

NATIONAL PROCESSED RASPBERRY COUNCIL

Jansen Art Center, Lynden, WA

November 28, 2017; 10:00 a.m.

Board Members:

<input type="checkbox"/> Matt Simonian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Antonio Dominguez	<input type="checkbox"/> Hector Lujan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Clark	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adam Enfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rob Dhaliwal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rolf Haugen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul Sidhu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Julie Schedeen
<input type="checkbox"/> Karen Holzberg	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eric Larson	<input type="checkbox"/> Nicki Briggs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Rubin		

Alternate Members:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Predrag Orescanin	<input type="checkbox"/> Jon Maberry	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark Van Klei
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Vander Veen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Van Mersbergen	<input type="checkbox"/> Erin Thoeny
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Loren Kimura	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tyler Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jonathan Paris
<input type="checkbox"/> Santpal Aulakh	<input type="checkbox"/> Joe Vandepol	

Others:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Krugman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hakim Fobia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allison Beadle
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brad Rader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Bierlink	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matt Maberry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lisa Craig	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Britt Burton-Freeman	

x = attending o = absent

A. Call to Order; Establish Quorum; Review of Antitrust Guidelines

The meeting was called to Order by Tom Krugman at 10:00 a.m. Roll call disclosed a quorum to be present. Tom noted that Britt's research report would be moved up on the Agenda following review of Antitrust Guidelines and the Conflict of Interest Policy.

The purpose of the Council's Antitrust Policy was to prohibit agreements or activities that lessen competition to protect the interest of consumers. The Guidelines prohibit discussion of pricing, geographic market allocation, supply limitations, and similar subjects, and apply to everyone participating in the meeting regardless of whether they are a U.S. citizen or not. The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to ensure that Council members do not use their position as a member of the Council to gain an unfair advantage or seek preferential treatment or to receive anything of value to influence their actions. He concluded by asking all members and alternate members to sign the certification and return it to Hakim.

B. Research Committee Report

Adam introduced Britt, who reported that of the Council's 11 funded studies, 6 would be published in peer reviewed journals over the next 12 months. Level of publication indicates the Council's research program has fulfilled the vision in funding many studies early on as there is a time lag between finding and publication. There is an expectation that while not as many studies may be published in any one year, there will now be a consistent flow of published projects.

She went on to discuss the food safety validation project, noting that chlorine had been studied to date, looking at exposure time and concentration on norovirus with listeria treatment next. Because of discussion during the research committee meeting, she will prepare a proposal to look at chlorine dioxide as well as PAA as originally proposed. She noted that with a pilot line set up, several companies had approached IIT regarding evaluation of other disinfectants. Question remains as to who would fund the study with the potential for cost sharing.

Discussion turned to the process of generating a qualified health claim. She stated it appeared the Council's best target was diabetes. Research data to date suggest a beneficial relationship between diabetes and raspberries, as well as other health issues such as cognitive health and cardiometabolism. She suggested two tracks for future RFP's, one to support the progress towards a health claim, the other continuing to explore other health issues. Allison noted that part of this year's activity would be to create the road map to a qualified health claim, and to determine any new research needed to fill gaps. Britt felt that the research that had been conducted to date was solid, and that the Council has a good group of scientists working on its behalf.

C. Election of Officers; Chair Remarks; Appointment of Committee Chairs

Discussion ensued on election of officers as part of the Council's annual actions at the first meeting of the fiscal year. On a motion by Julie and seconded by Adam, John Clark, Rob Dhaliwal, and Mark Van Mersbergen were unanimously elected as Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.

Taking the gavel, John recognized that progress had been made but that there were significant changes happening in the market that were having a negative impact on growers. Among these were industry consolidation at the buyer level and rising production costs. He concluded by noting the need to make and show defined progress if the Order is to continue.

He then recognized current committee chairs and asked if they would be interested in continuing to serve. On a motion by Rolf and seconded by Julieann, Adam Enfield, Antonio Dominguez, and Richard Rubin were unanimously approved to continue as Research, Marketing, and Industry Relations Committee chairs, respectively. He asked members and alternates to let with the chair, Tom, or him know of interest in serving on committees by December 8 so appointments could be completed.

D. Approval of Minutes; USDA Report; Executive Director report

On a motion by Paul and seconded by Antonio, minutes of the May 17, 2017 meeting of the Council were unanimously approved as submitted.

USDA Report

Hakim was called on to provide a USDA report. He began by noting the transition to a new administration, including appointment of a new secretary, new political appointees, and a new Director of Specialty Crops.

He discussed the data discrepancy between NASS production reports and NPRC assessment data which needed to be resolved so that the Council could evaluate whether to recommend to the Secretary any changes in membership as required by the Order.

He recognized the Effectiveness Evaluation being completed, with a conference call upcoming to discuss the quantitative portion of the study. Once reviewed by department economists, it would be released for review by the industry.

