

**Wyoming Crop Improvement Association
Northwest District Meeting Minutes
December 5, 2011
Powell Research and Extension Center**

In Attendance: Mike Forman, Mike Moore, Jolene Sweet, Debbie Nuss, Gil Waible, Axel Garcia, Abdel Mesbah, Sandy Frost, Brian Duyck, Kelly Spiering, Brent Brewer, Earl Rice, Tom Bales, Reed Williams, Ken Borchert, Mike Killen, Bret Hess, Gary White, Kim Decker, Brad May, Keith Schaffer, Vickie Hetzel, Dave Johnson, Bob Parsons, Denny Hall, Corey Forman and Donn Randall.

President, Mike Forman called the meeting to order at 8:12 am.

Welcome and introductions were made.

Approval of 2010 Minutes

Brian Duyck moved, Kelly Spiering second, to approve the minutes as written.

Motion carried.

Acreage/Field Inspection Report

Mike Moore reported that the total acreage was down about 8,000 acres from last year, mostly due to a drop in bean acres. There was also a slight drop in alfalfa, but small grain acres were up. There were no significant problems this year, but dry bean crops did not close rows and thus were challenged by nightshade. The happy dance was performed at the end of the season due to no disease being found in the beans. Staffing was unchanged from last year, and given the reduced bean acres, it was relatively easy year. Brent Brewer asked how much notice we need if bean acres were to double. Mike Moore indicated that he doesn't change the numbers of temporary inspectors that he hires. Depending on acres, he starts them a week earlier or later, but in the end, Mike works more hours to get the inspections done.

Mike did note that there were several fields this year with problem weeds, such as Russian knapweed, whitetop, and nightshade that had set seed prior to labor going through the field. The labor did a good job, in most cases, of pulling or hoeing the weeds, but left them in the field. The plants were likely to be picked up by harvest equipment, so the labor effort and expense really didn't accomplish anything. He even had a discussion with a grower's labor crew leader. The leader told Mike that they didn't want to pack the weeds out, couldn't make money doing it, and didn't know why we were being so difficult. Mike said that the inspectors would stress the need to remove weeds with seed set from the field in the future in grower communications.

Funding for Third Year of Forage Yield, Seed Yield, and Grazing Potential of Novel Tall Fescue Under Irrigated Conditions in the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming

Mike Moore explained that the WCIA has funded this research study for the past two years. While the final decision as to funding for a third year will be made at the annual meeting, Mike wanted people to start thinking about it now. It is important to take into consideration that the study will be much stronger with a third year of data, and that

it might not pass peer review with only two years of data. Brett Hess indicated that a third year would indeed be helpful. Kelly Spiering feels that if Anowar changed the scope of the study it would make sense to provide another year of funding. It was pointed out that changing the scope would not provide a third year of data related to the first two, so changing the scope to something more applicable should be done with caution. It was asked if the data from this year will be available for the annual meeting, and Mike Moore indicated that it would. It was also suggested that the WCIA might offer to fund half of the \$5,000 for a third year and ask Anowar to match it, and Mike agreed to talk to Anowar about it. Mike Forman suggested that Anowar put his request into a proposal format in order defend it. Kelly would like him to show how it would be applicable for us instead of an abstract concept, and stated that he would like to know what the total expenses are.

Trait Testing as Part of Seed Certification

Clearfield wheat varieties are developed through conventional breeding methods, rather than GM methods, but they operate similarly to Roundup Ready, in that the herbicide Beyond is used to control jointed goatgrass, downy brome, and other grassy winter annual weeds that cannot be controlled in non-Clearfield varieties. Gary White pointed out that the herbicide is also known as Raptor, but the labeled use for the Clearfield varieties is Beyond. BASF provided wheat breeders lines with the Clearfield trait free of charge, but required them to sign agreements that seed must pass the Clearfield Confirm test, among other things. BASF asked seed certifying agencies to require an acceptable (92% minimum) Clearfield Confirm test as part of certification eligibility. Seed certification is based on visual inspection, not genetic testing, and the request essentially put seed certification in a position to police the licensing agreement between BASF and the breeders. AOSCA talked to BASF and asked them to submit a letter requesting that their varieties be subject to the Confirm test, which BASF did, but the wording they used makes it sound like seed certification requested that position. While AOCA is still working on it, the topic is a good lead in to the newly developed AOSCA Additional Certification Request (ACR). The main concept behind these related issues is that seed certification is based on visual field inspections, and a seed test for a trait, such as Clearfield or Roundup Ready should not be used to verify a trait or variety that otherwise did not pass a visual field inspection. An ACR allows the owner/maintainer of a variety to request additional tests or standards that are used in determining the certification eligibility for seed of that specific variety. That request is either put in the variety description or via a variety description amendment, and can include testing or field requirements, such as land history or isolation. All ACRs must be more stringent than current certification standards. To say that discussions on this topic within AOSCA were vigorous would be an understatement, it was deemed necessary if seed certification is to remain relevant. Most people who buy seed with genetic traits such as Roundup Ready or Clearfield buy those varieties because of those traits, and this was deemed the best way to make trait tests or other requirements part of certification. It was noted that in the event that a seed certifying agency could not administer an ACR,

such as not having staff trained in that area, they would not certify the variety. One of the requirements of the AOSCA ACR is that regulatory agencies must be notified of the ACR. That would allow them, should they so choose, to include the ACR in regulatory testing. When asked about Clearfield Confirm tests, which our lab is approved to conduct, Gil indicated that he has never had a test that did not meet the 92% standards, but a few have come close. This issue really came to a head when seed of a Clearfield variety was sold in Colorado. The seed seller called the purchaser after the seed was planted, but before Beyond was applied, and told him that there might be a problem and that he should not spray Beyond. While a sample of the seed was submitted, tested and passed the Confirm test, the seller must have realized there was a problem. The Colorado Seed Growers Association Board of Directors required their director, Brad Erker, to include the Confirm test in certification eligibility determination prior to the BASF letter, putting Colorado at odds with neighboring states. That has been solved with the ACR wording accepted by AOSCA this summer. Gil shared that he went to Switzerland this summer and his trip included a chance to visit with someone in their seed industry. He found that 95% of all their seed is certified or “quality” seed, with obvious benefits. It was noted that most people purchasing the initial Clearfield varieties were buying them to make use of the technology, as there were the downsides of a yield drag with the Clearfield trait, as well as less than stellar milling and baking. (In the SE District meeting three days later, growers reported that some of the new Clearfield varieties are being purchased not for the Clearfield trait but because of their yield potential and end use characteristics.) Mike gave an example of two different times where a grower followed a wheat field with Clearfield and felt like we should accept those fields for certification, even though they did not meet land history requirements. Given that sprayers can have spray skips or nozzle issues, those fields are not eligible for certification. This should be noted by growers, as the company contracting for the seed told the grower that seed certification would allow it and to go ahead and plant it. Trait testing is a logical direction for the future, and Gil noted that stacked traits are incredibly expensive to test for.

The discussion of trait testing moved to the issue on Heart Mountain, where two growers are having difficulty related to RR alfalfa seed production and the impact to neighbors. The comment was made that testing and isolation don't make a difference if there is an RR hay field across from a non-RR seed field. The zero tolerance or attempt to meet it, is causing a huge problem. AOSCA standards are set up for some cross pollination and mechanical mixtures, in recognition that biological systems are seldom, if ever, perfect or 100% pure. Sandy Frost suggested the region specialize in one crop and market it globally as a group and then the crop would be worth more money.

Kelly Spiering moved that we set a standard that all alfalfa seed being planted for seed production must be tested prior to planting. Brian Duyck second. Motion carried. Mike Forman suggested that we get input from other seed companies. Mike Moore stated that the alfalfa companies are amending their varieties descriptions with changes to how they produce Breeder and Foundation seed due to difficulty in producing

seedstock that does not have the RR trait. There were two positive seedstock tests in the ASSP program this year, one in Idaho and one in Wyoming and, in the case of Wyoming, the seed was already planted. Kelly suggested taking the samples and hold them and maybe test 10% of them, but the option to test is there. Tom Bales suggested drawing and testing the samples, then just keeping the paperwork therefore no need to hold the samples.

Bob Parsons recommended changing the wording related to the proposed ACR section of the Grower Handbook, to require that ACR is communicated in writing with all parties involved in the regulation and production of the variety. **Gary White moved, Brian Duyck seconded to forward the change to the Grower Handbook related to ACRs to Seed Standards Committee. Motion carried.**

Experimental Variety Program

The second proposed change to the Grower Handbook is related to Experimental Varieties. Several states have been certifying varieties that have not met all of the variety eligibility standards for certification, so that once the variety is eligible, seed is also available. AOSCA accepted the Experimental Variety Program last summer, which puts into writing a method whereby seed is handled just like certified seed, and thus is eligible for certification once the variety is accepted. The main impetus is to allow for seed to move across state lines smoothly. **Brian Duyck moved, Vickie Hetzel second, to recommend this change to the Seed Standards Committee. Motion carried.**

Donn Randall from the Wyoming Business Council

Donn Randall and Linda Cruikshank will be conducting a Risk Management Program. The multisession program will begin at WESTI Ag Days for the first session, and then be held at NWC for the following sessions. Donn and Linda received a grant to conduct the program, with support from the WCIA and others. There will be four sessions that are progressive. People who attend the training get a copy of “Applied Risk Management in Agriculture” and a notebook with all the Power Point presentations for \$125, which also includes lunch. The course starts with a survey and premarketing test, and at the end of the course, there is a monetary prize for the student with the best portfolio.

Seed testing – Proposal to only accept tests from WY, MT, and CO labs for certification eligibility determination.

This proposal is due to two issues. The first is related to wheat testing. A recent meeting showed that seed labs are not testing wheat in the same manner, mainly in that they do not handle red and white wheat mixtures the same way. In the case of a hard red wheat sample, many labs would not pull white wheat kernels out of the sample or call them other crop or variety. The reason is that white wheat in red wheat is not a problem for the end user, so it is essentially ignored. The problem is that for seed certification purposes, those white wheat kernels represent another variety, and may mean the seed lot should not be eligible for certification. Aside from simply pulling white wheat out of a red wheat sample, some labs use potassium hydroxide to better visualize red or white

kernels in a sample. Some labs don't use it at all, some only use it on questionable seeds, and others use it on a given number of seeds for every purity test. Visually inspecting for red/white wheat mixtures is a challenge, and the potassium hydroxide test is also subjective. To that end, Gil stated that our lab has not done the potassium hydroxide test, and that he would recommend samples with questions be sent to a lab that has more experience. The second situation that brought this subject up was uniformity/consistency in testing study conducted by the AOSA. Five species were sent as blind referee samples to 10 labs. There was up to a 40% difference between labs for germination and TZ results, in uniformity between labs, but even the labs with less differences were different enough to result in regulatory action. Mike indicated that we have a pretty good relationship with the Montana lab, and while we have not been close to the Colorado lab lately, it is good to keep it as an option for growers in that end of Wyoming. A provision allowing another lab would be necessary in the instance of a trait test being necessary and one of the three labs could not do it. There was a fair amount of discussion to clarify that this was just related to eligibility determination for seed lots tagged in Wyoming, not seed tagged by other states and used for seed stock. Mike Forman asked about including ID as there is a lot of seed moving there. Mike Moore indicated that Greg Lowery really dislikes the Idaho lab and that is the main reason Mike left it out of the list. There were strong opinions from the floor that we should not limit the labs we accept tests from. It was noted that seed samples can be picked prior to sending a sample, or other ways to get around testing. Gil explained that it is really important that uniformity be demanded by the seed industry, including seed certification. At the end of discussions, the consensus was to not go forward with the proposal as it is very limiting.

Nightshade in Dry Beans

Being a perennial favorite, this topic is a staple of almost every meeting agenda. This year, the topic was the Foundation class field standard of one nightshade plant per acre, versus the two plants per acre allowed in the Registered and Certified classes. While it is normal to have a more stringent standard for Foundation class in respect to contaminants, this one is very difficult. Mike Moore pointed out that it is extremely rare for a seed sample to contain nightshade in Certified class seed, and given that seed conditioners are so capable, the more restrictive Foundation class standard seems excessive. It is also very likely that a Foundation class will fail, as one plant per acre is approaching perfection regarding control or removal. **After a brief discussion, Kelly Spiering moved, Brian Duyck second, to change the Foundation class nightshade field tolerance to two plants per acre. Motion carried.**

Small Grain Isolation Standard – Change to 10 Feet Between Varieties to Meet AOSCA Minimum Requirements.

Mike Moore stated that he evidently missed the memo that this standard had changed at AOSCA, which was pointed out when the program had an on-site evaluation this spring. This change must be made to align us with AOSCA standards. **Brian Duyck moved, Tom Bales second, to accept the Small Grain Isolation Standard proposal.**

Tom Bales spoke to a seed lot that he had problems with, specifically a barley contamination of an oat lot. While no standards change was proposed at the end of the discussion, it was noted that a larger sample could be assessed for an issue such as this to get a better picture of the level of contamination, or even a test that met standards.

Sainfoin Other Crop Standard

A recommendation to change the Other Crop standard for Certified class sainfoin from 0.10% to 0.20% resulted from a grower not cleaning grain handling equipment between a barley crop and their sainfoin crop. While that is not a good reason to change standards, a review of the situation did indicate that given the working weight of a sainfoin purity sample and the size of likely contaminants, the standard was restrictive. At the current standard, one barley in a working weight would pass, but a second would not. Combined with the fact that forage growers would not be offended by barley or wheat in their crop, the group recommended approval of the change. **Brian Duyck moved, Ken Borchert second, to accept the proposal change. Motion carried.**

Alfalfa Total Other Crop Standard

Mike Moore explained that the change was necessary in light of the fact that our Other Variety seed standard was 2%, and Total Other Crop had to be at least that much. **Vickie Hetzel moved, Brian Duyck second, to accept the proposed standard of 2% Total Other Crop in the Certified class of alfalfa seed. Motion carried.**

New Seed Certification Software

Mike indicated that we are looking into a new seed program. Pure Harvest, which is used by our seed lab, is the program that we are looking considering. Some benefits would be that field inspection reports could be accessed by growers and contractors on the web. Debbie will travel to Washington next week to test drive the program at the Washington Department of Agriculture. If her report is positive, we will make the switch. As with any software change, there will be some pain and challenges, but it is time. On a side note, there was also a discussion about using different colors of flagging tape and flags in deference to people who are red/green color blind. Those so afflicted cannot see orange or pink against the green crop. In the end, it was noted that inspectors will attempt to contact the grower if there are issues in the field, so the flags are not the sole method of communication.

Seed Lab Progress Report

Gil reported the lab staff is relatively unchanged, with Erin Johnson being added as a call-in being the only change. Invoices for last year were at an all-time high, and this year is on track to be equal to it. There are no plans to raise seed testing fees or prices this year.

Gil also noted that downy brome was no longer on the all-state noxious weed list, so growers should ask the lab to look for it in the noxious portion if their customers are sensitive or looking for downy brome-free seed.

Foundation Seed

The foundation seed building is now up and running. Mike is very pleased with how the mill is running, and the first test of clean Foundation Monida oats was excellent. He expressed his appreciation for all the work done by Brad, Keith, Mike Killen and Bret to get us to this point.

WCIA Lobbyist Report, Including the Donations to Date and Account Balance

A handout provided details on the donations to date. We are currently paying Keith Kennedy \$600/month, and donations are not sufficient to cover this year's cost. The group then discussed the NPDS permit being required for use of pesticides along waters of the US. It has been postponed for three years, but as things stand, a permit is now going to be required for next year. There is a potential reprieve in one of the houses – it would leave regulation of pesticides with FIFRA rather than the EPA and Corps of Engineers.

Concern was expressed that a proposed bill to allow irrigation districts to get into wind power which will cause a conflict between the irrigation district and farmers. Given that farmers and irrigation districts contribute to the Lobbyist Fund, it will be an issue that needs to be handled carefully. It was suggested that Keith should contact irrigation districts and farmers across the state to see what they want.

Keith noted that the Bureau of Reclamation was recommending that parcels of 10 acres or less pay the municipal/industrial water rate. He will keep an eye on this for Jolene.

Funding Research on UW R&E Centers

Kelly Spiering was one of four producers from the Big Horn Basin that recently visited campus. One of the things they talked about was funding research projects on R&E Centers, and specifically, projects that are directly applicable to today's and tomorrow's production issues. One possible solution would be to get legislative funds appropriated to a Board that would then accept research proposals. This is still in the early stages of development, and concepts such as grants requiring matching funds will develop over time. Kelly would like to get Keith to start talking to other groups, such as the Woolgrowers and Livestock Growers groups in the state to get wide-spread support. Kelly would like the legislation in two years to set up the group and the funding. Mike suggested getting it into an interim study, if possible.

UW Soil Testing Laboratory – No Longer Accepting Samples from the public

Due to antiquated equipment and the pending retirement of Kelly Belden, the decision was made not to service public soil samples. The lab will still test samples that come via area Extension educators or research projects. Bret Hess worked with the Colorado State Soil, Water, and Plant Testing Laboratory for them to accept Wyoming samples and communicate test results with area educators. Forms for submitting samples were handed out.

Annual Meeting – February 2nd and 3rd, 2012

- a. Speakers
 - i. Pete Stahl, Director of the UW Reclamation Center
 - ii. Dean Galey
 - iii. Lee Sommers, CSU AES Director

Elections

The term is up for the position held by Mike Forman, and Rick Dunne has resigned from his position due to health issues, leaving one year on his term. **Brian Duyck moved, Ken Borchert second, to nominate Mike Forman. Vickie Hetzel**

moved, Kelly Spiering second, to nominate Brian Duyck as the NW District representative. Kelly Spiering moved, Vickie Hetzel second, to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Mike Forman and Brian Duyck, with the latter being a one year term. Motion carried.

Other?

Meeting adjourned at 12:04 pm.