

Potato Certification Advisory Committee Meeting

January 21, 2020, Kennewick, Washington

MINUTES

Voting members present: Mark Campbell, Brian Charlton, Kenneth Frost, Mike Kirsch, Rob Lane, Mike Macy, Sagar Vidyasagar.

Non-voting members present: Andrew Altishin, Jeff McMorran (secretary).

Members absent: Lon E. Baley, Tom Chastain (Represented by Andy Altishin); Dan Curry, (represented by Andrew A.), Scott Fenters, Reagan Grabner (represented by Mick Peck), Greg Harris, James Macy (represented by Richard Macy); George Rajnus, Elizabeth Savory.

Guests present: Tami Brown, Dale Brown, Terry Burr, Rob Campbell, Larry Davidson, James Farris, Oscar Gutbrod, Travis Miller, Lydia Raath (will replace Reagan Grabner as voting member), Tadd Thomas, Tim Topliff.

I. Welcome and Introductions: Chair Mike Macy opened the meeting at 10:00 AM. Introductions were made. All present were asked to sign the signup sheet and verify accuracy of contact information. The meeting was recorded.

II. 2019 Minutes: The minutes for the 2019 meeting were included in the packets and had been emailed to members in advance. No changes were recommended. A **motion**, duly made and seconded to approve the 2019 minutes without changes or additions, unanimously **passed**.

III. Program Updates:

A. Oregon Department of Agriculture (no report)

B. OSU - Crop & Soil Science, OSU Seed Services, and Seed Certification Updates. These reports were all given by Andrew Altishin and basically followed the summaries present in the meeting packet. Jeff also referred the group to the charts in the meeting packet showing the fee increases.

C. Winter Grow-Out Report. Terry Burr, with the aid of a graph that was handed out, summarized the WGO mosaic levels relative to previous years. He also related that 3 of the 4 greenhouses had now been converted to cement/gravel floors with permanent tables. The change in the protocol of cutting samples after 2 weeks in the warming room, and planting in trays, may mean OSCS is able to reduce GH use to only 3 in the future (only 2 were actually used this year) reducing rental costs. Terry explained some of the difficulties with getting and keeping the student labor due to the fluctuating work loads. Over all the system worked very well this year with nearly 100% emergence of all lots and a 6 to 8 week time from sample delivery to getting the final results.

Jeff also mentioned that, for the 2nd year, the OSU Seed Lab was conducting all of the PVY testing. The turn-around time for results this year was generally only a few days and 100% of the follow-up strain tests done at North Dakota State University confirmed that no false positives were being reported by the OSU lab (i.e., no ‘no strain detected’ readings noted). The lab was set up this year to do the follow-up strain testing but was unable to get the + controls. They plan on conducting the strain testing next year.

D. Review of National Potato Certification Meetings. Jeff McMorran reviewed some of the items that were discussed at the national potato certification meetings held in Ottawa Canada this last December. For more specific information on what was discussed, see the summary placed in the meeting packet, or request minutes from those meetings (when available).

IV. OSCS ISSUES & UPDATES FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

Item 1: Generation system (N, G1, G2, G3... to FY1, FY2, FY3 system). Jeff discussed the information regarding the history of the class terminology used by OSCS and other states as reviewed in the meeting packet. He reminded the group that they had previously voted to switch Oregon's class terminology to one where the first year in the field was called G1 (rather than Nuclear) as soon as Idaho did the same. He pointed out that Idaho has made a change but have decided to use the Field Year terminology that is gaining national acceptance rather than a "Generation system". He referred to several charts in the meeting packet to help describe the 'Idaho system' where greenhouse produced minitubers/plantlets are classed as "Nuclear", first year in the field = FY1, second year = FY2, etc. This is ONLY a terminology change. Each FY# still has a specific set of tolerances. Jeff pointed out that the national trend is moving towards this type of system (rather than a "Generation# system) with at least 5 states using the terminology, and other considering it.

Jeff went on to discuss more complex systems where the FY terminology is used but there are separate terms/tolerances for class, such as "Foundation", "Registered", "Certified" class where a seed lot can be downgraded from Foundation to Registered (for example) if tolerances are not met, but the FY terminology would not change (see meeting packet for more information on this type of system). Oscar pointed out that this was more of European system, but the European systems he was familiar with were very complex and hard to understand. Rob Campbell pointed out that both FY and Generation 'systems' were flush through systems, which was the basics for improving the seed lots. A question was raised whether any states allowed a lot to obtain a class independent of FY, for example if a FY5 lot was found to be "free" of scorable disease and off-type then it could be called Foundation class regardless of the field year. Jeff replied 'no' because seed certification does not score for all diseases that can affect field or market performance (like scab or Rhizoc) but these can also build up in the lot over the years. He also noted that certification only examines a relatively small part of an entire seed lot so sticking to a rule that says "Foundation" class is limited to FY1 & 2, 'Registered" to FY 3 & 4 (for example) helps assure other, perhaps not observed, factors are also kept low.

Jeff recommended that, for this year the group simply change the terminology used for each generation as shown in the table on page 3 of the meeting packet ("Table 2 – Seed Categories") and delay other changes until next year when this issue can be studied further.

A motion to this effect was made and seconded, and unanimously PASSED.

Item 2: Removing Class Downgrades in the Winter Grow-Out. Jeff reviewed the information presented in the meeting packet on this issue. Rob Campbell, who requested the item, pointed out that the current system, where lots can be downgraded in the WGO, puts Oregon at a marketing disadvantage when competing with states like Idaho who use the WGO results simply as a way to determine if a lot is eligible for re-certification. In Idaho, for example, one tolerance of 2% used for all classes of seed to determine eligibility for re-certification, and there is no downgrading of a seed lot's class based on virus content. The question arose as to how other states than Idaho used the WGO results, do other states downgrade? Jeff replied that in looking over the Standards for many states that most only seem to use the results the way Idaho does, for setting eligibility for recertification purposes, however some states, like North Dakota have more restrictive tolerances (0.5%) and many have 'caps' on how much virus is allowed to consider a lot certified (generally 5%, sometimes less). Jeff pointed out that Oregon does not have a cap but downgrades the lot to G5 class that is a buyer-seller agreement. This system was put in place when the seed law came into existence that made it illegal to plant uncertified potatoes in a commercial field. Oscar pointed out that Idaho changes its 'cap' each year depending on market demands (i.e. higher in a year of high virus and low seed supply).

Rob Campbell noted that the growers had a lengthy discussion on this topic at the previous growers meeting and the general consensus was that our system put Oregon growers at a marketing disadvantage for no good reason. He pointed out that most Oregon seed lots are transported to the Columbia Basin where the main competitors were Idaho and Washington, and Washington does not even require a WGO in all cases. Jeff did note that a system like Idaho's tends to make a state look poorly when a G1 lot with 1.8% mosaic is tagged at the G1 level, but of course the % mosaic is listed on the Final Reports and North American Seed Potato Health Certificate (NAHC) for the buyer to read. Tim T. felt that it was 'a slippery slope' to follow Idaho's example in regards maintaining a top-quality certification program.

There was some additional discussion on what a 'cap' would be if Oregon had one10%, 5%, higher? Having a published cap too high could make Oregon look bad if buyers felt that we had a high cap because we needed it, however having a cap too low may result in an unacceptably high number of totally rejected lots. After some additional discussion, it was generally agreed upon that Oregon should adopt the system used in Idaho of not downgrading in the WGO, but to not have a maximum tagging cap (i.e., the amount of mosaic that limits any certification of a seed lot). A motion was made to this effect, but Jeff said he needed clarification as to its scope did the 'no downgrading' policy only refer to % mosaic in the lot or to all the factors shown on "Table 7 (revised)" of the meeting packet (page 6) including leafroll, mosaic, other virus, variety mix (but not chemical injury). The original motion was amended to state that it applied to the all but "chemical injury" as shown in Table 7 (revised) on the line "For Recertification" but not the "For Certification" line.

The **motion**, duly made and seconded, **passed with no objections**.

Item 3: Tolerance for Chemical injury observed in the Winter Grow-Out. Jeff discussed the history behind the manner chemical injury is handled when observed in the field and the WGO as presented in the meeting packet. He noted that now that the WGO lots were planted in soilless media rather than greenhouse soil the notation at the bottom of Table 7 of the Standards is no longer relevant. Thus, he felt it should be removed to allow for reporting of chemical injury that is observed in the WGO that is not linked to symptoms observed in the field the previous season. There was some discussion of how “chemical” is identified, how severe symptoms must be to be ‘called’ and whether the plant growing out of the symptoms in a few weeks or not had any bearing on this. It was pointed out that what is observed in the GH may or may not affect the performance of the plants grown in the field the following season.

The growers present did not want a maximum tolerance placed on “chemical injury” observed in the WGO, but did feel that OSCS observations should be noted. Jeff noted that we can simply put a notation of the % of plants observed with chemical injury in the remarks section of the NAHC and Final Report and note if the plants grew out of the symptoms with a few weeks of growth.

A **motion** that (1) the notation related to chemical injury observed in the WGO found on the bottom of Table 7 of the Standards be removed, and (2) OSCS simply note the percent of chemical injury observed in the remarks sections of the Final Reports and NAHC, was made and seconded, and unanimously PASSED.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Jeff noted that there was not enough time for a discussion of the “*Additional Items to Present for Consideration in 2021*” as detailed on page 10 and 11 of the meeting packet. Specifically, (A) Change in PVY testing & tolerances model for WGO; and (B) Change Manner Varieties ‘latent’ to PVY are treated in the Standards. He advised the group to read over these inclusions and that they would be present at the next PCAC in 2021 if there was enough interest.

VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Following the system proposed by Rob Lane, and approved at the 2019 PCAC meeting, where the vice chair was automatically chosen from the next farm in alphabetical order on the Grower list, Mike Kirsch of Madras Farms* was ‘elected’ as vice chair for the 2020-2021 year.

* technically Macy Farms would follow Lane farm but because Macy Farms was chairing this year they were passed to Madras Farms.

ADJOURN - Meeting adjourned at 11:59 AM

Submitted 2-1-2020 by Jeff McMorran

These minutes will also available at: <http://seedcert.oregonstate.edu/potatoes>