**MBC Meeting Minutes**

**March 11, 2025**

**MSU Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center, Frankenmuth, Michigan**

Those Present:

District #1 Kevin Noffsinger

District #2 Ted Bauer, Vice-Chair

District #3 Greg Ackerman

District #4

District #5

District #6 Chase Voelker, Treasurer

District #7 Jessica Rader

At Large Steve Ewald, Chair

Shipper Representative Neil French

Executive Secretary Joe Cramer

Those Absent

District #1

District #2

District #3

District #4 Clint Stoutenburg District #5 Allen Bischer

District #6

District #7

At Large

Shipper Representative Neil French

Others Present:

Scott Bales MSU-MBC Dry Bean Specialist

Stevie Glaspie MDARD

Chris Creguer MBC Nominee

Matt Stawowy Steele & Company (V)

Chairman Ewald called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Following roll call, Ewald declared a quorum was present.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Minutes from December 12, 2024, Commission were presented. After review, Rader moved to accept the minutes as presented. Bauer supported. ***Motion passed.***

**FINANCIAL REPORT**: Cramer explained the addition of interest-bearing saving accounts for both the Commission and PRAB. He also explained adding security to the Commission’s checking account and the monthly cost for this addition. After a brief discussion on security risks, Cramer reviewed the balance sheet, credit card and check registry through February 2025 and a P&L report including a budget comparison for FY 2024-2025 YTD. Following a brief discussion, French moved to accept the financial reports as presented. Voelker supported. ***Motion passed.***

**MDARD UPDATE** - Stevie Glaspie

* The Governor is expected to make appointments to the Commission very soon.
* The Department will offer board training in the upcoming months.
* Grant opportunities are in various stages (closing, scoring, and evaluating or opening).

**MBS Report** – Neil French

* Shipments to Mexico seem to have slowed but container shipments remain fairly steady.
* Seed will start arriving in Michigan this month.
* The 2025 planted acreage is expected to be down slightly across the country.
* Cramer will attend next week’s MBS meeting to offer an update.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT –** Joe Cramer

* Trade – Bauer speculated on our ability to fund domestic and international projects if federal funding was reduced or eliminated. Discussion followed.
* Michigan Bean Week – Cramer reviewed the activities and events that took place the week of February 10th and initial planning for 2026.
* Customer Visits – Cramer shared highlights from his recent visit to Furmano’s and Goya.
* Cooking Time Project – With the approval of the three officers, a Mattson Cooker has been purchased. Dr. Karen Cichy and Cramer will travel to Costa Rica in April to deliver the device to Dr. Luis Barboza, University of Costa Rica. The device will be donated to the university by the Commission. Dr. Cichy will train Dr. Baroboza and other food scientists who will work with the domestic trade to provide data intended to affect in country policy defining cooking time. The current methodology is very dated and considered unscientific. It often leads to unnecessary discounts for high quality Michigan beans.
* PRAB Chairman Voelker and Cramer will participate in MSU Dry Bean Specialist Bales annual review on March 12th.

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

* Cuts in federal programs have caused tremendous uncertainty across Campus. Funds for some programs have been frozen, others such as the Legume Innovation Lab have been eliminated.
* Caleb Ortner has accepted the technician position Bales posted post-harvest.
* 2025 research will focus on varieties, diseases, cover crop systems, etc. Locations are being identified.
* This year’s annual Grower Roundtable Discussion included growers from Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, Saginaw, Bay, and Arenac counties. The discussion focused on the challenges and successes of last year’s growing season. Participants were much more engaged this year. Several thanked Cramer and Bales for the invitation.

**USDBC UPDATE – Ewald, Bauer, Cramer**

* Matt Stawowy shared the highlights of the recent trade mission to the UK that he was part of.
* Ackerman shared the highlights of the recent trade mission to the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.
* International representatives attended the March 4th International Programs Committee meeting held prior to the Winter Board Meeting. Committee members focused on grant status, budgets, 2025 and 2026 programs. The Committee offered a few adjustments to 2025 programing and some insight and recommendations for the 2026 grant application.
* The Board meeting included committee reports, rep presentations and financial reports. The Board also discussed structure, strategic planning, and structure.
* Action items included:
  + The formation of delegations to address potential tariffs in the EU and Mexico. Ackerman was named to the EU delegation. Cramer was named to the Mexico delegation.
  + The formation of a delegation to address trade barriers in the Dominican Republic. Rob Chandonnet was named to the DR delegation.
  + The addition of Brazil to the Argentina Harvest Tour.
  + The second annual LATAM Conference will take place next February. It will be held in Mexico.
  + The formation of a new Strategic Planning Committee.
  + The formal implementation of a more formal trade team participant training program.
  + The creation of a Food Aid Reverse Trade Mission. This will most likely be hosted by Michigan.

With no further business, Ewald adjourned the meeting at 4:27 PM.

Respectfully,

**Joe Cramer**

Joe Cramer, Executive Secretary