

ARKANSAS COTTON GROWER'S ORGANIZATION, INC.

Minutes of the
May 31, 2000 Meeting

Arkansas State Plant Board
Little Rock, AR

Members present were Joe Burns, Mark Bryles, Perry Stratton, Don Alexander, Ritter Arnold, Charles Tilmon and Trent Felton.

Others present were Cal McCastlain, attorney for ABWEP; Tony Feaster and David Blackburn, ASPB; Ken Pierce, USDA-APHIS; Doug Ladner, Patty Carr and JoAnn Arnn, ABWEP; Cecil Williams, Ag Council of AR; Greg Bell, Simmons; Ken Johnson and Ronnie Antici, Griffin LLC; Don Johnson U of A CES; Bill Yearian, U of A; Marty Moncrief, cotton producer; Richard Bransford, cotton producer; Gene Martin and Stanley Hill, AR Farm Bureau Federation; Jim Plato, Plato Industries; Don Moses, Manager of the Central Zone; and Mike Catanach, TBWEP.

Welcome and Introductions.

Chairman Burns called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Doug Ladner led the group in a word of prayer. Introductions followed.

Approval of April 5, 2000 meeting minutes.

Chairman Burns asked if there were any additions or deletions to the April 5, 2000 minutes. There were none. Don Alexander moved to accept them and Perry Stratton seconded. Motion carried.

Don Johnson talked about the problem with . He said Monitor, a product of Bayer, worked well.

One grower, Marty Moncrief, was there who wanted to address the hardship situation on eradication dues assessment. Tony Feaster said there were six applications. Two did not send in documentation concerning their requests. Feaster said he had called them and left messages, but had not heard back from them.

Alexander was asked to read the list of applicants.

They are as follows:

Desha County

Oak Hill Farm, Inc.	Planted 623 acres in 1999	Assessment for 2000 - \$22,120.00
Rosemary Sullivan	Planted 52 acres in 1999	Assessment for 2000 - \$ 1,820.00
Allen Halloway	Planted 94 acres in 1999	Assessment for 2000 - \$ 3,290.00
Mary Moncrief	Planted 183 acres in 1999	Assessment for 2000 - \$ 6,405.00

Monroe County

Ronnie George	Planted 858 acres in 1999	Assessment for 2000 - \$12,870.00
Horace George	Planted 863 acres in 1999	Assessment for 2000 - \$12,945.00

He stated that the documentation would need to be very strong in any of these cases this early in the season.

Marty Moncrief was asked if he wanted to address the board. He said that basically what he wanted to do was be there to answer any questions that the board might have to help them make their decision.

He was asked if he would receive any [REDACTED] payments. He said he would receive \$4,500.00. He stated that not being about to finish taking care of this crop is where he's at.

The question was asked as to what his crop rent situation is – cash or crop.
I do it on a 20%

Is your landlord a bank trust or an individual?
Individual.

If the Boll Weevil Eradication Program were not in effect and you had to control your weevils on your farm yourself, how would you have proposed to have done that?

I know for the last 2 years I can't remember spraying for weevils, solely for weevils. We've been using [REDACTED].

I understand that is you're killing the worms, you'd be killing the weevils. In Desha County you're going to have weevils.

What I'm saying is that the worm spraying that I have been doing has been taking care of the weevils. At least for 2 years that I know of, we did not spray at all solely for weevils. What this is going to be doing is having me pay to spray for weevils and then around and spray again for worms on top of it.

We're going to have 7 or 8 sprayings. I know year before last I sprayed 11 times.
For worms?

Right. About 8 of those trips was [REDACTED].

Do you employ a scout, as such, for insects? Yes sir.

How is your crop right now?

I had to replant, but I finally got a stand. I replanted 105 acres.

In your application you're asking for total relief. Is that right?

Correct.

Alexander said it seems to him it's awfully early. We don't know about the crop or other changes that will occur.

MORE DISCUSSION

We do not want to place an undue hardship on anybody.

Stratton – As I understand it we can only as a board make recommendations to the State Plant Board.

We are in sympathy with these people, but we cannot jeopardize the program for a few individuals.

MORE DISCUSSION

Stratton moved to table until a later date. Bryles seconded. Motion carried.

We're all kinda in the same boat with you. We're pulling for this crop to be a good one.

Marty – Well, it's going to need to be. Are you finished with me then?

We appreciate your coming.

Interview final applicant

Our main topic of business today is the interview of applicant for the assistant director's job. Ritter Arnold is the chairman of the committee, which headed that up and he was given the floor to proceed as he had planned.

Arnold reported that the appointment committee of the Board had spent quite a bit of time together over the last month. Two ads for the position were placed in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and one was placed in the Farm Press.

Forty-five resumés were received. Chairman Burns appointed a standing committee of Mark Byles, Cal McCastlin, Doug Ladner, himself, Ritter Arnold, Dr. Bill Yearian and Jack Carey. The applications were reviewed and 10 were chosen for further consideration. In a subsequent meeting the list was narrowed to 4 finalists.

The committee met for interviews on May 30, 2000. The applicant they chose to recommend to the Board for its consideration is Mike Catanach. He is with the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Program. Mike was asked to give a brief sketch about who he is and about his professional career.

The Board went into executive session at 10:40. After reconvening in general session at 11:00, the chairman introduced Mike Catanach, whom the Board had unanimously agreed to hire as the assistant director. Mike accepted.

McCastlain stated that the chairman needed to publicly ratify the executive decision on hiring. It would take a motion to ratify the hiring of Mr. Catanach. Stratton moved to ratify, with Bryles seconding. The motion carried.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman stated that he had received a call from the Feds wanting to know if we were going to have a program this year. They felt that we were behind schedule. A conference call was set up for the Board. The gist of the conference call was that we are really not that far behind, we have a plan, and we are going to implement it. The hiring of an assistant director will help our progress in implementing our program.

The question was raised as to when Mike would be coming back, when he will report to work. He said probably somewhere around June 16 or 17.

Don Johnson and Gene Martin have co-authored a history of Boll Weevil Eradication in Arkansas.

Technical Committee Report

Dr. Yearian stated that the reason for the meeting on Friday, May 26, 2000 was that there has been some disgruntlement coming out of the southeast zone as to how the program was being operated. This wasn't being done and that wasn't being done. The bottom line is that we need to continue to work, and work diligently, on our communication within the program, so that everybody from the producer through the director to the Plant Board is aware of what is going on. We have to give Doug, and now Mike, the flexibility to operate the program in the way that they see that it can best be implemented and best accomplish our objectives.

Dr. Yearian said we all have, to eradicate the boll weevil and if we keep that in mind then we will accomplish that. There's always going to be the bumps in the road. We need to work together and most of all we need to increase our communication. Make sure that everyone is aware of where we stand at any point in time and what we plan to do in implementing the program.

Dr. Yearian also said the question of communication was proposed to Mike in the interview. Mike's opinion is that the central part in communication is the field unit supervisor. The same conclusion came from the meeting last week – that it had to be at the field unit supervisor level, dealing with the growers and keeping the growers informed. Also the supervisors need to become very familiar with their county extension personnel and vice versa. We need to strengthen the communication between the county extension office and the field unit supervisors.

Things will never go totally smoothly, but we can make things go much more smoothly than they have in the past.

Dr. Yearian said he came out of the meeting feeling relatively good that everybody had an opportunity to vent, and we came out of the room with one objective in mind and that is to eradicate the boll weevil and do it in the most advantageous way possible. We all sat down and we all vented and we came to an agreement.

There was more discussion on the lack of communications.

Out of the executive session came a recommendation that we get a hot line set up, so that if somebody has a question they can call in and get that question answered.

SIDE TWO

Ladner made the comment that the main thing he needs for everyone to realize is that there are two sides to every issue, and that we are on the side of the program. Whatever that takes.

Dr. Yearian commented that this is a grower program. This is a board program. It is not a University of Arkansas program. It is not a cooperative extension program. It is not a Plant Board program. If there are complaints they don't need to go to him or extension,

they need to go to Doug, to the program, so they can be addressed, because every time we go through a different conduit it gets blown more and more out of proportion.

Alexander stated that if cotton were a decent price we wouldn't be having these decisions about the acreage fee and problems in getting the trap out. As the body that's putting the program out there, we have to understand that the farmers are up against the wall. When we hear negative statements, it's not always negative about the program. It's just a negative approach to what's happening out there in the community now.

There was some discussion about traps.

Loan update

Cal McCastlain reported that he sent his comments back to Soil and Water, and they told him to expect documents by the end of this week.

He said we closed on the FSA loan at the first of the month of May and we made our first draw on it.

USDA report

Ken Pierce said he was in the southwest for several days. They had caught about 2000 weevils at this time last year. This year they have caught 186 weevils. They treated 400 acres the first part of the week, treating some today by ground. We're reacting today to one weevil. If we catch one weevil, we're bas digging it, trapping it, mist blowing it, spraying it with a hi-boy, and calling an airplane in, if we need to.

The 4th year will be different then the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year, so it will be hard again communicating with people how we're going to do all of this, but to do eradication we have to change every year to make it work. You've got to react in the 4th year to just one weevil and get rid of that one weevil before it reproduces and causes you some more problems.

We're really in good shape over there, in the Miller and Lafayette county area and I think we'll probably do away with those weevils this year.

Director's update.

Doug Ladner presented the Program Update. Copies were provided. This is shown as Attachment ____.

You have the update in front of you. The Southeast Zone is about 95% trapped. Fields are being plated and they're just trying to keep up with them. We've had complaints about traps being up and then we had complaints about traps being down. We use bamboo poles here where in Texas they use the stakes. What we'll do is the second time you have to put up a trap we're going to use 1" X 2" X 4' long stakes. With a roofing nail on top of it, it is almost impossible to blow a trap off.

We'll use bamboo poles when we can, because normally we're okay and they cost only 7 cents each. The stakes will be 22 cents and we are getting 10,000.

I guess I'll have to make it short. I gave all of my stuff away. You can read it.

The Central Zone is ready to do. We're bringing fourteen people on tomorrow. Don has a training schedule which you have in front of you. It goes all the way through July 8. You'll notice the GPS in the field goes over almost 2 weeks. That's basically making sure that they do it , and having somebody out there available with them to make sure

things are going right because you answer their questions when it doesn't quite work right.

Also you'll notice on the second page, you've got to start visiting farmers and mapping. In Marvell, Cotton Plant, Forrest City, and Clarksdale, it's not gonna be just a haphazard organization up there. Things are going to be planned out. All but one of our assistants there is from our program that we had last year. They're all extremely dedicated. I'm real proud of that group. I'm proud of all of our groups. We're learning in the areas we have problems. Things are getting much better.

We still have problems with some of our people. We'll take care of those problems. We have to know about them to take care of them.

When putting out schedules we need to say that it is a general schedule and is subject to change. Otherwise we're going to be having people saying that we weren't there when we said we would be. That's one thing that can come back to haunt you. You've got to give people as much information as you can.

We're having a growers' meeting July 6 at 7 p.m. We are planning to meet with all the extension people soon.

Patty Carr gave the financial report. She reported that a few changes had been made, the main one being that we added the trapper contracts to the report, so it is showing how much we're spending on that.

The T-bill matures June 1, 2000. It is a 5.56. We can get 6.9 on it for six months.

The Delta Trust will mature in August.

This report also shows the first draw on the 2000 loan.

Cal McCastlain stated that we have followed the auditors' recommendations on the reconciliation of the bank statements and checking system and it seems to be working.

Bransford – When will you get your first FSA report on grower participation payment, after today?

Alexander – The way we've been getting that is when the grower sends in their application. The FSA sends them in. They're sending them in lumps. Tony and Joy are going through them as fast as they can. Tony, what was it you told me yesterday, that you had about \$600,000.00 or so? \$650,000.00 collected. Now that's in both zones. That's not near half.

Need to get notices out in plenty of time. Also farmers get busy and forget. They need to be sent a reminder.

Cecil – Yesterday I had a call from an irate landlord who had gone over to pay his part of the fee and he found out that he didn't get any credit for the stalks being cut early. His point was in agreeing to allow the farmer to cut the stalk instead of picking the second

time, he assumed that he'd get part of that fee. That's a board decision and I said I had never even heard it discussed. Anyway, I'm just saying it's probably something that you should make known. If he had known it, I don't think he would have been so upset.

Alexander – How they divide it up is between them. The board has said in the past that's between the two.

END OF TAPE - YOU HAD A FEW NOTES ON WHAT ELSE WAS SAID

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, June 28, 2000.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.