

Montana Alfalfa Seed Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday February 14, 2023

I. Call to order

John Mehling called to order the regular meeting of the Alfalfa Seed Advisory Committee at 12:58pm on Tuesday February 14th, 2023.

John Mehling called for public comment, none at this time.

II. Roll call

Dani Jones conducted roll call. The following persons were present:

Committee Members: Chair John Mehling, Tom Niebur, Cavin Steiger, Ernest Johnson, Dallas Steiger, and Justin Wiese. Tom Matchett was absent, proxy to Chair John Mehling

Department Staff: Andy Fjeseth, Alyssa Piccolomini and Dani Jones- via phone call

Members of the Public: Eric Sommer with USDA NASS

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Dani Jones asked if the committee members had any comments or changes to the meeting minutes from the February 15, 2022, meeting. Cavin Steiger made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Tom Niebur 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

IV. Financial Report

Andy Fjeseth presented the financial report to the committee members and updated the committee. Dani Jones updated the committee on the assessment list and businesses that were missing. Dani is going to reach out to Alforex to remind them of the assessment deadline. All members were happy with the budget and how it was presented.

V. Old Business

Alyssa Piccolomini updated the committee members that there are still finds remaining from the previous year's awards. Alyssa discussed it with Frank Etzler, and it was decided to not apply for funding this grant cycle.

Currently Alyssa has received some samples. Samples are better than average, so far she is at 12 samples and has not found anything odd. She reminded the committee that February is a great time to send in samples.

Alyssa went to the Honeybee convention in January. There is a shortage of Honeybees in Canada, producers might be looking for leaf cutter bees, for Canada Blueberry production. The US and Canada border has been closed for honeybees.

VI. New Business

- a) 2023 Alfalfa RFP Applications
- i) USDA NASS presented by Eric Sommer. USDA-National Agriculture Statistics Service prepares district level estimate of planted acres, harvested acres, yield, production, price/pound and total value on an annual basis. A state level estimate of the gallons of Leaf Cutter Bees used per acre. Continuation of this data series is dependent upon industry partnership and more closely aligning the date series with those who benefit from it. The research timeline will start February 2023 and go through February 2024. IT was discussed to have the maps possibly redistricted, making districts larger for more input, reporting by grower. Eric told the committee that he will investigate the process and the cost. Ernest Johnson made the motion to fund Eric Sommer, USDA NASS at the full award of \$5,500.00. Justin Wiese 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

VII. Committee Terms

Cavin Steiger, Ernest Johnson, and John Mehling's terms end 12/1/2023. All members are interested and willing to serve the Alfalfa Seed Committee again. Dani Jones will send the committee applications via email or mail as requested.

VIII. Other Business

- a) Out of State travel- Ernest Johnson will be traveling out of state on behalf of the committee, Dani Jones will mail and email the out of state travel request form. Ernest will complete the form and return it to Dani prior to travel.

IX. Public Comment- No Public Comment currently.

Cavin Steiger motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:45pm

Minutes submitted by: Dani Jones

Minutes approved by: