

OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE PROGRAM BOARD

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the **OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE (SIR) PROGRAM BOARD** held in the Woodhaven Room of the Regional District of Central Okanagan, Kelowna, BC, on Friday, Dec. 6, 2019

Voting Members:

Director Shirley Fowler, Chair	Regional District of North Okanagan
Grower Amarjit Lalli, Vice Chair	Grower Representative – Zone 2
Director James Baker	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director George Bush	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Grower Dave Dobernigg	Grower Representative – Zone 3
Director Chad Eliason	Columbia Shuswap Regional District

Non-Voting Members:

Taras Pojasok	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Dr. Susanna Achaempong	BC Ministry of Agriculture

Guests/Delegates:

Glen Lucas	BC Fruit Growers Association
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Regrets:

Director Brad Sieben	Regional District Central Okanagan
Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1

Staff:

Melissa Tesche	OKSIR General Manager
Carol Teschner	CORD Finance Manager
Paul Thiessen	OKSIR Operations Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Loren Scott	Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 9:00 am.

Moved: Director Baker

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Director Baker

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

"THAT the December 6, 2019 meeting agenda be adopted."

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

3.1 Regular Board Meeting – October 4, 2019 – for adoption

Moved by: Director Eliason

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

"THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of October 4, 2019 be adopted."

CARRIED

3.2 Business Arising from Minutes

N/A

4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION

4.1 Mr. Allan Neilson, Neilson Strategies Inc., re: Update on Governance Review Process

a.) Record of Discussion (Workshop 2)

Mr. Neilson reviewed the outcomes of the second Governance Review Workshop that took place on October 4, 2019. He reminded the Board of the topics that were on the agenda for discussion: the current cost allocation formula that dictates the tax burden among regional district partners, and the need to update the program's current legislative and structural framework.

At the workshop, participants prepared a recommendation to the OKSIR Board, requesting that a working group, comprised of representatives from each RD, be assembled to produce options for a new cost sharing formula. The intention would be for the working group to present a new method of apportionment to the Board in six months.

During the workshop, participants also reached a consensus to put forward a recommendation to the Board requesting that RDNO be given a one-time reduction of \$20,000 to their annual land value tax requisition in 2020. As RDNO had raised concerns in 2018 regarding the current cost apportionment structure, the program partners felt this reduction would be a good faith gesture as RDNO continues to collaborate in the discussions regarding changes to the cost sharing formula.

Mr. Neilson then provided the Board with an overview of discussions that he and the program's General Manager had in November, when they met with Ministry officials in Victoria to provide a progress report on the program's governance matters.

The Chair thanked Mr. Neilson for providing the Board with guidance on how to approach the discussions and for providing a vision on how the process could unfold.

Following Mr. Neilson's presentation, the Board agreed that it would be appropriate to invite BC's Minister of Agriculture, Lana Popham, to Osoyoos to provide her with a tour of the facility and update her on the program's achievements and plans for the future.

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Baker

"THAT the Record of Discussion for the Workshop held on October 4, 2019 be adopted as presented."

CARRIED

4.2 Dr. Susanna Achaempong, BC Ministry of Agriculture, re: Update on Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

Dr. Achaempong provided the Board with an update on monitoring efforts for brown marmorated stink bugs (BMSB) in the Okanagan Valley. The main concentration of BSMB remains in the downtown Kelowna area. A BMSB Committee, comprised of members from local agriculture programs and government institutions, continues to meet.

The Board inquired if more traps could be placed in the valley and whether or not it would be helpful for residential owners to be involved with helping collect data on their property. Dr. Achaempong confirmed that the amount of traps currently being used is sufficient.

Grower Dobernigg arrived at 9:20am

4.3 Evan Esch, OKSIR Entomologist, Update on 2019 Season Results

The program's Entomologist, Mr. Evan Esch, presented the Board with a PowerPoint presentation showing an analysis of the final results from the 2019 field season.

While 44% of the program area continues to have no detectable amount of codling moth, codling moth pressure was on the rise throughout the Okanagan valley. The program fell short of its operational target, with 86% of the program acreage having less than 0.2% damaged fruit at harvest (target is 90%). Year over year changes in codling moth populations and damage were broken down by operational area and presented. Overall, decreases in damaged fruit were noted in Winfield, Oyama, Ellison, Glenmore, and Rutland. Increases in codling moth populations were noted in Osoyoos, Penticton, Naramata, Coldstream, Bella Vista, and BX. Summerland, East Kelowna and South Kelowna had approximately equal numbers of orchards with increasing or decreasing amounts of damaged fruit. When considering moth captures, the worst 10% of orchards accounted for 70% of all wild captures and the worst 1% of orchards accounting for 22% of all captures. Overall, the number of infested urban sites was similar this season as in 2018.

Mr. Esch identified challenges that the program is facing in suppressing codling moth populations. Mr. Esch pointed out that a small number of orchards contributed disproportionately to increases in codling moth populations and asserted that the codling moth is a serious pest capable of erupting very rapidly if an initial infestation is not managed appropriately. He noted that low returns over the last two years have contributed to a vicious cycle of infestation, as low returns can discourage growers from investing in their orchard—choosing not to spray, leaving blocks unmanaged or even unharvested. Grower Lalli agreed that low returns can have a real impact on growers' management decisions the next year.

Another challenge that is contributing to a spread in codling moth populations is movement of infested apple bins. Mr. Esch explained that codling moth larvae emerge from fruit that has fallen to the ground, and look for woody areas to spin their cocoons. Apple bins that are left in between rows become a prime spot for codling moth larvae to spin up. Mr. Esch shared data collected at a number of the southern packing houses, as well as from the orchards surrounding the bin piles.

