**MBC Meeting Minutes – May 6, 2021**

Those Present:

District #1 Kevin Noffsinger, Treasurer

District #2 Ted Bauer

District #3 Greg Ackerman, Chairman

District #4

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 Clint Stoutenburg

District #5

District #6

District #7

At Large

Shipper Representative

Others Present:

Scott Bales MSU Dry Bean Specialist

Chairman Ackerman called the meeting to order at 6:16 pm. He thanked the group for being flexible this time of the year as we schedule our meetings around weather and workload. Ackerman also expressed his thanks to Commissioner Ted Bauer for hosting our meeting.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Minutes from February 11, 2021, March 17, 2021 and May 6, 2021 will be addressed at the next meeting of the Commission.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**: Cramer presented MBC and PRAB YTD revenue and expenses through April 30. The size of the crop has put assessment revenue well ahead of projections. COVID-19 has caused so many promotional activities to be cancelled that expenses are down significantly. The projected loss that was expected and planned for will not be realized but rather a more favorable finish to FY20-21. Commissioner Ackerman noted the lack of promotional activities and events and a feeling of ineffectiveness. A brief discussion followed. A motion was made by French to accept the report as presented. Noffsinger supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

Cramer presented a FY 21-22 budget for discussion only. He will update for the next meeting.

**MDARD UPDATE**

* MDARD was recently notified that $2.5 million dollars have been tagged for Michigan in the form of Specialty Crop Block Grants. Details about the grant and the application timeline are expected yet this month. Applications are encouraged.
* The House Ag Committee was processing HB460 which allows commodity groups including the Michigan Bean Commission to meet virtually. The Michigan Bean Commission looks forward to having this option.

**MBS UPDATE**

* Shipper Representative Neil French mentioned that shipments continue at a nice, steady pace across the Michigan Industry. French does not anticipate shortages of the major classes prior to our next harvest.
* Contracting early has proven to be wise in terms of getting commitments to plant dry beans. CBOT has certainly gotten everyone’s attention as it significantly appreciated through the winter and spring. Selling dry bean seed and/or adding contracts has been very difficult and in fact we have reduced the amount of dry bean acres that are not tied to a contract. French anticipates that the revenue noted in the draft budget discussed earlier in the meeting will have to be reduced to reflect lower acres/production.
* French expressed his concern for the 2022 crop year noting that continued bullish CBOT values will make contracting dry beans even more difficult. Competitive dry bean values will certainly be needed.
* The Minn Dak region is expected to significantly reduce their acreage. Most of the reduction will be pinto bean acreage. He expects them to begin seeding next week. Field conditions are dry.

**RESEARCH GRANT POLICY**

* Cramer continues to work with MDARD and Grapp Lerash Accounting to find language for our future policy.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

* 2015 Dry Bean Revenue Endorsement Litigation: A May 3, 2021 communication from Attorney John Tallman was included in the board packet. The communication explained that the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals recently reversed the trial court dismissal and remanded the case to the trial court. Judge Ludington in the district court will now determine what the remedy should be.
* The dry bean flour project is moving forward but at a very slow pace. The mill purchased by the Commission is not operational yet however arrangements have been made to supply heat treated flour samples to anyone that requests a sample. A letter has been drafted intended to update interested parties and to encourage them to request samples for their respective R&D teams to work with. Despite the frustration, it is very exciting to see the interest in bean flour nationally and internationally.
* Communications and Marketing activities continue. These educational activities focus on the consumer and health/nutrition professionals. They are supported by a SCBG.
* The MBC recently applied for and was rewarded a SCBG that will support our version of a bean and bean four focused “iron chef” style contest. The contest will be managed by the MSU product center and include university chefs. This activity will take place this summer.
* A UK/USA trade update was supplied by Grayling – the USDBC EU Representative based in Brussels. Negotiations seem to be moving forward but certainly not at the pace we had hoped for. We seem a long way away from shipping beans to the (UK and EU) duty free.
* Cramer commented on the effort to be proactive during the pandemic by creating website, blog, social media, etc. content intended to keep people thinking about Michigan Beans and encouraging their consumption. Marketing experts find the shotgun approach we are using to be confusing to the user. We discussed the need to manage two accounts aimed at (1) the consumer and (2) the grower. Cramer plans to continue the discussion and move toward a more professional approach. This appears to be an ongoing process.
* We have two pending SCBG applications currently. These grants are typically awarded in late August.

**DRY BEAN SPECIALIST REPORT**

* Dry Bean Specialist Scott Bales is nearly ready to begin planting the 2021 Research plots. This year Scott will be assisted by Daniele Siler. Ms. Siler is a student at MSU that expressed interest in learning more about dry beans.
* This year Scott will have 4,500 plus individual research trials planted in over 30 locations and 90 acres of strip trials.
* Scott’s program purchased a used research planter this winter. This research planter will allow a much wider range of research to be conducted.
* As a result of the PRAB Roundtable discussion, Dr. Martin Chilvers recognized that there is a need to learn more about the management/control of rhizoctonia in dry beans. Scott and Dr. Chilvers plan to include this study in their 2021 research efforts.
* Bales also noted that Dr. Francisco Gomez, MSU Dry Bean Breeder will have a breeding nursery in Huron County this year. The plot will be located at Gentner-Bischer Farms in Minden City.
* Bales asked for comments about this years Roundtable meeting. COVID-19 reduced the number of participants but overall, most felt it was one of the more productive discussions. Participants felt that it was more of a discussion than a presentation. Cramer received several notes following the meeting. Virtual attendance from MSU stakeholders was also a positive.

**USDBC UPDATE**

* USDBC will hold its Summer Meeting in Denver this July.
* Cramer expects the USDBC Executive Committee to review the dues structure in the upcoming months.
* IPC activities have been on hold since February 2020. Any activities have taken place virtually. ANUGA is scheduled for October 2021 in person.
* The Bean Innovation committee continues to move forward. The Culinary Institute of America has been busy working with our flours and its chefs. The committee has studied the pros and cons of participation in the World of Flavors event in November 2021. The exposure to so many chefs and the influence they have is attractive despite the price tag. The committee has recommended that the Council does participate in the form of sponsorship. The committee understands that the USDBC does not have room in their budget to fund this so support from members is being solicited. Chairman Ackerman expressed his desire to support the event for the good of the industry and hoped that every production region would step up. Discussion followed. Ewald moved that we pledge $5,000 toward sponsorship if the World of Flavors event. Bauer supported. Ewald clarified that pledging means we send our check if/when the fundraising goal is met. ***Motion passed.***
* Cramer noted that the Food Aid committee continues to look for ways to move dry beans into the food aid channels. Yemen is in the headlines right now. Yemen is traditionally a white bean consuming nation however peas, wheat, etc. are being supplied. The Food Aid committee is working hard to get beans included.
* GPC very recently formed a Food Systems Committee. As the USDBC representative to the GPC, Cramer was named to that committee.

Chairman Ackerman again thanked Bauer for hosting our meeting and thanked everyone for their time and flexibility. With no further business, he adjourned the meeting at 8:48 PM.

Respectfully,

  **Joe Cramer**

Joe Cramer, Executive Secretary