

ARKANSAS COTTON GROWER'S ORGANIZATION, INC.

Minutes of the
December 18, 2001 Meeting

Arkansas State Plant Board
Little Rock, AR

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

Others present were Cal McCastlain, attorney for ABWEP; Doug Ladner, Mike Catanach, Danny Kiser, Joel Pietsch, Patty Carr, Tasha Gunn, and JoAnn Arnn, ABWEP; Cecil Williams, Ag Council of AR; David Blackburn, Darrell Little, and Scott Longing, ASPB; Carol Griffey, Jonesboro Sun; Ronnie Antici, Griffin L.L.C.; Gene Martin, AR Farm Bureau; Don Johnson, UA SEC; Bruce Harrod, AAAA; Bob Hulett, former ABWEP employee; Mr. and Mrs. Victor Zachary, Marvell, AR; Richard Myers, UAP Mid-South; Bill Blankenship, Jr. and Lee Blankenship, farmers, Pine Bluff, AR; Mike Wilson, Mississippi County; Ken Pierce, USDA-APHIS; Frank Carter, National Cotton Council; Phil Tugwell, U of A Entomology; Randy Luttrell, U of A Entomology; and Richard Bransford, Lonoke, AR.

Chairman Burns called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Don Johnson to lead in a word of prayer.

Approval of September 13, 2001 and October 8, 2001 meeting minutes

Chairman Burns asked if there were any corrections, deletions, or additions to the September 13, 2001 and October 8, 2001 minutes. There were none. Ritter Arnold moved they be accepted as presented. Perry Stratton seconded and the motion carried.

Doug Ladner was asked to present program questions that needed to be brought before the Board. Ladner said that a situation occurred this year that may have caused impact to Bill Blankenship's yield in at least one field.

Danny Kiser said that Mr. Blankenship had two fields in question. Kiser said he was sure one field was missed. It was in with another field and early in the season when it was mapped, the map was not done properly. It didn't show up on the map, but when the field was trapped, they trapped two fields together. As they ran the traps they were getting information on the entire field, but when they took the spray maps in to get the fields sprayed, a portion of that field was not showing up on the spray map. That field was missed all season, and there was damage to that crop.

Kiser said there was another field in question, but he will have to look into it further. In another field that may not have been mapped early, there was some confusion. The people in the office have told Kiser that this field was sprayed with another field of Mr. Eagle's during the year. Spray logs suggest that it was sprayed. Kiser said he wanted to look at the spray logs to make sure proper action was taken.

Chairman Burns asked Mr. Blankenship if, when he realized the fields were not being sprayed, he had contacted a field unit supervisor or someone with the Program. He said that he had and was told to talk to the pilot.

Stratton asked when fields are adjacent how can it be determined whether the one in question has been sprayed or not. Kiser said the flight logs show exactly what area was sprayed. The earlier flight logs will lay right over the entire field map if it was sprayed. Flight logs will prove it, one way or the other.

Stratton asked what can be done to keep this situation from happening again. Kiser said if the FUS had responded correctly this could have been corrected earlier. The FUS was given a warning. These fields were in soybeans in the year 2000, and that may have been part of the problem.

Chairman Burns expressed concern about the amount of time that passed. It should have only taken one time of being told that a field was being skipped for it to be put on the schedule. Kiser said the District Supervisor reacted on the day she became aware of the problem. He said most growers will go to the DS if they are having trouble and don't get a response from the FUS. Stratton said that the people at the lower level have got to understand that these farmers are interested in their crops. The farmers don't complain for no reason. They come with problems. The lower echelon people must be made to realize that this is important.

Kiser said he would look at the field with Mr. Blankenship on December 19, 2001, and then look at the flight logs to make sure they're on the same field and everything is the same, and determine whether the other field was treated or not. Mr. Blankenship agreed to the meeting.

Victor Zachary, a sweet sorghum grower from Marvell, addressed the Board next. His complaint was that on August 28, 2001, he experienced contamination of his sorghum fields. He said that sorghum is susceptible to Malathion. USDA publication 441 has information as to what insecticides will do to sweet sorghum within a matter of hours. Mr. Zachary said he has test results from an independent lab show that there was Malathion on the plants. He had test results from the University of Arkansas Department of Agriculture, which showed no pathogens or diseases on the plants. His field was rendered useless.

Cal McCastlain said there were two valid areas. One is the issue that has been raised about whether any of our product drifted or caused any damage. The other is other types of issues that have to be taken into account, grower responsibility or proving the drift. He said technical information is needed. He said the issue has been brought to the attention of the Board and he is prepared to immediately follow-up.

Certify NE Delta Zone Referendum Ballots

Chairman Burns asked Don Alexander to give the results of the Northeast Delta vote. Alexander stated that the Eastern Craighead County vote was 66% to 34%. The Mississippi County vote was 59% to 41%. The average was 61% for and 39% against.

Jack Carey moved that the Board accept the figures presented by the Plant Board. Perry Stratton seconded and the motion passed.

Alexander was asked to give the actual voter count, which was 423 for and 300 opposed in Mississippi County, and 221 for and 114 opposed in Eastern Craighead County.

Chairman Burns introduced Mike Wilson, who had requested to speak to the Board. He began by asking the Board to consider calling a re-vote. He said he had met with a group of growers December 17, 2001, and after much discussion, they are asking the Board to re-vote at the same amount of money as last time, with one exception. They want an area, basically Buffalo Island, to have a different fee than the rest of Eastern Craighead and Mississippi counties because of lower weevil populations in that area. They are asking for a fee of \$50 for a period of five years, and a maximum of \$3 maintenance fee for following years.

After much discussion Ritter Arnold moved that the Wilson proposal be adopted. McCastlain asked for clarifying language particularly on the \$50 being paid over five years. After clarification, Mark Bryles seconded. Charles Tillman moved that the motion be amended that everything lost from that area be made up by the remainder of that district in dollars. After discussion, the motion failed to get a second.

After a break for lunch, the meeting reconvened at 1:55. Arnold restated his motion, which was that the Board adopt the proposal which Wilson had presented and present this to the eligible voters in Eastern Craighead and Mississippi counties at the earliest opportunity. Seven voted in favor of the proposal and the motion passed.

Alexander moved that the ballot be mailed on January 29, 2002. It would be returned to the Mississippi County or Craighead County FSA office by February 15, 2002. The votes would be counted the following week. Arnold seconded. Motion carried.

Program Update

Danny Kiser presented a program update focusing on season long weevil average per trap per week.

Southwest – Good progress was made, on track to accomplish goal for next season

Southeast – last year, 5.54, this year, .320 (94.23% reduction from last year)

Central – last year, 15.66, this year, .399 (97.45% reduction from last year)

Northeast Ridge – this year, 5.42

Northeast Delta – this year, 11.56

In the damage survey, the numbers are as follows:

Southwest – no damage

Southeast – 0.6%

Central – 1.6%

Northeast Ridge – 4.8%

Northeast Delta – 34.3%

Ladner reported that Bobby Davis has made two trips to Fort Worth. He got approximately \$170,000 worth of supplies.

USDA Report

Ken Pierce reported that suppressive trapping will be done in an area of Northeast Texas to knock some of the weevils down and keep them from moving as quickly into a 500 acre area of Oklahoma.

Pierce said that traps were put out in Kansas, in early spring one traps per 40 acres. No weevils were caught. He also put some traps out in Missouri in an area that wasn't in the referendum. No weevils were caught there.

Mark Bryles expressed appreciation to everyone who helped on the recent referendum.

Ritter Arnold reported that Mr. Ted Wagon had been interviewed for the Public Relations position (cover letter, résumé, and references – Attachment 1). Ladner pointed out, and agreed with, Wagon's suggestion of retaining a professional under renewable contract to provide support when we need it.

Chairman Burns said that this will be discussed at a later date.

Ladner gave financial report. Copies (Attachment 2) were provided.

McCastlain reported that two assessments appear to be delinquent. All indications are that they have not paid. Don Alexander said he would look into it.

The next meeting was set for Thursday, January 17, 2002, at 10:00 a.m. at the Arkansas State Plant Board.

The meeting adjourned to executive session at 3:15 and reconvened at 5:00 p.m. with no action taken.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

JOE BURNS, Chairman