

Wyoming Crop Improvement Association Northwest District Meeting

**December 1, 2022
Powell R&E Center
747 Road 9, Powell, WY
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

In attendance: Mike Forman, Mike Moore, Kyle Webber, Keith Kennedy, Brent Horton, Dustin Reuter, Cheri North, Dave Johnson, Brian Duyck, Crystal May, Pam Bridgeman, Kelly Spiering, Lee Craig, Jeremiah Vardiman, Samuel George, Jim Heitholt, Josh Shorb, Jake Jarrett, Brian Mealor, Keith Schaefer, Brad May, Camby Reynolds, Dale Heggem, Morgan Grover, Corey Forman, Cortney Allen, Josh Christofferson, Bill Goolsbey, Melanie Bennett, Jonathan Smith, Cort Jones, Cody Hurford, Chloe Winkler, Tod Stutzman, John Stutzman, Brett Stutzman's other son

Chairman Mike Forman welcomed the attendees at 8:10 a.m., and those present introduced themselves.

Approval of 2021 Minutes

Morgan Grover moved, Brian Duyck second, to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

2022 Inspection Report

Mike Moore provided a report on the 2022 inspection season. While most crops were essentially static, small increases in several resulted in a total acreage increase of 1,400 acres. Ken Namuth inspected fields in SE Wyoming, while Mike, Kyle and five rookie inspectors did the inspections in northern Wyoming. Since all the inspectors were new, Mike and/or Kyle were essentially in every field. There weren't any growing season issues, which was definitely a gift, as the search for an administrative assistant started in June. Mike thanked Samantha Fulton and Kyle Webber for their help with the search, as well as Trish Hysong, who was the campus-based DHR. The search was pushed as fast as possible, and those three people were instrumental in moving it forward quickly.

Proposal to state AOSCA standards will be used if the WSCS doesn't have published standards

Mike explained that we already utilize AOSCA standards when a certification request is made for a crop that we don't have published standards for. This would just put it in our standards. A handout showed the wording that would be used, as well as a recommended location in the handbook. **Brian Duyck moved, Morgan Grover second, to adopt the proposed wording and location. Motion carried.**

Electronic tag images

Mike shared that it is relatively common to have someone state that another state does things easier or differently than we do, and in the case of what is required as seed stock documentation with applications for certification, it turns out they were right. In reaching out to our colleagues in our neighboring states, every state indicated they accept a photocopy, a scanned copy or electronic submission in lieu of a physical tag. Not only that, but none expressed concern or shared any problems with doing that. Mike noted that he may be old school in his thoughts, but it seems like that would provide a lot of opportunities for abuse that physical tags do not. He noted that the same scanned tag could be provided to different states and no one would be the wiser. Serialized tags were discussed as an option, but Mike noted that those tags are significantly more expensive. Mike added that applications must have all the required information, including tags before we put them in our system, and tags are one of the main reasons applications are late. While applicants have claimed at times that our requirement of a physical tag is the reason the application is late, it was noted that putting a tag in an envelope isn't that hard. **Kelly Spiering moved, Dave Johnson second, to continue to require a physical tag or bulk sales certificate as seed stock documentation. Motion passed.**

Weeds missing from the prohibited noxious weed seed list

Dale Heggem shared that he had reached out to Mike Moore before the meeting in regards to four weeds that were not on the official Wyoming prohibited noxious weed list, adding that Mike Moore had provided documents showing they were approved for the list in 2015. There was some discussion with seed lab staff who said the weeds were on the list, but it was eventually noted that the list the seed lab had was from the federal seed regulatory and testing division and Dale was referring to what was on the Wyoming Secretary of State website. Dale said that the way to get them back on the list was for someone to request that the Seed Lab Advisory Group put them on the list. That request could be by an individual or an entity. The Seed Lab Advisory Group could then forward the issue on to the Board of Agriculture, who will meet in January. If the Board of Ag approves putting them on the list, there would be a 180 day public comment period, so it will be at least 6 months before they would be back on the list. **Morgan Grover moved, Kelly Spiering second, for the NW District to support the topic for SLAG consideration. Motion carried.**

Palmer amaranth

Mike Forman shared that the Weed and Pest Council had, by resolution, voted to request the Board of Ag put Palmer amaranth on the Weed and Pest prohibited noxious weed list in action this past November. The WCIA would like to again request that Palmer be placed on the noxious weed seed list, and there was discussion as to how to best do that, including adding it to the request for listing the four orphan weeds from the previous topic, or making it a separate request. Timing was noted as an issue, as having Palmer or the missing weeds on the list prior to next spring's seed sales would be best, but Dale reminded the group of the 180 comment period after Board of Ag action, so that won't be possible. **Brian Duyck moved, Dave Johnson second, to put Palmer amaranth on the Wyoming Noxious Weed List. Motion carried.** A procedural question was raised as to how the WCIA could move forward. Mike Moore stated that there are procedures for a mail-in vote of the membership. **Dave Johnson moved, Brian Duyck second, to direct the WCIA Board of Directors to do an email ballot for Palmer amaranth listing and for the four missing species, with the mailing to be done as two separate issues. Motion carried.** (Secretary note: Dave Johnson shared that he had made a personal request to Pam

Bridgeman regarding the four species and Palmer the day following this meeting. He was told that Pam had talked to SLAG chair Mike Riley, and that Mike had said he did not want to work on both issues at the same meeting, and wanted to address the Palmer request at a later date. With that in mind, and due to timing, there is no need to poll the WCIA membership on either topic, as the four missing species are already on the agenda, and the Palmer topic can come from normally scheduled WCIA meeting actions.)

Draft of new bulk sales certificate

The bulk sales certificate that has been used for more than 25 years came into question two years ago when seed produced in another state was sold using the certificate as documentation. The current certificate states that the seed was produced in Wyoming as pre-printed boilerplate language, and there isn't a proper way to change it. The proposed form addresses that, and keeps all the other functionality. These certificates are seldom used in this district, but are the main way seed is sold in the SE. With that in mind, no action from this group was requested, and none was taken.

Grass Seed Research

Brian Mealor presented the latest findings on the weedy grass control research project. Brian, Donna Harris, Beth Fowers, and Jeremiah Vardiman sprayed several herbicides on fields of several grass species on the farms of Kelly Spiering, Dave Johnson, and Brian Duyck. Dr. Mealor started by showing pictures and graphs of the greenhouse portion of the study, which was key to understanding which herbicides were effective on cheatgrass, Japanese brome, ventenata, and medusahead. The field study portion of the research did not assess weedy grass control because the growers had done such a good job. The field study showed that some grasses really do not do well with some of the products, experiencing significant injury. One product resulted in zero seed production from one species. The good news was that two herbicides that showed minimal crop injury were effective on cheatgrass and Japanese brome. At this point, the intent is to work on a publication on this research. It may be an extension bulletin, but there is the option of a peer reviewed publication.

Jim Heitholt – grass seed research

Jim Heitholt has been in communication with Gary White, Scott Schell, and Mike Moore regarding potential grass seed research projects. His idea is to write one or more grants that would provide funding for a staff position at the PREC. The focus of that research will likely be insect related, and he was looking for encouragement from this group, as well as guidance on what he should work on. The two grant opportunity options he was considering would be a Western SARE and/or a NEFFA grant. The timeline would be to meet with producers in January to discuss options, develop a grant proposal, and if successful, have funding to start the project in 2024. He will need letters of support from growers, as those grants require evidence of grower involvement.

Bridger Plant Materials Center request for financial support

Mike shared a request from the BPMC to fund an AmeriCorp volunteer for several months in 2023. The total cost would be \$3,300, with the funds coming out of the Grass Seed Research Account, which has over \$60,000 in it at this time. **Brian Duyck moved, Dave Johnson second, to fund the PMC request. Motion carried.**

GX of GX designation for pre-variety germplasm

Mike shared the story of a germplasm release that had no limitation of generations. Most germplasms have a limitation of 5 or 7 years, but Mike is aware of two releases that have no limitation, with the tags being printed with the GX designation. The problem is that it was discouraging tagging, as any seed that was tagged could be used by competitors to produce seed, in contrast to seed that is eligible for an earlier generation, but is down classed to the terminal generation. Mike Moore took this issue to the national level, and with changes adopted last summer, it is now possible to tag those releases as GX/GX, with no further certified production possible on seed tagged that way.

Contracted native grass seed

Changes to the BLM bid process specifically related to seed lots that are bid as weed free or weedy brome free have resulted in numerous last-minute requests for field inspection reports by seed companies that Wyoming producers grow seed for. It would be a lot easier, and less stressful, if the growers would identify the contractor on their applications, resulting in the contractors receiving inspection reports at the same time the growers do. One contractor Mike spoke to has already agreed to that, and Mike is hoping the growers will include contractor information in future applications as well as when renewals go out next spring. Mike did note that the seed directory has listed acres of native seed in the past, but that it was probably inappropriate to continue to do that if those acres are attributed to a contractor. The consensus was that it would be best to stop listing acres in that document.

Timothy variety development opportunity

Mike Moore shared that Timothy seed, and specifically “orange tag” seed, has been going to Washington State, with that seed being used to plant fields that produce premium hay destined for export markets. Indications are that there is room for more Timothy seed in that market, as well as in general. Dave Johnson has been exploring the options, and while variety development was initially considered, the expense is likely prohibitive. The easiest, and maybe best, way to move forward is with public varieties, but there would also be the opportunity to license a company-held variety.

