

OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE PROGRAM BOARD

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the **OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE (SIR) PROGRAM BOARD**
held hybrid in the RDCO Woodhaven Boardroom, Kelowna BC, and online via Microsoft Teams on Friday, May 12, 2023

Voting Members:

Director Shirley Fowler	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director George Bush	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Director Tim Lavery	Regional District Columbia Shuswap
Director Gord Lovegrove	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Mohini Singh	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Grower Tarsem Goraya	Grower Representative – Zone 2
Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic
Grower Joginder Dhand	Grower Representative – Zone 3

Non-Voting Members:

Taras Pojasok	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
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Guests/Delegates:

Glen Lucas	BC Fruit Growers Association
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Regrets:

Dr. Susanna Acheampong	BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food
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Staff:

Melissa Tesche	OKSIR General Manager
Michelle Cook	OKSIR Operations Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Shelby Austen	OKSIR Office Manager
Lori White	RDCO Financial Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 12:38 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Grower Makepeace

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT the May 12, 2023, meeting agenda be adopted as presented.”

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

3.1 Regular Board Meeting – Mar. 10, 2023 – for adoption

The minutes were amended to include the attendance of Director Singh.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Lovegrove

“THAT the SIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2023, be adopted as amended.”

CARRIED

3.2 Business Arising from Minutes**4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION****4.1 Tiana Verigin, CPA, Manager, A&A, BDO Canada LLP, Presentation of the 2022 Audit Results**

- a. Audit letter dated May 12, 2023
- b. 2022 Audited Financial Statements

The Chair introduced Ms. Verigin to the Board. Ms. Verigin presented the audited financial statements in detail, noting that the audit had not identified any issues or concerns with the 2023 financials.

Moved by: Grower Goraya

Seconded by: Director Bush

"THAT the OKSIR Board accept the Audit Letter dated May 12, 2023, and accept and approve the 2022 Audited Financial Statements as presented."

CARRIED

5. CORRESPONDENCE/ INFORMATION**5.1 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated May 8, 2023, re: Program Update**

The General Manager gave her staff report in detail.

Facility operations are going well, and the facility is fully staffed at this time. The chiller replacement will not occur until the fall due to production delays, but pre-season testing of the existing chiller indicates that the unit should be reliable for the 2023 season.

A new Ministry of Agriculture (MAF) funding program has just been announced, the Perennial Crop Renewal Program, with a stream of funding available to help growers remove planted acreage. The removal funding does not require any commitment to replanting. Ms. Tesche noted that financial aid is always good for growers, but this program is likely to accelerate the rate of apples coming out without creating any impetus for new apple acreage to be planted. She explained that MAF has not yet approved apples as a commodity that would qualify for dollars for planting—the approval requires submission of a Market Opportunities Assessment (MOA) that demonstrates that apples have potential to be profitable and outlines guidelines for the types of apple plantings that the government funding should support. Consultants engaged by MAF are currently working on the MOA for apples. The General Manager sits on both the Perennial Crop Renewal Program steering committee and the steering committee for the apple MOA.

The General Manager presented an orientation to the SIR Program at RDCO on April 20th and the presentation was warmly received by new and returning RDCO Directors. She has not received requests from CSRD or RDNO for such presentations but is available at any time should a request be made.

Moved by: Director Singh

Seconded by: Director Lovegrove

"THAT the staff report from the General Manager be received."

CARRIED

5.2 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated May 8, 2023, re: RDCO Contract for Services

The General Manager informed the Board that current five-year lease and services agreement between RDCO and SIR expires at the end of 2023. She is seeking support to proceed with negotiations on a renewed agreement with RDCO. Once a tentative agreement is reached, she will bring it back to the Board for approval.

Moved by: Grower Makepeace

Seconded by: Director Lovegrove

“THAT staff proceed with negotiating the terms of the 5-year renewal of the lease and services agreement with the Regional District of Central Okanagan with the new agreement to be approved by the SIR Board before signing.”

CARRIED

5.3 Staff Report from Evan Esch, Entomologist, dated May 5, 2023, re: Request to Host International Coordinated Research Meeting

The SIR Entomologist, Mr. Evan Esch, gave his report in detail.

Mr. Esch informed the Board that the program has been working with the joint program of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for many years. This program has a series of meetings every 18 months to host researchers through their coordinated research programs. SIR has been invited to host the next meeting, in the spring of 2024, and Mr. Esch is seeking Board approval to host the event locally. About 20 scientists would attend to share research on sterile insect technology (SIT). The bulk of the costs would be paid for by IAEA and SIR would provide the meeting space and rearing facility tour.

The Board commented on the importance of sharing our research and experiences with others as well as the direct benefit to our program that comes from being tied into the network of other SIT programs and scientists around the world. The Board agreed that this opportunity would raise the profile of SIR both regionally and internationally.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Makepeace

“THAT OKSIR host the spring 2024 Research Coordination Meeting for the IAEA/FAO Coordinated Research Project on Improving the Mass-Rearing of Lepidoptera Pests for SIT Programs.”

CARRIED

5.4 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated May 8, 2023, re: Administration of Funds for Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project

One of the central recommendations to come out of the TFSI was the creation of a new cross-commodity leadership organization. Through the stabilization implementation period, it became apparent that existing industry organizations did not have an appetite for a new organization. There was, however, a desire to find ways to increase collaboration and communication and boost capacity of the existing organizations without formalizing a whole new entity. There are Stabilization funds designated to support this work and the Leadership Subcommittee has submitted a proposal that would have existing organizations joining forces to hire two new positions to work on cross-commodity issues. SIR, given its size and administrative capacity, would be best equipped to act as the fund administrator for the project. The program would receive an administrative fee for these efforts.

The Board asked how the project would impact the General Manager’s workload. She explained that the project should reduce her workload—the staff hired would take over much of the stabilization committee work/project management that has been on her desk and the desks of the other industry organizations.

Moved by: Grower Makepeace

Seconded by: Director Singh

"THAT OKSIR act as applicant and administrator of funds for the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project submitted to the Investment Agriculture Foundation on behalf of the project partners and the Leadership Subcommittee of the Tree Fruit Stabilization Project."

CARRIED

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Interim Financials to Mar 31, 2023

Ms. White presented the financials in detail.

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Lovegrove

"THAT the interim financial statements be received."

CARRIED

8. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

9. OTHER BUSINESS

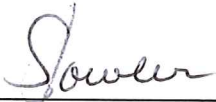
10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Grower Makepeace

Seconded by: Director Singh

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 1:37 pm."

CARRIED



Chair



Corporate Officer