

NCPN Annual Meeting Notes

NCPN April 14, 2020

Day 1

Welcome- Kevin welcomed everyone to the meeting. A roll call was taken to confirm attendees. Some housekeeping rules were reviewed, and the format of the web-ex meeting was reviewed. Sarah and Kevin are available for support during the meeting if needed.

Action plan review- Nate reviewed the topics of discussion for the action plan. See the attached document. He stated that a lot of time and effort went into preparing the agenda for the meeting. The last year was reviewed. 2019 action items were completed as assigned. Nate asked for any further items for the meeting expectations. There were no new additions to the agenda. All 9 items on the 2019 action items were completed.

COVID 19 Impact- Jon Umble reviewed the impact of COVID 19. Industry customer orders are changing. The industry is adjusting as they go to stay in compliance with COVID 19 rules. They are looking ahead to spring to see how to function moving forward. Liz reported that some international shipments were a challenge. Most domestic orders are solid. Orders for the Baha are a bit questionable but moving forward at present. Bob Martin stated that Spain is beginning to open up their industry slowly. Jon also stated Spain is moving at a very slow speed. Wendy reported that their industry is the same at Jon and Liz. They are working on the new methods of practice. Nate reported that the State Dept of Ag may have to slow the progression however they are hopeful thing will open up in May.

Kim Lewers asked about the status of H2A workers. Ontario has a 2-week quarantine period and others are having difficulty even getting workers in to work. About 90% of workers arriving now. The most common issue is the lack of workers. Everyone is adapting to the new guidelines and PPE required.

Bob asked how this is impacting fruit coming in across the border. Yongjian Chang and Liz Ponce reported that to date thing seem to be moving well with plants and fruit.

Centre reports- See attached reports. Bob, Christie and Ioannis reported on the centre activities. Bob reported that due to COVID restrictions there is a lot less research being performed in the labs. There is a limited amount of personnel allowed in the lab at a time, so this impacts how much work is being performed. They have extended their hours into evenings and weekends, so the impact is diminished, and they expect to still be able to complete the scheduled testing by spring. David asked if supplies were impacted. Bob reported that they order in the fall for the year and at this point there is no issue getting necessary materials for testing.

Christie reported that they were asked to work remotely where possible due to COVID 19. There is a TC person in the lab 6 hours per day to maintain operations. Some of the orders are delayed. See attached report for 2020 and 2021

Ioannis reported on the Arkansas update. They are working 7 days a week to try to keep up with the demand. If they open by May 1, they will be able to deliver the NCPN funded test results by September. See attached report for 2020 and 2021. Depending on the outcome of the funding request, will determine the future of work with the NCPN and Arkansas. The diagnostic centre will be run from the

present lab. There have been updates to the present structure to facilitate testing in the future for NCPN. Ioannis will be submitting his final proposal for funding after this meeting.

David asked if the scarcity of materials in the future will impact the testing performed. Ioannis does not see any issues with that in the future. The consumables do not seem to be a factor. It is more an issue of having the appropriate number of staff in the lab. Christie also felt that the main issue is the number of bodies working at one time. Maher stated that he could help Christie if the need be as well. Bob felt they were fine at the present time. However, depending on the duration of the COVID 19 pandemic this may change.

Certification program update- Dipak gave a presentation. The update is available for review if required and it will be shared with the group. Kevin will share with the group. Should have a certification for blueberries by 2023.

Foundation Plant Services Update- Presentation was shared.

Maher gave an update on High Throughput Sequencing (HTS) at Foundation Plant Services.

Eric stated NCPN would fund a representative to travel to New Zealand to see how the 2 countries can work together to come to an agreement on the validity of HTS between the countries.

The hope is that this HTS technology would be in use internationally as an APHIS approved technique soon.

UC Davis released 4 new varieties last year. 2018 they received a new introduction. The foundation changes this year will be increased by 10-15%. Diagnostic will increase by 5%. Therapy will be increased by 5-10%. Introduction will increase 5%.

Sharing of workload between centres- JF and Chuck joined the meeting to give an update on the infrastructure. They are trying to expand the work at Arkansas to include the therapeutic portion of Ioannis work. There needed to be renovation to be able to proceed. Approximately \$750,000 has been budgeted on the facility with upgrades to lighting, heating etc. Renos anticipated to be done by end of June. This would make the facility fully functional again. There have been some funding issues for the NCPN portion. Ioannis will resubmit his proposal with an addendum to the previous proposal after this meeting. JF stated that they are committed to making this happen to achieve a fully functioning center in Arkansas. The funding is already committed for the renovation so there is no chance this will be cut or put on hold.

Capacity – Refer to the excel spreadsheet below

Centres

Corvallis- Bob projects the foundation to go up 15%. Diagnostics will remain the same with 0% increase assuming some diagnostics go to Arkansas or elsewhere. Therapy will go up 5%. Introductions will go down approximately 20%.

North Carolina- Foundation will go up 20%. Diagnostics increase 25%. Therapy increase 20%. Introductions will go up 25%

Arkansas- Foundation. Diagnostics will increase 50% if same testing methods are used. Therapy will try to be split between the centres so Arkansas will increase 10% assuming the other centres increase 10% as well. Ioannis states they will be able to produce the first clean plants by 2023. If High throughput sequencing is developed this will drastically change the efficiency and testing time.

Yongjian Chang- Depends on customer needs. 20 % increase projected on diagnosis and importation.

Bob getting a second breeder so there will be more material to be tested. Projects a 25% increase across the board. They limit the number per breeder per crop. Other companies go up about 5% per year.

Christie also limits each breeder to 5 per year per crop. Also projects a 20-25% increase across the board as well.

		Projection change for 2020-2023 (with respect to 2017-2019)							
		Foundatio n	Diagnostic s	Therapy	Introduc ions				
Capacity	Arkansas		50%	10% (sharing)		First clean plants 2023. 20 new viruses- increase in diagnostics			
	Corvallis	15%	0%	5%	-20%				
	North Carolina	20%	25%	20%	25%	Diagnostics should increase based on new viruses discovered.			
	FPS	10-15%	5%	5%	5%				
Need	Agristarts								
	Driscolls	0%	50%	0%	0%	increase on grafting only			
	Fall Creek	5%	-40%	0%	-75%				
	Lassen Canyon	0%	0%	0%	0%				
	North American Plant	0%	20%	0%	20%	Foundation numbers depend on new cultivars			
	Nourse Farms								
	Others / industry trend	5-15%	5-15%	5-15%	5-15%				
	PNW Breeders	25%	25%	25%	25%	a new breeder in PNW			

Gaps and Challenges- Bob pointed out that between 2020 and 2023 when Arkansas will have clean plants there could be a gap in service. There should be a huge increase in the work in diagnostics at Arkansas until HTS is used by everyone. Maher offered to help with testing for Strawberries as well. Ioannis has the ability to test 120 samples by HTS per year. IF they upgrade the facility, they can increase due to decreased time of analysis to double in 2 years time.

Day 2 – April 15, 2020

NCPN update- Eric gave a presentation for NCPN which was shared.

Board Membership and Executive Committee- New board members include Kim Lewers and Tim Miles. Nate asked that if anyone wanted to move off the board that you nominate someone to replace you or the board may nominate someone. Nate expressed that he would like to step down and let John Umble replace him. This presents the need for a vice chair. Nate asked that anyone with suggestions or nominations contact him or Kevin. Eric stated that we could have 2 new state regulator members as well to assist with the certification planning in the future. Nate stated that we have good representation across the country presently and it would be an asset to continue with this in the future.

Cindy suggested that it may be a good time to submit a proposal for funding a certification project over the next couple of years. Jon is interested in attending the next working group meeting along with possibly another berry representative. Wendy and Liz are also expressing interest in being a part of the working group.

Great opportunity to engage in multi-state efforts around certification. Looking at Specialty Crop Block Grant or PPA 7721 grant (formally known as farm bill). Application opening in early July. Looking for some good robust requests for funding for safeguarding nurseries and nursery certification initiatives.

Meeting EU timeline of 2023 – Matt Messenger – working with Brussels – looking at US program – if OR is the only state with a blueberry program, that will be primarily what will be presented to the EU – if 2-3 states – he will need to present a unified description of what the 3 states look like – they won't be doing anything state by state – just one presentation of what it looks like in the United States. Regulators – it seems like the next step might be to fit that in in the next two years to make sure we have what we need in place to meet that deadline. In OR – so much work needed internally that no proposal was submitted – but this year or the following year would be a good time to bring forth a proposal again. CA would be a great one for blueberries and a tie in there – good tie in for all west coast states. Matt Messenger will want to take one set of standards to the EU. One of the reasons/points for the National Model Standards – have an upcoming call in May and if someone from Berries would like to sit in on the call to emphasize why it is important to have the standards – would be a good opportunity. Possibly Jon Umble – with someone from a different berry crop? Wendy O'Donovan and Liz Ponce would like to be part of the group/call. Send an email to Dipak or Cindy to get the ball

rolling. Will help to push along the initiative. Great to have the industry voice and help to move it along!

Nate suggested developing a white paper to submit to state legislators to get HTS testing approved and nationally recognized. Ioannis has information published that will provide much of the information for the white paper and is willing to share it for this purpose. Maher suggested developing minimum guidelines for HTS testing so it is used properly by all facilities.

Jon requested a list of key congress people for the berry sector.

Eric will share the organizational chart for the NCPN.

Ioannis shared a paper he published in 2016 in the Growers Newsletter that could be used to present the HTS technology.

Conversation around 2020 Funding Proposal

Liz – What has to happen before HTS is scientifically accepted?

Ioannis – Technically speaking – need to have evidence from labs and what we are seeing. Need publications. Some published – one from Maher’s lab, one from Canada, started a paper for Berries – need proof that it is indeed a better method. Publication needed for regulators to move forward. Dipak and Cindy can probably help with regulatory side with what is needed as evidence.

Cindy - State level – any testing protocol can be accepted. International is the issue – needs to be codified with standards being set. Robust system ensuring consistency across states. Working groups working on this internationally.

Maher – Realistic in timeframe and pace of regulatory change – making good progress and working with APHIS and making progress with NAPPO. Peer reviewed journals – need more than our input. International input – slow but making strides.

Dipak – States willing to apply any technique as good as contemporary technique using. Applying to G2 in US ok but international considerations to make. PRA?? All parties on the same page (state, federal and international)

Cindy – other crop groups working on HTS validation and acceptance. In lieu of field indexing/other longer processes. When validated for one crop – hope to be validated for all.

Erich – Suggest key element missing – leadership decision – science inform leadership decision making – level is currently lacking in active discussions – up to industry to indicate that this question is important to you and you would like leaders to engage in discussions around HTS and know the importance of all of this and moving it forward.

Dipak – state regulatory group meeting in May – (May 8?) Bring this topic up for discussion at the meeting.

Maher – working across crops to collect data. Preparing a paper. Want to make the change – but also want supported data and publications to back decision.

Jon – dynamics of congress – who are the people and who do we talk to? Want us to be ready and ahead to take advantage of tools and systems. Is there something we should do more directly to express thoughts back to Tier I?

Erich – plan will help us understand what the needs are and help explain where NCPN can and can't help. Group needs to define parameters and needs and network can define circumscription.

Jon – other piece – for berries (blueberries) – where is the line? (Gray) Improving tests to include broader range of virus isolates – for me seems to be part of NCPN – bringing more clarity to the grey. Some that look like research in other crops may not look like research to berries due to different relationships and procedures/operations.

Wendy – NCPN work can't be done unless research is done to make it possible (according to charter)

Liz – seems like research goes hand in hand.

Ioannis – to Cindy – differences in proposals? Looks more like research now than it did before?

Cindy – How clear is it that what you are doing ties to core mission? Where priorities are and where dollars go first. How does it tie to service work and creating more G1 material for industry? Make a clear connection in the proposal.

Maher – prunus group – invite regulatory colleagues to the meeting and engaged them in the discussion and gave them the space to share their perspectives and needs – industry, researcher and regulatory (fed and state) – share perspectives and made good progress.

Cindy – cross-cutting collaboration really helps to get things done.

Berries Website- Kevin asked the centres for an updated list of cultivars so we can add them to the website. Also, if there are any current articles to be posted Kevin would be happy to do so. Ioannis asked if the USDA Beltsville could also be added to the website as a resource.

Financial implication of cancelling face to face meeting- Kevin asked for feedback from people regarding reimbursement of fees for the meeting that was supposed to be face to face. If there are any out of pocket expenses they are to be submitted to Kevin for reimbursement.

NCPN Berries Communication Plan- Kevin reviewed the communications plan which has been attached to the meeting package. Eric said the coordinators will be receiving an email on how the berry group will proceed with this information. Nate suggested a press release to inform people of what the NCPN is doing and the accomplishments of the group.

Next Face to Face meeting- Kevin asked for suggestions regarding timing and location of the next meeting. Liz suggested revisiting the Las Vegas location. The April time frame seemed to be favourable for most people. It seemed to be a unanimous decision to rebook the meeting in Las Vegas in April 2021. Eric said money will be left if we do not travel this year. It can be repurposed to purchase equipment for Arkansas as there will be a new budget for the meeting in 2021. This will be revisited on the next call.