**MBC Meeting Minutes**

**June 5, 2024**

**LaRaCha Farms, 640 North Block Road, Reese, Michigan**

Those Present:

District #1 Kevin Noffsinger, Chair

District #2 Ted Bauer, Treasurer

District #3 Greg Ackerman

District #4 Clint Stoutenburg

District #5 Allen Bischer

District #6 Chase Voelker

District #7 Jessica Rader

At Large Steve Ewald, Vice-Chair

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-MBC Dry Bean Specialist

Stevie Glaspie MDARD

Sasha Eliason MDARD

Chairman Noffsinger thanked Commissioner Bauer for hosting out meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Ackerman moved to approve the agenda as presented. French supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Minutes from the March 13, 2024, meeting were presented and reviewed. A motion was made by Bischer with support from Rader to approve the minutes as presented. ***Motion passed.***

**FINANCIAL REPORT**: The financial report included a current balance sheet, credit card and check registry and revenue and expenses compared to the FY 23-24 budget for both the Commission and for PRAB. Cramer went through the highlights of each. Following discussion, Ewald moved to accept the reports as presented. Voelker supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

Cramer then proposed budget amendments for the current fiscal year and a draft budget for the next fiscal year. Both will be reviewed again and acted upon at the August meeting.

**MDARD UPDATE – Stevie Glaspie and Sasha Eliason**

* Department re-organization continues.
* Financial reviews for commodity groups are being scheduled.
* SCBG applicants have been notified if their applications have been forwarded to USDA for approval or declined.
* Rural Development Grant, Underserved Grant, and Resilient Food Systems Grant applications in various stages of processing.
* The MBC Referendum will take place in September.
* Cramer has signed the MOU with MDARD covering the period through 2027.

**MBS UPDATE – Neil French, Shipper Representative**

* Shipments continue to be strong, which is important for many reasons. Most importantly, it makes valuable space available for the next harvest. French stressed the importance for growers to have arrangements in place for delivery of their dry beans next fall. Space will be very tight. Some could find themselves without a place to deliver if they wait too long.
* Michigan may have a few more dry bean acres than originally forecast. Planting has progressed to roughly 30% as a state.
* The Minn-Dak region is expected to increase black bean acreage but decrease navy bean acreage. Moisture is adequate in 77% of the region.
* There is an adequate seed supply for any re-planting that might be required.

**MSU DRY BEAN RESEARCH SPECIALIST – Scott Bales**

* The West Michigan Roundtable meeting was well attended. Bales noted the interest in black beans. A discussion followed regarding the importance of a diversified offering of bean classes and the need for continued support for the western production area and investment in new genetics appropriate to that area.
* Dr. Valerio Hoyas-Villegas has accepted the MSU breeder position. He will start on November 1, 2024, after completing his obligations at McGill University.
* Dr. Wei Zhang will replace Dr. Brian Horgan as PSM Chair until the position is filled permanently.
* Dr. Ehsan Glance continues to develop a soil drainage project. Funding, scope, goals need further discussion before proceeding.
* 2024 plot research is up app. 30% again this year. Research is being conducted at 12 locations.
* Bales started a discussion about the efficiencies of conducting research on larger plots, the inconvenience created for the cooperator, and the payment being offered (rent) for this inconvenience. Over the past few years, we have moved from a flat fee to $250 per acre but all things considered this isn’t covering the cooperators sacrifice. While growers don’t agree to host research plots for the income, the loss they create should be minimized. Following a brief discussion, Ackerman moved to increase the rate to $400 per acre. French supported. ***Motion passed.***
* Bales commented on the annual maintenance cost the plot combine has experienced since its purchase. At an average annual cost of app. $10,000, the group felt this was a fair cost given the age, hours, and replacement cost of the machine.
* Bales presented a draft schedule of 2024 dry bean research plot tours.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT – Joe Cramer**

* Nominations will take place at the Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola plot locations this year. The shipper representative position expires this year as well.
* Cramer updated the group on the status of the 2015 Dry Bean Revenue Insurance lawsuit. Despite a ruling in their favor, growers have not been paid. Attorney John Tallman will move forward with a follow-up lawsuit.
* Beans@Brody was a success. The second session will be held in November.
* Cramer participated in meetings with Red’s All Natural, Matriark Foods and HeyDay Canning recently. All have new, unique positions in the market.
* The week of February 10, 2025, will include Pod to Process Seminar, Industry Dinner, Canning Evaluation, and a new production focused, MiBean Day.
* Cramer discussed the Beans at Brody concept and plans.

**US DRY BEAN COUNCIL**

* USDBC Past President Stoutenburg updated Commissioners on the recent change in the executive director position. Stoutenburg explained that Executive Director Bratter requested that she move into a new international programs role targeting a June 1 start date. The Council formed a search committee and conducted a search that produced several good candidates including Daniel Raulerson. Following interviews, Raulerson was selected, a contract was agreed to, and he started in his new role on June 1. On-boarding is underway.
* Cramer will participate in the USDBC Strategic Planning Core Team meeting in Denver in June.
* Commissioner Volker gave a summary of his recent participation in the Alimentaria Food Show in Spain and the trade mission to Italy. Stops in Italy included WFP and the canning industry in the Naples area. Sustainability was a topic of conversation as at least one of the meetings.
* Cramer attended the USDA Food Aid Showcase in Washington DC last month.
* RAPP funding was announced. USDBC was awarded 1.5 million over 5 years. There is concern that the USDBC’s award was seriously lowered because of the change in leadership.
* Northarvest and NCBD will host the 2024 WWTM the week of September 9th in Fargo.
* USDBC is planning an event in mid to late January in Mexico. Cramer is helping organize.
* Plans for the IFT Show this July in Chicago are well underway.

With no further business, Chairman Noffsinger adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully,

  **Joe Cramer**

Joe Cramer, Executive Secretary