



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN

MINUTES of a **REGULAR** meeting of the **REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held in the Board Room at the Regional District Office on Thursday, September 11, 2013

Members:	Director M. Macnabb Bruce Naka Director S. Fowler Councillor P. McClean Councillor M. Besso Alt. Director C. Fraser Director P. Nicol Director B. Fleming Mike Randell Dennis Lapierre Joel Allen Ralph van Dalssen Tony Van den Tillaart Peter Stockdale Wendy Aasen Doug Gordon Greg Tagert	Electoral Area "C" Member at Large City of Armstrong District of Coldstream District of Coldstream Township of Spallumcheen City of Vernon Electoral Area "B" Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Agricultural Producer Member at Large Young Farmer Ministry of Agriculture Representative	Chair Vice Chair
Staff:	R. Smailes A. Kittel Trafford Hall J. deGroot	General Manager, Planning and Building Regional Growth Strategy Coordinator Administrator Executive Assistant (Temp.) (taking minutes)	

Also

Present: Media and Public

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

The Chair welcomed the Public and outlined the following:

- Meeting conduct; and
- Terms of Reference of the Committee.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting – September 11, 2013

Moved and seconded by Alt. Director Fraser and Mike Randell

That the agenda of the September 11, 2013 regular meeting of the Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee be approved with the following addition:

- Item D.2 – Meat Regulations – Class E Licenses

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting – August 22, 2013

One amendment was noted for the August 22, 2013 Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee minutes:

- Regarding Bylaw 2603 – Electoral Areas “D” and “E” Official Community Plan Amendment [Genetically Modified Organisms] bullet one should read as follows:
 - difference between genetically modified, genetically engineered and transgenic crops;

Moved and seconded by Director Fleming and Bruce Naka

That the minutes of the August 22, 2013 regular meeting of the Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

DELEGATIONS

Janice Tranberg, Vice-President, Western Division of CropLife

Ms. Tranberg presented the viewpoint of CropLife on plant biotechnology which included the following:

- Companies CropLife represents;
- Economics of agriculture in Canada;
- Challenges facing agriculture and food sources today such as small land bases, water availability and climate change;
- How plant science helps farmers and are tools for farmers;
- Common biotech products and where they are commonly grown;
- How products are regulated by Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada and what the regulators look for and at;
- CFIA and Health Canada say biotech products are safe;
- Process to bring a new plant product to market; and
- Regulation in other countries and global studies on biotech products.

Questions and discussion ensued regarding the following:

- Labeling? – more complicated than it seems; would increase costs; how are products tracked; what should be labeled; why labels if the regulators say they are safe;
- What GMOs are in Canada currently? – Canola, Soybeans, Sugar Beet, Corn, and some imports such as papaya and squash;
- Are there issues with cross contamination/open pollination? – These issues are taken into consideration and a stewardship plan can to help minimize. Co-existence can occur if there is cooperation. Unintentional limits could allow coexistence;
- Monsanto vs. Schmeiser Case – How has this changed the industry? – Courts found that that Schmeiser was at fault as he did not follow the agreement. The technology is purchased; a seed cannot be patented, only the technology;
- Some studies say they are not safe? – Very few studies say they are not safe, regulatory agencies review this information;
- Have some areas banned GMOs? – Some within the EU that want to not allow their growth and allow imports only;
- Are cross species modifications done that would not happen without biotechnology? – Yes, this can happen. Researchers look at how these modifications change the plant, regarding toxins, allergens etc.;

- How long has this been done? - We have been eating them for 20 years; studying them for 25 years;
- Contracts for GMO products, v. regular products? – Seed purchased every year, farmer chooses biotech for their specific needs, there is a technology use agreement;
- How can anyone be certain that they are safe, when we have been certain about other things before in science? – There is a responsibility to provide safe products;
- David Suzuki comments? – Regulatory agencies believe they are safe. Science doesn't allow 100%; These products have benefits that help people and there is not a negative safety track record;
- Is testing long enough? – Need to have faith in regulatory agencies. Experts with tools and experience to make tests they need to make. We have been eating the for 20 years and we have not seen negative effects;
- Are scientists muzzled? – Does not believe that;
- Consumers, may not agree, no one asked the consumer. Not being heard at other levels. – There is choice, organic is an option. Base opinion on science, not opinion.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bylaw 2603 – Electoral Areas “D” and “E” Official Community Plan Amendment [Genetically Modified Organisms]

Moved and seconded by Director Fleming and Doug Gordon

That the matter of Electoral Areas “D” and “E” Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 2603 be referred to the Electoral Area Advisory Committee for review and comment.

CARRIED

Meat Regulations

Alt. Director Fraser informed the Committee that the selection for the first round of Class E Licences will take place Friday, September 13. There will be 5 Licences permitted; 3 for red meat and 2 for poultry. The Interior Health contact for information is Chris Russell. As many people as possible should apply.

Discussion ensued including the following:

- The history of Meat Regulations and the work the Board has done to get Licences reinstated; and
- The need for more Licences.

Genetically Modified Organisms

Discussion ensued including the following:

Labeling:

- Labeling could be difficult with so many trucks, storage units, and processing machinery because they are so hard to separate, contamination can occur;
- This could be expensive;
- Labeling in general is difficult ie//product of Canada;
- Should be voluntary;
- This is a Federal issue;
- There are some labeling now; there is a market for this; some have chosen to participate;

- Can we get information costs to provide labeling and how do other countries do this? ie// organics; VQA; Australia;
- Biotech companies do not want to label, but it can be done;
- Needs to be simplified so it is usable and cost effective so people can make a choice; and
- Coexistence is difficult; Set a threshold for a little bit of acceptance;

Field Trip

- Possible tour or field trip of local farms; organic and GMO/non GMO;

Moving Forward

- Move forward on the issue and consider the political process; and
- Wendy Aasen will provide a recommendation for the next meeting agenda; then the committee can discuss and move something forward;

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Certified Correct:


Chair


Corporate Officer