



Marion Citizens Advisory Network
3180 Center St. NE, RM 1361
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Meeting Minutes
September 30, 2008

Meeting called to order at 6:30PM by Derek Godwin, Staff Chair

An introduction of members and staff and the agenda was accepted as presented.

Derek introduced Tom Silberstein, Field Crops Extension faculty for Marion and Clackamas Counties. He presented a PowerPoint overview of the Willamette Valley agricultural activities and its economic impact. A few of the slides described the seeds and grains and their specialized genetics that grow in the valley.

A few of the statistics he displayed were:

- ✓ 55% of the acreage in Marion County produces various varieties of grass seeds.
- ✓ 100 million pounds of seed are produced in Marion County.
- ✓ 600,000 tons of straw is shipped to Japan and Korea annually.
- ✓ 18% of the acreage in Marion County produces grain, hay and field crops.

A handout, attached, was distributed with two pie charts describing commodity sales and crop acreage by agriculture products.

Tom described his extension role of research and assisting growers.

- ✓ Measuring seed moisture before harvest, "yield increases with moisture control".
- ✓ Management of nutrients, fungicides, direct seed system, herbicides, insects, and field burning. He answered several questions regarding field burning and the impact of legislation.
- ✓ Seed certification for quality, and tagging to designated generation. Certification is vital to insure exported seed meets or exceeds industry standards.
- ✓ OSU Extension Service has partnered with Marion Soil and Water Conservation District and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to dispose of outdated and outlawed chemicals. This was very successful in the farming community. It is based on a "no questions asked" policy resulting in some DDT and other harmful chemicals being safely destroyed.

Members of the Advisory asked relevant questions that were answered by Tom with additional comments by members.

Continued

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Derek asked Tom “what could the Advisory Network do to assist Tom”, i.e. outreach, advocacy, public forum, etc.

Question:

1. Where do the farmers get information and assistance?

Tom’s response:

There are field tours. OSU Extension interacts at meetings with growers. Some growers subscribe or receive publications from federal and state agencies.

Member suggestions:

- ✓ Emphasize quality seed enriches life.
- ✓ Use CCTV to televise demonstration as presented at beginning of meeting.
- ✓ Provide opportunities to speak to groups, clubs, and forums.
- ✓ Provide farm tours would be important and useful for educating students, and public.
- ✓ Speaker’s bureau facilitated by OSU Extension.
- ✓ Emphasize job opportunities and careers in agriculture.

Question:

2. What are the biggest factors that impact field crop farming?

Tom’s response:

Field burning is controversial. Burning is beneficial to the soil and eradicates insects and pests. Mandates by the State Legislature will require alternatives. Another issue facing farmers is the minimum wage established by the Legislature. Additional increases in costs of fuel, fertilizer, and other operating expenses will decrease farming profitability and increase prices on all commodities to the public. The increase cost will have an impact on exported products and possibly the long term ability to maintain a business.

Derek presented upcoming Extension opportunities.

He reported on the budget that is principally funded by Marion County. The present office is provided in-kind by Marion County. They may at an undetermined date request Extension to vacate the space thereby allowing space for county services. He asked for volunteers to work with him. Jim Castle and Pat Rigsby agreed.

Suggested opportunities were:

- ✓ Expanding the programs to include speakers and demonstrations.
- ✓ Outreach and marketing ideas were discussed.
- ✓ Updating the Extension web site permitting staff to update rather than a Webmaster.
- ✓ Discussion followed on the new “on line” Master Gardner course. It is limited to 50 students. The issue of tracking pay back time by the staff needs to be addressed.

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Derek updated the members on federal funding and upcoming state legislation. New legislators will require information of the importance of programs provided by Extension and the funding required. Public awareness improvements would include having printed material and access to staff.

A discussion ensued on recognizing leaders, partners and volunteers. Several ideas expressed were publishing an annual report of accomplishments, potluck meeting, or awards. It was agreed that recognition was important but no decisions were made. The topic was tabled for a later meeting.

Derek concluded with a review of fiscal impacts on Extension in other counties by possible cuts to the Secure Rural Schools Funding Act (a.k.a. Timber Funds). Several counties may curtail programs and staff.

The next meeting is October 28 at 6:30pm at the Extension Conference Room on Center St. Neil Bell, Ag Horticulture will be present his role with Extension.

Respectfully submitted,
James Castle, Recorder