

NCPN Tier II Meeting  
Royal Sonesta Hotel  
January 20, 2019

Meeting attendees: Christie Almeyda, Dianne Coats, Beth Ellison, David Ellison, Bill Foote, Bruce Garner, Kristen Farrar, Stephen Meyers, Sathish Ponniah, Dave Prokrym, Kay Rentzel, Erich Rudyj, Mark Shankle, Sue Sim, Tara Smith, Scott Stoddard, Arthur Villordon, Jamie Earp

Bill Foote called the meeting to order. An agenda was distributed, but Bill said we needed to change the order to accommodate schedules.

Stakeholders were given the opportunity to share their experiences and advise the Clean Plant Centers regarding industry needs from the NCPN. The following is a summary of stakeholder input.

Matt Garber of Louisiana said he knows the importance of seed being as clean as it can be.

Jim Jones of North Carolina said it makes a difference having clean seed. They need more paper trails showing where you got the seed. He hopes weather doesn't make the growing season worse. Bill asked if there were areas we need to work on. Jim said better yields, education to other growers – get all on the same page with the generation.

Steve Ellison of Mississippi didn't know anything about the clean plant network and the services they provide.

Jamie Earp said lower yields and less quality are more of a problem the further you get from the mother plant.

Sue Leggett of North Carolina joined the group by Skype. A farmer in Nash County, NC, farming with her husband. First generation farmers growing sweetpotatoes, strawberries, cotton, tobacco, and soybeans. Sue gave a PowerPoint presentation on the MPRU. They get plants from the greenhouse and those are good for one year – all certified through NC Crop Improvement (NCCIA) with inspections at each point. Year one is considered G1, the second year they bed G1 to get G2 seed. G2 is not required to be certified by NCCIA. The price of potatoes drives how many acres are planted.

Sweetpotatoes are the fourth most revenue generating crop in NC. Plants from the MPRU are nuclear/mother plants. Sue Sim asked if G1 or G2 are ever re-tested? Bill answered that once they leave the greenhouse, No and in the greenhouse, No – only for visual symptoms.

Bill told Sue that NC seed producers desire to receive G0 plants at the same time. This is a particular challenge to the MPRU due to limitations of Greenhouse space; demand for MPRU Nuclear Plants peaks in Jan-Feb. Fortunately, NC seed producers have invested in greenhouse construction. Will the MPRU be able to meet grower demands once the new greenhouses are producing clean plants?

Christie Almeyda said they have four greenhouses now and will probably use two this year. She said the rest could be used when they get new employees and new growers, beginning this year. They have the capacity for growth. She is the person responsible for the greenhouses. She asked how many growers use certified seed. Bill guessed 30%, but said he's not sure of the number now. He Said Sue and Jim may be better able to answer. Education is the challenge.

Erich and Dave (NCPN Program Administrators) – Erich provided an NCPN program update. Seven crops since 2008. Fruit trees and Grapes came first followed by Hops, Berries, Citrus, Roses and Sweetpotatoes, in that order. He explained the purpose of the clean plant network is the acquisition of plant material for industry that has been through Diagnostics – to identify plant pathogens, Therapy to clean (the number one thing), Propagation, Distribution and then to address governance.

There are 40 collaborating programs at 28 centers in 19 states. There is a national forum for critical discussion. They advise on funding decisions. The NCPN items – national networking, coordinators, balance and visibility. Manage the funding mechanism.

Commodity – includes research, regulatory, educators and industry for the crop. Manage charter, membership, prioritization. Advocacy for crop needs.

Centers – conduct diagnostics and therapeutics, establish and manage foundation material. Deliver services to the stakeholder. Recipient of national funds.

NCPN working groups are up and running; more specifically, Education and Outreach, Strategic planning, economics. The economics group will meet in Ithaca, NY in April to determine how best to serve stakeholders in each commodity.

Farm Bill 2019 – no more NCPN mention – NCPN is permanently funded with or without the Farm Bill endorsement. However, redistribution of NCPN funding could take place if USDA-APHIS administration changed priorities or leadership changed. David and Erich believe it is extremely important to have an NCPN governance in place in case David and Erich retired, a succession plan in a sense.

There were 24 proposals this year for 6.95 million ask; anticipated 7.5 million ask. The budget availability is 6.5 million. Sweetpotato history since the beginning – 1.6 million

(8-10% of the available base). The Tier 1 Governing board found the NCPN-SP proposal to be extremely well done, defended and well received by the Board. Funding decisions were not formalized yet due to the Federal Government partial shutdown. The results from the Tier 1 review would be announced soon.

Strategic Planning Initiative – the intention is to strengthen and advance the network. An update on strategic planning – values quality, service, connectivity, empowerment and sustainability.

Education and Outreach – Sue and Kristen will elaborate  
Dave Prokrym – planning cycle  
Develop a workplan – Say what you'll do  
Action – Do what you said  
Report – Measure what you did and share that information  
Repeat – Repeat the process, but involve more people each time  
Adjust – Change what you'll do based on the feedback

Bill said he'd like to have a roundtable with Education and Outreach  
Scott coordinated trial showing the benefits  
Jim Jones – can the fact sheet be updated annually and given venues that would share it – they'd get them out. Could give to growers at the state level  
Ann Gallagher – it might be beneficial to have on a state by state basis – could help them to get the news out  
Dave – challenge to Jim – Would there be a benefit of having more growers? He said Bill and Sue said only 30% of the growers use clean plants – would it benefit to have 70-80%?  
Jim – Get the word out more that it's a benefit; many growers are older and not internet savvy  
Dave – the challenge is smaller with sweetpotatoes – less acreage.

Bill said he appreciated the help from stakeholders. We met last night so we wouldn't have to do that part today. Today is our Tier II review process. Erich said the governing board liked our proposal.

Priority list – will send out by email. An opportunity to provide feedback. Add other priorities as needed. Dave asked Ann if they could give to new growers. She said no, it's too much for someone new. (They'd like value-added more.) Bill said we'll send the priority list with instructions to all, and Sue pointed out that there can be more than one number 1, etc.

Sue – Education and Outreach – comprised of Sue, Kristen and Debbie Woodbury. Kristen is mostly the website, etc. Sue is the content. Debbie does the newsletter. NationalCleanPlantNetwork.org. Sue added that all coordinators are on the committee,

along with some Tier II members – Stephen Meyers, Tara Smith, Scott Stoddard and Sue Leggett.

Kristen – efforts to improve E & O – focus on network communications. E & O met in Portland. From that meeting, internal and external communication needs to be improved (step it up a notch).

Coordinators Handbook – Resource Library

They have proposed two meetings in 2019 – March and June

- 1 To shape communications masterplan
2. Evaluate and ameliorate with communication experts before implementation

Upcoming Projects

- Master NCPN poster – generic for all crops
- Tissue Culture fact sheet
- Virtual tour of NCPN
- Communications process

Tier II Membership – will send email asking if all will continue to serve on the Tier II Committee. The longer it goes on, the better job we'll do for our stakeholders. One nominee, Greg Flint from Mississippi – is Bill's counterpart in Mississippi.

Ad Hoc Committee – reviews the proposal. Scott will lead up this years' effort. He will serve as the chair of the ad-hoc committee and perform the proposal review. All members of this Tier 2 group are expected to participate in the review. The proposal review summary is provided to the Tier 1 Governing Board after the ad-hoc committee provides feedback to the PI's.

Meetings planned – tentatively plan to meet with the National meeting in Nashville next year. A virus workshop, much like last year, was discussed but no consensus was agreed upon. A virus workshop will only be feasible if there is enough money left in the travel budget.

Education and Outreach meetings will continue, see website

<http://nationalcleanplantnetwork.org/> for details.

New Business – Steve Meyers – quality material from repository – not true to type – do we address that here? In the field, they don't match literature for that variety. Chris said there's a committee – led by Ken Pecota, and to contact him.

Tara Smith and Stephen Myers agreed to work as coordinators for the next joint Sweetpotato Proposal, much like Dr. Chris Clark has done in the past. The group expressed their gratitude toward Dr. Clark's effort on the joint proposal and how well it was written. Thank you Dr. Clark.

Dave – challenge – communications – welcome to NCPN on the phone, and share the website with one person while here.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15.

Dianne Coats