

OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE PROGRAM BOARD

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the **OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE (SIR) PROGRAM BOARD**
held virtually via Zoom, on Friday, Oct 1, 2021

Voting Members:

Director Shirley Fowler, Chair
Grower Amarjit Lalli, Vice Chair
Director George Bush
Grower Dave Dobernigg
Alternate Director Gail Given

Regional District of North Okanagan
Grower Representative – Zone 2
Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Grower Representative – Zone 3
Regional District of the Central Okanagan

Non-Voting Members:

Dr. Susanna Achaempong
Dr. Rachid El Hafid

BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Alternate, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Guests/Delegates:

Allan Neilson

Neilson Strategies

Regrets:

Grower Walter Makepeace
Director James Baker
Director Tim Lavery
Director Brad Sieben
Taras Pojasok

Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic
Regional District of Central Okanagan
Regional District Columbia Shuswap
Regional District of Central Okanagan
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Staff:

Melissa Tesche
Carol Teschner
Michelle Cook
Evan Esch
Paul Thiessen
Loren Scott

OKSIR General Manager
RDCO Financial Manager
OKSIR Project Manager
OKSIR Entomologist
OKSIR Operations Manager
Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 9:04am.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

“THAT the October 1, 2021, meeting agenda be adopted.”

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

3.1 Regular Board Meeting – July 23, 2021 – for adoption

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Lalli

"THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of July 23, 2021, be adopted."

CARRIED

3.2 Business Arising from Minutes

The Chair took a brief moment to introduce the Board to Dr. Rachid El Hafid. Dr. El Hafid is the Director of Research Development and Technology Transfer for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, based out of the Summerland Research Center. He attended the meeting as an alternate on behalf of AAFC. The Board welcomed Dr. El Hafid.

4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION

5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION

5.1 Summary Report prepared by Inner Harbour Consulting Inc. for the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Project, re: Summary: Industry Issues Identified During Consultation, dated August 31, 2021.

The General Manager briefly reviewed the Summary Report and informed the Board that it echoes statements made by tree fruit industry representatives at several meetings and presentations that had taken place throughout the year. The report identifies the challenges that the tree fruit sector will need to overcome to thrive again.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Given

"THAT the summary report from the BC MAFF Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan be received."

CARRIED

5.2 Letter from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/International Atomic Energy Association, re: Invitation to Attend Consultancy Meeting on Rearing of Lepidoptera for SIT Application, dated September 16, 2021.

The General Manager shared the invitation to the Program's Entomologist, Evan Esch. Mr Esch has been invited by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization/International Atomic Energy Association (FAO/IAEA) to attend the Consultancy Meeting on Rearing of Lepidoptera for SIT Application in Vienna, Austria. The Chair congratulated Mr. Esch on the invitation. Mr. Esch thanked the Chair and the Board and stated that he would be proud to represent the Program at the conference. He noted that the conference might switch from an in-person event to a virtual event. If the event goes ahead in Austria, all travel costs related to the meeting would be covered by the FAO/IAEA.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Given

"THAT the invitation from the FAO/IAEA be received."

CARRIED

5.3 Letter from M3 Agriculture Technologies re: Cooperation on testing of x-ray for sterilization of codling moth, dated September 13, 2021.

The General Manager informed the Board that the OKSIR Program has an opportunity to collaborate with M3 Agriculture Technologies on testing x-ray technology for the sterilization of codling moth in the Osoyoos rearing facility. This technology would be tested in the off-season to ensure that it produces desired moth quality. The General Manager explained that if the x-ray testing is successful, the program would use the machine during the upcoming field season to test the machine at high through-puts. Reaching this stage would have the added bonus of reducing wear and tear on the irradiator. The Chair shared her excitement over the potential to adopt new, non-nuclear technologies in the facility.

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT the letter from M3 Agriculture technologies be received.”

CARRIED

5.4 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated September 27, 2021, re: Program Update

The General Manager gave the Program Update in detail.

The General Manager expressed how proud she is of the OKSIR team, both facility and field staff for overcoming many difficult challenges this season, including high temperatures, power outages, wildfire smoke, and acute staffing shortages.

With sadness, the General Manager informed the Board that codling moth expert and renown IPM researcher Dr. Larry Gut has passed away. Dr. Gut had been instrumental in SIR pilot projects in Washington and Michigan, and was generous with his time and knowledge to OKSIR Program staff over the years. He will be missed by OKSIR and the tree fruit IPM world.

The General Manager informed the Board that the facility irradiator had another partial breakdown the last week in August. The irradiator was still operational, but the exposure time required to reach sterilization more than doubled. Facility staff worked overtime to ensure that no properties went without moths and all sales responsibilities were met. With looser border restrictions, the technician was able to cross the border without problems and the irradiator was repaired promptly. The General Manager explained that cost of the repairs for the two breakdowns this season will exceed the amount budgeted annually for irradiator maintenance.

In the sales update, the General Manager informed the Board that sterile codling moth sales with the United States went very smoothly this year. The sale of egg sheets, however, has been lower than predicted and the OKSIR Program will come in under the anticipated sales revenue. The Chair inquired about the sales of egg sheets being curtailed. The General Manager explained that our main purchaser BioTEPP, paused the production of their products for the summer and switched to R&D. Their production is expected to begin again later this fall.

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT the staff report from the General Manager be received.”

CARRIED

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 **Memo from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated September 28, 2021, re: 2022 Tax Increases**

The General Manager presented the proposed tax increase for approval, noting the suggested increases are in line with the levels previously discussed by the Board. The Chair confirmed that the tax increase is necessary, as the program has not had an increase for over a decade.

Moved by: Grower Lalli

Seconded by: Director Given

"THAT OKSIR increase the parcel tax rate for 2022 by 8% for a rate of \$150.40/acre.

"AND THAT OKSIR increase the total amount requisitioned from the value tax in 2022 by 4% for a total requisition of \$1,779,157, to be apportioned between the Regional Districts according to the newly agreed upon apportionment method."

CARRIED

7.2 **Interim Financials to August 31, 2021**

The Financial Manager reviewed the financial statement in detail.

Despite a difficult year that saw another sharp decrease in revenue due to acreage removals along with lower than expected egg sheet sales, the program is expected to come in under budget. Management curtailed as much discretionary spending as possible.

The Chair thanked the Financial Manager for the budget review.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Given

"THAT the interim Financials to August 31, 2021 be received."

CARRIED

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

N/A

9. OTHER BUSINESS

N/A

10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Given

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 9:30am"

CARRIED



Chair



Corporate Officer