**MBC Meeting Minutes – November 24, 2020**

Those Present:

District #1 Kevin Noffsinger, Treasurer

District #2 Mark Reif

District #3 Greg Ackerman, Chairman

District #4 Clint Stoutenburg

District #5 Allen Bischer

District #6 Ross Voelker

District #7 Jessica Rader

At Large Steve Ewald

Shipper Representative Neil French

Executive Secretary Joe Cramer

Those Absent:

District #1

District #2

District #3

District #4

District #5

District #6

District #7

At Large

Shipper Representative

Others Present:

Scott Bales MSU Dry Bean Specialist

Heather Throne MDARD

Ted Bauer LaRaCha Farms

Shari Steinbeck Nutrition & Culinary Strategies

Barbara Ivens Nutrition Information Exchange

Chairman Ackerman called the meeting to order at 10:24 am. He explained that many in the group had just participated in recording MSU Dry Bean Specialist Scott Bales who presented his 2020 research findings. He apologized for the late start and welcomed everyone to the virtual commission meeting.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** With no additions, a motion was made by Bischer to approve the agenda as presented. Ewald supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Minutes from the August 12, 2020 Commission meeting were presented and reviewed. A motion was made by Bischer with support from Ewald to approve the minutes as presented. ***Motion passed.***

**FINANCIAL REPORT**: Cramer presented MBC and PRAB FY 2019-2020 pre-audit P&L reports including budget comparisons. Cramer highlighted revenue and expense line items as compared to budget. A brief discussion followed. A motion was made by Voelker to accept the report as presented. French supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**MDARD UPDATE**

* Heather Throne explained that USDA has opened a comment period that allows anyone to weigh in on the SCBG process.
* SCBG agreements have been sent out to recipients. MBC has received agreements for both of the recent awards.
* The Value-Added Grant process is moving forward.
* The MBC was awarded a grant that Cramer describes as a communications and marketing grant. He welcomed Shari Steinbeck and Barbara Ivens to the meeting. Both will participate as cooperators in executing the grant. He thanked them for attending, asked them to introduce themselves and explain their role in the process. They reviewed a one-page hand out that that included activities and timelines. Questions followed. Chairman Ackerman thanked the ladies and encouraged them to reach out with any-and-all questions rather than reinvent something that may already exist.

**MBS UPDATE**

* Shipper Representative Neil French declared harvest to be complete noting that 2019 beans harvest continued well into December. Weather conditions were as good as anyone can recall. The quality of this year’s production is excellent overall. Average yield may not be quite as good as early indications.
* 2021 crop values are being discussed as dry bean acreage will be challenged by CBOT values.
* Shippers are very busy managing full shipping schedules. Inventory next August should be minimal if this pace continues. French also noted recent shipments from Michigan to China! French noted that shipments ex. Michigan are estimated to be 5% to 10% ahead of last year. Some dealers are actively trying to buy grower beans but added that a large percentage of the crop has already been sold by growers.
* Neil also mentioned the ongoing challenge of communicating/engaging with growers. Cramer is aware of the challenge. He and dry bean specialist Scott Bales continue to work on this almost daily.
* French closed by reminder growers to order seed early to best assure getting the preferred varieties. Germ tests are pending. He expects some varieties to be tighter than others.

**DRY BEAN SPECIALIST REPORT**

* Dry bean specialist Scott Bales spoke briefly about his growing season and bean harvest. Things went very smoothly. Plot harvest began on September 17 and was wrapped up by October 8th.
* COVID-19 delayed research plot tours this year. 5 tours were held beginning on September 1st. Expectations were low given the circumstances, but attendance wasn’t bad.
* Scott shared an update from Dr. Francisco Gomez, MSU Dry Bean Breeder. The program is in good hands and research continues.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

* Nominations have been submitted to the Governor’s office. District 2 Commissioner Mark Reif was nominated as was Ted Bauer. Commissioner Steve Ewald was nominated for the At Large position. The Governor is expected to announce her appointments yet this year.
* The lawsuit dry bean growers brought to USDA in 2016 continues. A hearing in Minnesota in October provided some encouragement. There is no timetable. Cramer thanked the Michigan Bean Shippers for their efforts this year to communicate values to BMN weekly during the price discovery period. In the spirit of continual improvement, he continues with work with NHBGA seeking alternatives to the current price discovery process.
* The Enagon Milling System is built with the exception of one, high speed motor that is on backorder. He is working with MSU on a MOA and hopes that once a motor is found milling will soon follow. In the meantime, Enagon has made some flour that has been shipped to the Culinary Institute for their research.
* 2021 Dry Bean Regional Production and Outlook Meetings have been cancelled this year. Scott will distribute/share his research results digitally, in newsletter form and in a video that was recorded earlier today.
* Cramer will devise a way to bring market information and knowledge to Michigan dry bean growers.

**USDBC UPDATE**

* IPC Trade missions continue to be conducted virtually. Bischer and Voelker both participated in trade missions recently. Both noted that their respective experiences were better than expected. They also noted the high level of demand that seems to exist around the globe. Stoutenburg has a Central America Trade Mission in December.
* Ackerman commented on the recent meetings of the USDBC Innovation Committee. The committee was asked to identify an area of focus for the Culinary Institute. After much discussion Product Development will be the focus.
* BeanCon21 has gone public. The speaker line up has been published. Watch your inbox for BeanCon21 in the subject line for details as they become available.

**FY 2020-2021 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

* Chairman Ackerman recommended that committee assignments for this fiscal year be the same as or a continuation of last fiscal year. Committee assignments are posted under the About Us tab on the website – a copy of which was included in this board meeting packet. Bischer moved to accept and approve the Chairman’s recommendation. Noffsinger supported the motion. 8 voted in favor. 1 opposed. ***Motion passed.***

**OTHER**

* Cramer has discussion the need for the MBC to consider awarding Scott Bales with bonus. Scotts effort and performance during his tenure has exceeded expectations. Following much discussion Ackerman moved to award Scott a $5,000 bonus. Rader supported the motion. Chairman Ackerman called for a roll call vote. ***Motion passed unanimously.*** Cramer will work out the details with MSU. Ackerman will explain the award to Bales and share everyone’s appreciation.

Chairman Ackerman thanked everyone for their time. And, with no further business, adjourned the meeting at 12:35 PM.

Respectfully,

**Joe Cramer**

Joe Cramer, Executive Secretary