Hakim discussed the more formal procedures that would be followed to collect nominees for appointment to expiring and/or vacant Council positions effective the end of 2018. Question was raised as to whether a Canadian citizen farming in Washington could serve as a domestic grower. Hakim answered in the affirmative.

Executive Director Report

Tom discussed the previous day's committee meetings and discussion on what defined success as part of the bigger discussion on establishing metrics. Noted was the difference between program success and success that was meaningful to those who pay assessments. Jonny noted that while there had been good discussion which would continue, there was also a sense of urgency and final definitions should be determined soon. Loren agreed, saying that with the current challenges, more complete and accurate data is necessary to avoid jumping to conclusions. Hakim responded that with a referendum scheduled for 2019, having good data was important. He also noted that as any changes required rule making, they could best be accomplished within the framework of the referendum to avoid duplication of effort. Tom concluded by stating that a renewal committee would be formed at the May meeting to begin the diligence process, and could look at Board seat allocation, Council name, and changes in the assessment rate, among other topics.

E. Executive Committee Report

John reported that the committee had reviewed discussion from the previous day's committee meetings, with much of it focused on defining success. This is important considering current market conditions and economic challenges being faced by domestic growers. There was also discussion on petitioning the ITC to add HTS codes such that raspberry volume in mixed berry blends could be tracked. Hakim noted that if the Council wanted to assess this product rulemaking would be required.

He concluded his report by noting that the FY 2017 Audit was underway, and it would be presented to the committee in January prior to presentation to the Council at its next meeting.

F. Research Committee Report

Adam noted that an RFP would be issued for FY 2019 projects, following the two tracks as suggested by Britt. Tom would work with Britt to revise the RFP as necessary. Proposals would also be solicited to generate a standardized powder and placebo for research purposes. Finally, he said that the USDA nutrition profile had been completed and was slated for publication in early 2018. Britt was in the process of preparing a manuscript for publication based on its results.

G. Industry Relations Committee Report

Richard reported on the first meeting of the committee. He noted that conversation was lively and engaging, and focused on industry sustainability and defining success for growers. To drive market demand, the committee discussed new products and new markets. Allison and her Team were asked to continue this discussion and report back to the committee.

Discussion ensued on driving demand, and if exports were a partial solution. In new products, it was suggested expansion of whole/broken, as tis product seemed ideal for most foodservice and food manufacturing uses. Question was raised about freeze-dried product and how it fits in. To increase value for processed raspberries, it was suggested that uses beyond jams and preserves needed to be developed.

There was a brief discussion on raising the assessment to generate funds necessary to aggressively develop new products or markets. Although difficult considering current conditions, one grower felt the industry had to remain open to difficult choices of it was to remain viable, noting that an investment today could save tomorrow.

Discussion then turned to adding fresh raspberries to the Council. It was recognized that processed might ride on the coat tails of fresh, but if it resulted in maintaining the industry, that was okay. It was noted that the goal would be to raise consciousness for the raspberry brand overall, and that fresh and frozen each product had their place within the brand. Another comment was that the raspberry market has changed in the last 4 years, and the entire industry should be working together. There was general agreement that the raspberry industry needs to work together to solve its issues.

One member noted that the blueberry council has some of the same fresh vs. processed issues as it currently serves both the fresh and processed segments, and there has been discussion by the fresh segment that it does not want the organization to promote fresh blueberries.

H. Marketing Committee

Antonio opened by recognizing the commitment of committee members to participate in monthly conference calls, stating that the committee has good, open discussion on current communication programs and how to build demand for processed raspberries. Ways to measure program effectiveness that are meaningful to growers have become a central part of discussion.

He called on Allison to review the program since the Council met in May and direction for programs in 2018. She said that following discussion at committee meetings the previous day, her presentation would note trends in the marketplace and how raspberries match those trends.

She began with a summary of social and print media metrics, comparing 2016 to 2017. In all cases, engagement and impressions had increased. Consumer media has been used to promote funded research presented at Experimental Biology, and to carry the quality and convenience messages of frozen raspberries. She went on to describe how raspberry ambassadors continue to spread the Council's message points in print and in social media, and how social media is driving conversation. Trade media focuses on food service operators and food manufacturers. A Brand Arc Relationship was used to show how consumers are relating to Council messaging. The Website, not the primary communications medium, continues to generate first-time users and longer user session times. It is being accessed as an information resource, both directly and linked from social media.

Recent trade communication activity, including participation at FNCE, was described. At FNCE, the Council had either sponsored or hosted various trade events to raise visibility for processed raspberries. She also noted that the Council would be participating in two conferences before the end of the year.

In looking at 2018, she said tactics would be shifting to a greater focus on trade education, followed by retail. Health professional communications would be slightly curtailed.

With time running short, she quickly noted the Council's crisis communications program and contact information in case any member or alternate hears or sees of any issues that could impact the industry.

I. New Business; adjournment

There was no new business to come before the Board. Discussion determined that the next meeting of the Council would be April 11-13, 2018 in Lynden, with committee meetings on April 11-12, and the Council on April 13.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by John at 4:15 p.m.