PMC release maintenance

The WSCS continues to work with the Bridger PMC to produce Foundation seed of varietal releases and early generation materials of pre-variety germplasms. A recent Zoom meeting with the national coordinator of the PMC system, John Englert, and PMC staff from several locations went really well. It is likely that we will pick up one or two releases from the Bismark PMC this year, but so far no traction on releases from the Aberdeen PMC. There is hope that availability of those releases will improve, as they are establishing fields with a new grower this year, but that will mean it will be at least another year before seed starts to be available. The Zoom meeting made a good working relationship even better, and will result in more regular communication between this program and cooperating PMC staff.

2022 Cooperative Dry Bean Nursery

Mike Moore shared that the 2022 Cooperative Dry Bean Nursery was lost this year due to poor stands. The field was not able to be pre-irrigated, and a heavy Memorial Day rain on top of

irrigation resulted in very poor emergence, with some plots having only a 10% stand. Mike did not feel that even maturity data would be valid with that poor of a stand, so the trial was abandoned.

Wyoming Bean Commission Report

Dale Heggem reported that the bean commission has been working for a couple of years with RMA to establish an insurance program for seed beans due to their higher input costs and higher value. The hope was to use the contract price as the basis for the program, which was supported by RMA staff in Billings. Unfortunately, RMA in Kansas City had a different idea, which included making seed beans a different crop kind. The short term impact of that would be to require anyone using that insurance to use the county yield average until they had several years of seed bean yield information. That would make it unlikely that anyone would use that insurance option. Dale and the bean commission will continue to work on it. Dale then shared that there are three bean commissioner terms that are open, with one a handler position and two grower positions. Opportunities to nominate members will happen soon, and an election will follow via mail ballot for people who have paid the assessment. Someone asked about the best way to find bean commission funded research reports. While they can be found in Ag Experiment Station Field Day Bulletins, the UW website, and the WDA website, those can be hard to find in some instances, and hard to search for specific topics. Mike Moore said that the links could be on the WSCS website. Having the information in as many places as possible would increase the chance of people finding it.

WSCS website

Kyle is working on a redesign of the WSCS website, as the software that was used on the current website is not viable any more, and as such the website has lost some functionality. The new and improved website will adhere to the current idea of having a fairly simple, and easy to download site so that phones and those with less than stellar internet service could make use of it.

Land use planning

Kelly Spiering has been working on the land use planning committee for several years. A report should come out December 19th, and people will have a year to respond to it. There will also be open house meetings in January, but Kelly said that personal conversations or emails to committee members would be more effective. Kelly then shared that he has been working with the Jackson Hole Land Trust to provide opportunities for conservation easements. Setting the price of the easements is challenging for some, and should recognize the development value. It is suggested that any easements done through that trust donate 25% of the income from the easement back to the Trust so they can monitor and defend the easement.

Fertilizer carts are evil

Mike Moore said there was yet another instance where fertilizer carts from local providers were the source of contamination for fields we inspected. One person in the meeting said that they check the carts before using them, but then had issues when the tender servicing them had contaminated product. One grower said he was getting dry fertilizer by the semi load to avoid that issue, while others are relying on liquid products. (Note from the SE District meeting the week after this meeting: A grower reported that he received a semi load of fertilizer that was contaminated with wheat, and was glad he checked before unloading it.)

Elections

Kelly Spiering nominated Dave Johnson and Morgan Grover to serve on the WCIA Board of Directors. Brian Duyck moved, Cortney Allen second, to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot. Motion carried.

UW Reports

Jim Heitholt reported that Wendy Files is the new PREC administrative assistant and encouraged people to meet her when they had a chance.

WDA Report

Dale noted that Slade Franklin is now the WDA Technical Services manager, and added that any support people were able to give toward filling the open Fremont County position would be appreciated, as covering that was stretching current staff.

WCIA Lobbyist

Keith Kennedy reported (in person) there were a couple of bills of interest at this time. One was addressing subdivisions that have irrigation rights, and would require the subdivider to pay the irrigation district back for certain expenses. Another bill dealing with irrigation infrastructure easements that were increased to 100 feet in both directions from the center of the irrigation structure was proposed, which could make smaller parcels impossible to place a house, well, and septic system on the property. There are efforts to update slow moving vehicle regulations, and the State Trust Lands and Leasing has asked for a subpoena of the WY AG for rule clarification on lease renewal. On the national front, the EPA has been pretty quiet, with recent action of note being registration review of rodenticides. He did caution the group, saying that the EPA often is much more active the last year of a federal administration. Keith will not be joining us in person in February, but plans to join remotely.

President Mike Forman adjourned the meeting at 12:22 p.m.