This season, the Program will focus efforts on communicating bin best management practices with the independent and new packing houses, as well as run trials of mass trapping around the bin piles in an effort to intercept emerging moths before they reach the neighbouring orchards.

Mr. Esch and the Board discussed additional challenges experienced during the 2019 season including the impact the rainy weather in the early season had on the effectiveness of sprays as well as ineffective spray techniques used by some growers.

This year, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) sponsored Mr. Esch to represent OKSIR at the Joint FAO/IAEA Conference in Mendoza, Argentina. Mr. Esch closed his presentation by sharing highlights from his working trip. The conference gave Mr. Esch the opportunity to engage with SIT experts from around the world and learn about their own challenges, and in the process, he gained information and strategies that will benefit OKSIR's program.

The chair thanked Mr. Esch for his presentation.

The Board took a ten-minute break at 10:30am

5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION

5.1 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated December 1, 2019, re: Program Update

The General Manager reviewed the program update in detail.

Since the fall, facility staff have been completing deep cleaning and maintenance projects, and recertifying for all

training required to meet OH&S regulations. Despite best efforts, the program was unable to introduce new genetics into the colony this year due to heavy rain in September and October. While there were enough larvae present to create a new colony, the soggy conditions made much of the banding unusable for the facility.

This fall, the program rolled out a new database. The database provides a far more efficient way for field supervisors to access data, particularly by phone. The team is looking forward to using the new database this season. The Board asked whether the database is available to the public for use. The General Manager advised the Board that because the database contains protected personal information, the database is not available outside of SIR.

The General Manager provided an update to the Board on the BC Decision Aid System (BCDAS). As the OKSIR Project Manager who was overseeing the BCDAS project has been away for the past year on parental leave, outreach for the program wasn't as extensive as in 2018. For the 2020 season, the program will be increasing outreach and education on the program. There has been feedback from growers requesting models for apple clearwing and eye spotted bud moth, two of the more significant pests in the Okanagan that are not currently problems in Washington. In order to add these models, the program will need to have an entomologist sign off on the programming. The BCFGAs has asserted there is funding available to support work on these models and Dr. Achaempong is working to secure entomologist support for the project.

The General Manager reviewed for the Board the various news reports that have been published over the last two months regarding the program. The Board thanked the General Manager for keeping them advised of media coverage on the program when articles are published.

The Chair thanked the General Manager for the program update. The Chair expressed her pride in the program and the involvement of staff in international conferences and commented that she is proud of the industry connections staff are making both locally and internationally.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

"THAT the Staff Report from the General Manager be received"

CARRIED

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

N/A

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2020

The Board reviewed and approved the 2020 regular Board Meeting Schedule.

Moved by: Director Eliason

Seconded by: Director Baker

"THAT the meeting schedule for 2020 for the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program be approved."

CARRIED

7.2 Interim Financial Statements to October 31, 2019

The RDCO Finance Manager reviewed the financial statements in detail.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Dobernigg

THAT the OKSIR Board accepts the Interim Financial Statements to Oct 31, 2019.

CARRIED

7.3 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated November 27, 2018 re: Tax Apportionment Memo

The General Manager discussed the recommended motions being presented to the Board, noting the motions from the Governance Review Workshop needed to be brought to the regular Board Meeting for approval.

The RDCO Finance Manager distributed a draft financial report to the Board, and the General Manager reviewed the potential impacts of offering the \$20,000 reduction. She highlighted that the program remains in good financial health and that the sales income from 2019 could more than absorb the one-time reduction.

Moved by: Director Eliason

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

“THAT the Board direct staff to reduce the 2020 SIR value tax requisition for the Regional District of North Okanagan by twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00), in recognition of the Regional District of North Okanagan’s concerns regarding the fairness of the service’s existing method of apportionment;

THAT the Board direct staff to fully offset the reduction in the Regional District of North Okanagan’s 2020 requisition using funds from the service’s 2019 and 2020 sales of excess product; and,

THAT the Board direct staff to convene a Working Group on Apportionment, comprised of an equal number of representatives from each of the four participating Regional Districts, to develop a proposed new method of value tax apportionment for recommendation to the SIR Board with intention of applying the new method for 2021.”

CARRIED

7.4 Staff report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager dated November 28, 2018 re: 2020 Requisition Rate

The General Manager referred again to the draft financial report and noted that as the program remains in good financial health, an increase to the requisition rates was not necessary for the upcoming year.

Moved by: Director Eliason

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

“THAT the Board approve the 2020 requisition rate reflecting zero increase over the 2019 requisition for the Regional District Land Only Value Tax and zero increase to the parcel tax rate of \$139.26 per acre.

CARRIED

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA**8.1 In-camera session to discuss matters related to personnel.**

Moved by: Grower Dobernigg

Seconded by: Director Baker

“THAT pursuant to Section 90 of the Community Charter the SIR Board adjourns and convenes to an ‘In-Camera’ session to discuss legal and personnel issues.”

CARRIED

9. OTHER BUSINESS**9.1 Staff Years of Service Recognition**

The Board recognized the years of service milestones being celebrated this year by SIR staff. The General Manager highlighted the good work by each of the staff members, and the Chair asked the General Manager to pass on their appreciation.

Mary-Anne Laluk, Facility QA/QC Tech, 20 years

Kelly Carmichael, Field Supervisor, 10 years

Darrel Steeves, seasonal Field Monitor, 5 Years

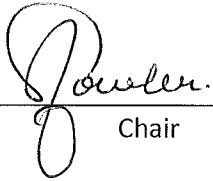
10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Director Eliason

Seconded by: Director Bush

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 11:40am."

CARRIED


Chair


Corporate Officer