



National Clean Plant Network
Fruit Tree Governing Board Teleconference Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2020

All presentation slides are attached in email, and online at ncpn-ft.org

Meeting Attendees (23): Maher Al Rwahnih, Bill Shane, Elizabeth Cieniewicz, Scott Harper, Elizabeth Savory, Matthew Howle, Chalmers Carr, Cliff Buemel, Gary Snyder, Eric Haller, Dale Goldy, Oscar Hurtado-Gonzales, Cindy Cooper, Mike Willet, David Bishop, Kristen Farrer, Tanner Hunt, David Prokrym, Leanne Morrison, Daniel Aune, Phillip Pelham, Erich Rudyj, Ruth

Meeting Minutes:

Scott Harper called the meeting to order at 8:45 am. Maher Al Rwahnih moved to approve the September 4-5, 2019 meeting minutes. Elizabeth Cieniewicz seconded. The minutes were approved.

Elizabeth Cieniewicz, Director of Clemson's Southeast Budwood program, provided an update. Despite COVID-19, the program is continuing to work. Over the past few weeks, she met with several key members of the region's nurseries and growers. They will continue to work together on how to expand the program while growing relations in the area. She is continuing to review the program and determining the best ways to proceed.

Scott Harper, Director of Clean Plant Center NW program, informed the group that CPCNW is continuing to work during COVID-19. The program has five varieties ready for a full release in the last two months. Although they have 782 varieties in progress, with the center is fully staffed, they are making headway. CPCNW is over Fruit Tree capacity by 30-45%. He provided the group with a Little Cherry update. The disease is spreading in Oregon, was identified in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois. At the last estimate, over half the Peach acreage in WA is infected.

Maher Al Rwahnih, Laboratory Manager of Foundation Plant Services, informed the group that the program has 376 fruit tree selections in progress. They have been able to release 29 selections, with 20 international varieties and 19 domestic selections. FPS has felt an impact from COVID-19 in production distribution and in beginning the new infrastructure projects. The new 4,476 square foot screen house is delayed to November 2020. FPS is at 60% capacity for its Fruit Tree program.

Oscar Hurtado-Gonzales, Lead Plant Pathologist and Program Manager USDA-APHIS-PGQP, provided an overview and update on the federal program. Between 2016 – 2019, over 60% of the programs imported plants needed treatment. In 2019 alone, they had 20 provisional releases and 15 final releases. In 2020, the program plans to ramp up bioassays, as well as, expand the field indexing block by 6 acres. They are on target to have High Throughput Sequencing fully implemented by 2022.

Erich Rudyj, National Clean Plant Manager, spoke briefly on the fiscal year 2020 highlights. Out of the 25 proposals, 9.2 million requested by various crops and special initiative groups. With the budget availability increasing to 7.5 million, the NCPN Gb was able to award 7.15 million to the crop groups. The



Fruit Tree programs were awarded 96% of the ask at 1.38 million. The NCPN team has been working closely with the entire network to understand and minimize the effects of COVID-19.

Kristen Farrer of NCPN Education and Outreach provided an update on the materials available to the centers, and growers. She spoke briefly about the upcoming meetings to be held for the various crop groups. Kristen also reminded the group about the outcomes from the economic studies workshop, and that a working paper on the topic was available on the website for review. She and Erich provided an update on the proposed communications plans generated for the national network and each of the seven crops.

Maher Al Rwahnih spoke on the networks push to integrate a national quality management program and establish the networks push for setting High Throughput Sequencing guidelines. The Quality Management group plans to organize a series of Quality Management training sessions in Beltsville, MD, for NCPN members. An NCPN draft of standards is expected this July. The group has also had ongoing discussions on hiring a national quality manager position to oversee the development and implementation of the Quality Management plan. As for the HTS working group hopes to set the stage for further HTS protocols and in the in other NCPN crops. The group plans to provide a mechanism for the evaluation of validated results for HTS to be accepted as a viable testing protocol. While ultimately expediting the release of foreign quarantined and domestic propagative plant material to stakeholders.

Scott Harper and Mike Willet provided an update on the Fruit Tree working group from the September 2019 meeting. Maher Al Rwahnih is continuing to work on the HTS methodology. Scott and Oscar have been working on compiling data for their position paper on field indexing. They hope to have the paper completed by September 2020. Mike Willett reported that he had been in contact with USA APHIS PPQ'S National Identification Service (NIS). This group makes actionable/non-actionable pest classifications regarding its designation of apple hammerhead viroid (AHVd) as actionable. He noted that he had raised a recent decision by an EFSA Plant Health panel that determined AHVd to be non-actionable and provided NIS with all current references regarding AHVd. In a return message from Dr. Yimaz Balci of PPQ's Plants for Planting group, he indicated that NIS looked at all the material and reaffirmed its decision to classify AHVd as actionable. Willett further mentioned that he had encouraged NIS to share its classification guidelines with the scientists at the NCPN and the NGQP to ensure that the information they are preparing on a range of detectable pathogens is useful for future NIS decision-making. Dr. Harper indicated that he did not have a copy of the guidelines.

Oscar Hurtado-Gonzales moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 am. Maher Al Rwahnih seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned.