

**MINUTES**  
**WORKING GROUP ON GRAPEVINE STATE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS**  
**NATIONAL CLEAN PLANT NETWORK FOR GRAPES**  
**PUTAH CREEK LODGE, U.C. DAVIS**  
**MAY 2, 2012**

*Attendees:*

Maher Al Rwahnih, Eric Amberg, Kari Arnold, Gary Ballard, Mark Black, Cathy Caldwell, Josh Chase, Mike Colvin, Mike Cunningham, Ken Eastwell, Katie Phillipini, Phil Freese, Marc Fuchs, Deborah Golino, Jan Hedberg, Jon Held, Emir Hodzic, Steve Huffman, Justin Jacobs, David Johnson, Margaret Kelly, Vicki Klaassen, Carole Lamb, Joanna Luna, Bob Martin, Dan Martinez, Judit Monis, Fatima Osman, Wenping Qiu, Dennis Rak, Melinda Richardson, Adib Rowhani, Erich Rudyj, Pimpa Rudyj, Tia Russell, Vicky Scharlau, Sue Sim, Rhonda Smith, Keith Striegler, Nancy Sweet, Athar Tariq, Liz Vavricka, Tom Wessels, Debbie Woodbury.

***Welcome & Introductions***

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by NCPN Grapes Chair Deborah Golino. Self-introductions were made.

***Purpose & scope of project for model grape regulations***

Deborah made opening remarks. The United States has no national grape certification program, and there is a lack of regulatory consistency within the country. That inconsistency may pose a problem for U.S. grape exporters in the international arena. Deborah complimented Ruth Welliver and her colleagues on the model regulations document that they have created for the NCPN-FT network [that booklet was distributed to all attendees at the May 2 meeting]. Deborah concluded by mentioning that all the documents presented at the meeting and referenced in the presentations will be posted on the ANR Collaborative Tools website for 'the Working Group – NCPN State Certification Programs'.

***Overview of Grape Certification Programs in the European Union***

Maher Al Rwahnih, a scientist at FPS, made a presentation describing the history and current status of grape certification programs in the European Union. His presentation is posted on the NCPN stakeholders (<http://NationalCleanPlantNetwork.org>) and NCPN Grapes (<http://NCPNGrapes.org>) websites in the location for the NCPN Grapes meeting on May 1-2, 2012, and on the State Certification page on the NCPN Grapes site.

***Existing Certification Programs in the United States and Canada***

Nancy Sweet, FPS staff, presented an overview of the certification regulations that exist in the United States and Canada. The four U.S. states with active state grapevine certification programs were represented at the May 2 meeting by NCPN Grapes regulatory board members Mike Colvin

(California), Jan Hedberg (Oregon), and David Johnson (Missouri). Tier 1 Governing Board member Tom Wessels works in the regulatory field for grapes in the State of Washington. Nancy's presentation is posted in the same websites as Maher's.

At the conclusion of the presentations, Deborah Golino estimated that the process for harmonizing the grape certification regulations may take as long as two years, during which the group would meet 1-2 times per year in person and virtually. Deborah offered to create a glossary for the terms used in the regulations. She suggested that tasks be assigned at the end of the meeting.

### ***Farm Bill section 10201 Update***

Erich Rudyj spoke about funding options for nursery certification work under Farm Bill section 10201. Several projects related to nursery certification and education have been supported to date under that funding option. Erich indicated that if anyone has an idea for a project related to certification, he or she should prepare a 2-3 page proposal for funding and send it to him for consideration. He stated that the primary purpose of Farm Bill section 10201 funding was to create an opportunity for interested parties to convene and develop/harmonize standards for grape certification programs, after which the proposed standards would be tested in real-life situations.

### ***Discussion of Process for Development of Model Regulations***

The group discussed future plans for developing the regulations.

Dan Martinez asked about the goal of NCPN Grapes in crafting the national or model regulations. New York (Margaret Kelly) is interested in selling to Canada and desires a consistent definition of 'certified material' across the U.S. Eric Amberg stated that establishment of national regulations are necessary for protection of U.S. plant material in that the U.S. will be justified in turn regulating incoming material.

Cathy Caldwell proposed that the working group assign pieces of the model regulations to various sub-groups rather than have the entire group address the regulations as a whole. She proposed that once the minimum testing standard is established, plants from various states be tested in production.

Mike Colvin believes that one benefit of harmonized regulations will be a uniform and consistent definition for the term 'registered or certified', so that everyone including the consumer knows what they are getting.

Tom Wessels suggested that the NCPN Grapes group review the existing harmonization plan developed by APHIS for seed potato certification. That model provides that each state sign an MOU for participation in the program, agreeing to apply certain specific phytosanitary measures. The states agree not to receive any material from any state other than a signatory to an MOU with APHIS. APHIS audits the state certification programs (not the nurseries). Wessels believes that this type of program may give credibility to U.S. regulation of European imports. *[Subsequent to the meeting,*

*Tom Wessels provided a copy of the seed potato regulations to Nancy Sweet, who posted them on the Collaborative Tools group Working Group - NCPN State Certification Regulations.']*

It was noted that the current demand for 'clean grapes' exceeds the available supply of such grapes currently produced by the clean plant centers and nurseries. Demand will therefore continue for common stock during the transition period while all commercial cultivars and clones are tested and/or treated to eliminate viruses and other pathogens. Many cultivars from the eastern and southeastern United States only recently arrived at FPS to begin the process. 90% of the nursery stock in the United States is produced in California. Eric Amberg suggested that all five NCPN clean plant centers participate in clean up/treatment efforts to qualify the eastern/southeastern cultivars as 'clean plants'.

Eric Amberg also stated that a template for the harmonized regulations might be easier to create given that only four states now have active grapevine registration and certification programs. Deborah Golino suggested that the common standard adopted in the harmonized regulations should consist of a 'fairly reasonable standard, probably requiring only lab tests that could also be implemented by the nurseries'. Implementation of the stricter standards now used in the '2010 Protocol' would impede the movement of commercial material. The standard used for the model NCPN grape regulations would be used to screen bad pathogens out. The program should be kept simple, so that regulators, growers and nurseries would buy into it. Tom Wessels commented that the NCPN model regulations should be limited to establishing a phytosanitary standard for grapevines, and not try to mandate best management practices for nurseries or impose 'generation levels' (G1, G2, etc).

Deborah Golino stated that all major nurseries are participants in the California program, where 95% of the rootstock and ~75% of the scion wood is produced within the R&C Program. The grower demand in California is greater than the amount of certified grapevines; California growers would resist a requirement that all material be certified. Deborah's opinion is that the standard regulations should screen for the major nepoviruses and leafroll viruses known to exist in the country and major vitiviruses, using language that would make it easy to add to or delete from the list.

The issue of assessments for participation in a grape certification program was discussed. The revenue would be used to fund state Departments of Agriculture and/or clean plant centers for inspection, production and maintenance of certified material. One issue will be whether to put a flat fee assessment on each grapevine or assess a percentage based on the sales of grapevines. One alternative funding source currently in use in one state is a flat fee charge for writing phytosanitary documents.

There are no assessments imposed in the seed potato program. USDA/ARS has traditionally found it difficult to impose charges for goods or services, such as those at the Repositories. There will probably not be a national assessment for participation in a grape certification program but there might be a state assessment. California has imposed fees since the 1950's in the form of user fees. In 2011, the nursery industry agreed to raise the user fees, which are assessed through FPS, from 2 cents per vine to 4 cents per vine. Additionally, the IAB manages a self-assessment by grape nurseries that amounts to 1% of entire gross sales. Washington State has a 5% assessment on all grapevines initiated by grape growers. Oregon has no assessment.

The general consensus was that currently there is little to no price differential between certified and non-certified grapevines. The cost to the nursery to produce a grafted vine is the same for both types of material.

Liz Vavricka asked what the testing for a certification program would look like. In Washington State, the Department of Agriculture takes the samples at the nurseries; WSU runs the tests and bills the nurseries. In California, a state agency (CDFA) or designated lab does the testing. Mike Colvin indicated that most states demand regulatory oversight for such testing for chain of custody purposes.

### ***Conclusion and Assignments***

Deborah Golino urged the meeting participants to review the materials that are on the Collaborative Tools website, in particular the seed potato regulations. Deborah will be responsible for crafting a glossary and table of major diseases.

The next meeting of the State Certification Working Group will be scheduled in conjunction with the FPS Annual Meeting, NCPN national meeting or NCPN Grapes meeting. Deborah will propose some dates later in the summer. She deemed the Working Group to consist of all attendees at the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Sweet  
May 23, 2012