. Rob and Todd both asked about this process, Alan and Rebecca told them that it takes a congressman to make the changes to this law. Alan asked Rebecca to get more information about how to change the process.

Interim Chair Rob Dhaliwal asked for approval to nominate Adam Enfield.

Todd Van Mersbergen moved to approve the nomination, Leif Olsen seconded the motion. All in favor, Andy Enfield abstains.
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## **Financial**

### **Treasurer's Report**

Alan reviewed the quarterly financials, explained each line item and the expenses associated with the expenditures. He then asked if there were any questions, Rebecca had question on SCBP and where the money is going, and the amount of money to pay Danny Kim, a WSCA Rep.

Alan went over the check detail and explained each item, he then continued with the travel expenses for the South Korea trip, Bryant Christie Inc., SCBG, Seafair and credits.

If you require reimbursements for funds please send receipts to Alan and he will get you the money.

Alan asks Andy how many acres in Whatcom County are producing, between Skagit and Snohomish Counties there are 2000 acres. The Commission would like to reach out to the blueberry growers and get them motivated to come to the meetings.

Interim Chair Rob asks for approval of the Financials.

<i>Todd Van Mersberger made the motion to approve the financials. Andy Enfield seconded the motion. Motion to approve treasures report passed unanimously.</i>
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### **Production Report**

Alan asked about the production and the yield for this year, Todd, Brenton and Leif all stated better than last year, by 10%. These are only production estimates at this time, but the east side of the state has slowed down production, with the west side increasing dramatically. One Thousand acres total, but one acre on the east is two acres on the west. Alan thinks that the number to give to the state is One Hundred and Eighteen Thousand.

## **Old Business**

In South Korea, the tariff is twenty two percent on processed, eight percent on dry, but every year that we are importing these numbers will go down. There will be no tariff on fresh when we finally get in but Oregon and Canada are ahead of us.

Brenton was surprised regarding rural Korea, stating that it is almost 3<sup>rd</sup> world, and their costs are very high. Andy wanted to know why the cost of an acre is going for \$200,000 per acre, ginseng, and rice are in high demand. Another problem is the South Korea buys blueberry plants from China and therefore do not know what variety they are planting, Brenton believes that Korea prefers USA berries over Chile berries.

Terry Dorsing thought Brenton had covered it pretty well, but Terry really feels that the promotion for blueberries in other countries needs to be expanded. By hiring a company or an individual that can help us to develop these markets, the quicker we can get name recognition and our blueberries into the South Korean market.

On the Agenda to be addressed, thanks to Christie Bryant LLC, there is another SCBG in the works with California. Alan ask the Commission about Danny Kim being our guy in Korea, Brenton thinks that is a great idea, but what happens after he starts finding the leads? Tied in with fruit sale, if you could get a sales lead every week and turn it into a sale it would be worth the money spent on Danny.

Terry wondered if the same idea could work in other countries, hiring a trade rep in India, China, along with Korea. India has some issues, the person of interest there is Keith Sunderlal, who Rebecca recommended.

## **MRLs**

Three things for MRLs, blueberries and raspberries became grouped into a single proposal, a MRL workshop is being held in San Francisco in July, the Blueberry Commission is sending Andy Enfield. Alan will be getting the report MRL report, and then he will send it out to Andy,

## **Local Promotion**

Bite of Seattle, Seafair Triathlon and Breakfast with the Blues are a promotion of the fresh blueberry season with Pete Delaunay. Starts in July and ends with the Seafair in August.

## **SCBG**

SCBG marketing submitting irrigation, Dave Bryla at Pulse irrigation, is trying to improve irrigation. Several different methods of watering are in the works to figure out the effects on fifty blueberries, and fifty raspberries.

## **Research**

Contracts are in place, the Commission decided not to fund the Bernadine Strik proposal, neither of the varieties selected will be consequential to the Washington blueberry industry.

Alan told the Commission that Washington is the number one grower of blueberries in the United States, a lot of money has been spent on genetic health research, along with additional being put into the marketing of blueberries. The research side seems to be more important than the marketing, so there needs to be changes made.

Gordon brought up pet food research, if people think blueberries are good for them then they must be good for their pets. Also, there has been research done in the military sector on soldiers, to help return their cognitive thought process.

## **Food Safety**

The Blueberry Commission would like to see the growers change their food safety education. Starting with regional meetings, and changing how the Commission teaches the classes. Todd went to a work shop, he stated it was very informative and he learned about items regarding timecards, CCO, phizo water, though much of the language was vague along with the statistical information.

Matt, Lance, and Bryant Christy Inc., would like to focus on what Matt is working on at this time. Market access issues they have received indicate that China wants more information on our product. Eighteen pests, legit or remove, packing house practices, these are just some of the issues that have to be addressed before getting into their market. Strawberry access for China was signed last month, hopefully making it easier to sell Washington blueberries there.

Korea wants accessing to Oregon Shipping, before moving on to California and Canada. Korea has not turned to WA yet; they believe that the pests are too high in our berries, the white banded fruit fly being one of them. Bilateral is scheduled for Labor Day week, that meeting will be held at Matt's office, if there is a reception than the Commission would like to attend. Australia, WA, CA, OR, will be first. We provided them with all the information that they requested, it may take at least 2 years before we get in to the country, political issues also go along with these.

Philippines has opened the market with potatoes, so Brenton is hoping that the blueberries will go as easy. They have a good market, and a strong middle class, Brenton has forwarded Alan the pest list.

Vietnam is doable as well, Alan is waiting on paperwork from Vietnam's pest list. Alan's office is working on this, so anything that we can do to help with getting any country to work with us, please contact us. Terry feels we may have quicker access to the Philippines at this time.

### **New Business**

Alan told the Commission that L&I have been targeting fresh blueberry faculties. it is LNI belief that blueberry growers are breaking labor laws. Along with that, H2A is making people hike the pay wage for asparagus workers, so it attracted all the pickers we need. Are there any thoughts on labor for this blueberry season, Alan asks? Brenton thinks it will be the same, if there are enough pickers for the cherries, than there should be enough to pick blueberries. Terry is having issues with getting enough labor for his processing plant, the whole state will be picking cherries within a shorter amount of time.

How prevalent is H2A on the west side of the mountain?

Alan's parting words was asking the Commission to think about the number of people in the industry and research, ramping the outreach programs, looking at next year, 80-150 thousand pounds for next year, looking to keep communication with growers and buyers open.

### **Other Business**

Rob asked if there are any other questions.

Andy thinks that some of the moneys going into MRLs and research could be going into promotions as well.

Interim Chair Rob Dhaliwal asked for approval the Proposed 2016 Budget.

*Andy made the motion to approve the Proposed 2016 Budget. Todd seconded the motion. Motion to approve treasures report passed unanimously.*

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm