

## **ARKANSAS COTTON GROWER'S ORGANIZATION, INC.**

Minutes of the  
June 28, 2000 Meeting

Arkansas State Plant Board  
Little Rock, AR

Members present were Joe Burns, Mark Bryles, Perry Stratton, Don Alexander, Jack Carey, Ritter Arnold, and Trent Felton. Hal Hyneman & Charles Tilmon were not present.

Others present were Cal McCastlain, attorney for ABWEP; Tony Feaster, ASPB; Ken Pierce, USDA-APHIS; Doug Ladner, Mike Catanach, Patty Carr and JoAnn Arnn, ABWEP; Cecil Williams, Jr., Ag Council of AR; Greg Bell, Simmons; Ken Johnson and Ronnie Antici, Griffin LLC; Bill Yearian, U of A; Richard Bransford, cotton producer; Gene Martin, AR Farm Bureau Federation; Jim Plato, Plato Industries; Erica Goss, KSSN Radio; Laudies Brantley, Jr., Lonoke County farmer; and David Hillman, president of AR Farm Bureau Federation.

Welcome and Introductions.

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

Chairman Burns stated that they are having a terrible boll weevil year in the northeastern part of the state. A lot of the growers are wishing they had an eradication program. There will be some farmer failures and those will be difficult votes to get on the referendum because they are going to be in a bad economic situation. The growers that survive will want an eradication program.

Approval of May 31, 2000 meeting minutes.

Chairman Burns asked if there were any additions or deletions to the May 31, 2000 minutes. There were none. Mark Bryles moved to approve them and Perry Stratton seconded. Motion carried.

Assessment update.

Don Alexander reported that \$6,562,380.18 has been collected. There were 2 returned checks, one for \$10,000.00 that has not been recovered and one for \$1,750.00 that has been.

A list of the current filings for hardships was handed out. There was some discussion. Alexander felt that consideration of the hardships should be delayed until after the 2<sup>nd</sup> filing.

Alexander was asked to comment on the Plant Board meeting dealing with changes in the rules and regulations. He stated that they were adopted by the Board, and will go before the Rules and Regulations Committee of the Legislature on July 6, 2000, for its review.

### Technical Committee Report

The Technical Committee has not met since the last Grower Board Meeting. Dr. Yearian said the committee has offered Doug Ladner any assistance the he needs. He suggested that the Technical Committee meet with Ladner and his administrative staff to review activities that have taken place over the past year and see if there are some wrinkles that could be discussed and ironed out.

Dr. Yearian commented that this may be the worst boll weevil year in 30 or 40 years and that dry weather is needed to improve the situation.

Gene Martin stated that he attended a grower meeting at Forrest City recently. They asked that the Technical Committee consider recommending to Ladner that they start running mist blowers in that area before August 1. It was explained to them that is was a budget situation, but they still wanted that word brought back.

Alexander commented that Mississippi failed to secure an FSA loan. They have enough money to run through August 15. There was some discussion.

### Director's Update.

Doug Ladner presented the Program Update. Copies were provided. This is shown as Attachment I. Following the presentation of the printed report, Ladner commented on problems in southern Lonoke County and Jefferson County.

Laudies Brantley spoke about the problems in southern Lonoke County, saying that a poor effort was made to implement the program. He felt they didn't get the help they needed. His comments were followed by discussion.

Cal McCastlain expressed concern and suggested that there may need to be more monitoring and he was concerned about catch up sprays having adverse effect on beneficials. He thinks the Technical Committee needs to be right on top of this thing. He doesn't think it's just a catch up thing. There may be a seasonal issue that needs to be monitored.

There was discussion about the trapping. Mark Bryles commented that the trapping situation has destroyed the confidence of the farmers.

There was more discussion of spraying, mapping and monitoring.

Trent Felton commented that it needs to be emphasized to the producers that they need to call and let us know about problems. They need to have access to the 800 number and they need to know that we need their help.

Ladner reported a helicopter is being used in spraying. He is working 2000 acres. He takes his truck with him wherever he goes, so our ferry time is reduced. He's working well with the program.

Ladner reported that receipt of a high boy from Big John has been delayed so we have bought a mudder. It includes an attachment with five locational sprays equal to a high boy.

Ladner stated that we're looking at truck leasing. It would save \$100,000.00.

Ladner reported that a Section 18 was passed on Furadan last week. Some discussion followed. Ladner stated that worker protection due to the use of Furadan was discussed at trapper meetings.

Ladner said he wants to fill the Public Information and Logistics position. He has talked to one individual and has the name of another individual. He also wants to get a computer person and hopes to have both new people by the next meeting.

Felton talked about the grower meetings held for the Central Zone. One was held in Marvell and one in Forrest City. He reported that there was good attendance from the farmers at both meetings. The meetings gave the growers an opportunity to meet their field unit supervisors, get to know them and ask any questions they might have.

Felton suggested sending post cards to remind farmers of the deadline for paying their assessments.

Patty Carr gave a brief financial report. Copies were provided.

#### USDA Report.

Ken Pierce reported that a bar code system has been started on all of the government equipment, vehicles, and supplies.

Pierce said that he is still trying to get vehicles for Arkansas but is having to compete with Texas and Oklahoma. He plans to move some to Arkansas from Louisiana.

#### New Business.

Carey reported that the House and Senate have agreed to add to the agriculture bill and let some agricultural trade go on with Cuba. Brief discussion followed.

Cecil Williams expressed concern about the need to organize for the September referendum. Discussion followed.

Alexander suggested two things that need to happen. 1. Need to identify the price per acre. 2. Need to know how it's going to be paid out.

Burns asked Cecil Williams and Gene Martin to assist the Board with getting out a direct mailing.

Catanach suggested sending post cards out which list the benefits of the program and are signed by supporters.

Discussion returned to the problems in southern Lonoke and Jefferson County. McCastlain expressed the need for a documented plan as to where we are and what we need to do and who is involved in problem areas.

Ladner stated that he wants to meet with the Technical Committee as soon as possible.

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, July 19, 2000.

The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 12:20 p.m. and reconvened at 12:53 p.m. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12.55 p.m.

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JOE BURNS, Chairman