

Montana Alfalfa Seed Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday February 23, 2021

I. Call to order

John Mehling called to order the regular meeting of the Alfalfa Seed Advisory Committee at 8:36am on Tuesday February 23, 2021 via Zoom.

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. Director Mike Foster (part of the meeting) Tom Matchett was absent, proxy to Chair John Mehling

Department Staff: Andy Fjeseth, Alyssa Piccolomini, Frank Etzler, Judy Clay, and Dani Jones

Members of the Public: Eric Sommer with USDA NASS and Lindsay Orem with Montana Ag in the Classroom

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 18, 2020 meeting. Ernie Johnson made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dallas Steiger 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

IV. Department Staff Update

Alyssa Piccolomini introduced Frank Etzler to the committee. Frank is the Natural Resource Section Manager. Alyssa discussed that the sample numbers are low but are starting to pick up.

V. Financial Report

Andy Fjeseth presented the financial report to the committee members. Ernie Johnson made the motion to accept the budget as presented and explained. Dallas Steiger 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

VI. Old Business

- a) Montana Ag in the Classroom, Lindsay Orem presented to the committee the need to amend the previous project end date to December 30, 2021. The original project end date is June 30, 2021. Lindsay asked for the amendment to give a little more time to work on the project, as 2020 was a difficult year in the school system. Cavin Steiger made the motion to amend the project end date to December 30, 2021. Tom Niebur 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

VII. New Business

- a) Membership- Western Alfalfa Seed Grower Association and NAFA. Both invoices should be received by the end of June 2021. Shane Johnson with WASGA and Beth Nelson with NAFA will send the invoices to Dani Jones. Dani will share the invoices with the committee when they have been received. The committee directed Dani Jones to monitor and check back on the past 3 years of assessment and membership dues paid, and to share that information at the 2022 meeting. Cavin Steiger made the motion to give the department approval to pay the membership dues when they are received in the office. Ernie Johnson 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

VIII. 2021 Alfalfa RFP Applications

- a) Montana Department of Agriculture, presented by Alyssa Piccolomini, “An examination of “pollen balls” of alfalfa leaf-cutting bees (*Megachile rotundata*) in commercial Montana nests”. Total funds requested \$6,940.00. Ernie Johnson made the motion to fully fund the project as presented. Cavin Steiger 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.
- b) USDA NASS presented by Eric Sommer, “Prepare district level estimate of planted acres, harvested acres, yield, production, price/pound, and total value on an annual basis”. Total funds requested \$5,100.00. Ernie Johnson made the motion to fully fund the project as presented. Tom Niebur 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

IX. Committee Terms

Dallas Steiger and Justin Wiese’s terms end 12/1/2021. Both are interested and willing to serve the Alfalfa Seed Committee again. Dani Jones will send the committee applications via email or mail as requested.

X. Other Business

- a) The current assessment for Alfalfa Seed is “half of 1%”, Cavin Steiger made the motion to keep the assessment at “half of 1%”. Ernie Johnson 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.
- b) Assessment Collection- Cavin Steiger made the motion for the department (Dani and Andy) to contact Corteva about assessment that has not been paid. Outreach will be conducted to remind companies (Corteva) about assessments . Justin Wiese 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed. The committee asked that an assessment “tab” be added to the budget, so show collections are future meetings. (Name, Amount, and Collection Date)

XI. Public Comment

Ernie Johnson expressed his thanks to Dani Jones and the department for their hard work and dedication.

John Mehling adjourned the meeting at 10:38am

Minutes submitted by: Dani Jones

Minutes approved by: Andy Fjeseth