

# LOUISIANA RICE RESEARCH BOARD

## Minutes

Crowley, Louisiana  
June 26, 2019

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Richard Fontenot, Dane Hebert, John Denison, John Earles, Sammy Noel, Kim Frey, Gerald Leonards, Jeffery Sylvester, Eric Savant, and David LaCour, Damian Bollich, Jason Waller, Jude Doise, Alan Lawson, LDAF Commissioner Dr. Mike Strain,

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Benjy Rayburn, Kyle McCann, Andy Brown, Rogers Leonard, Wade Baumgartner, Scott Soileau, Bruce Schultz, Kane Web, Kurt Guidry, Don Groth, Mike Salassi, Dennis Blunt, Steve Linscombe, Dustin Harrell, Frankie Gould

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Chairman, Richard Fontenot called the Louisiana Rice Research Board (LRRB) meeting to order at 12:36 pm and asked members to review the agenda items. He indicated that the agenda order may change to hold an executive session in conjunction with the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board (LRPB) and asked if anyone had any additional items.

**ACTION #1** A motion was made by Jeffery Sylvester, seconded by Damian Bollich and carried, to approve the agenda.

Chairman Fontenot then asked for self-introductions around the room. Andy Brown was introduced as a new employee of Louisiana Farm Bureau and would be considered to replace roles and responsibilities of Kyle McCann at the completion of his contracted term with the LRRB.

Frankie Gould presented a list of Louisiana Rice Research Board Report List of Articles to be considered for publication. Mrs. Guidry explained this list would be available for review on the LSU AgCenter website. No additions were requested at this time. The list of articles is attached to these minutes.

Chairman Fontenot presented the Chairman's Report of Activities during the Rice Research Field Day prior to convening the board meeting and asked if any member was not present and wished for him to offer his report again to please take action. None heard. Chairman's report was accepted as presented.

The Board next considered the minutes of the previous meeting which had been

sent to all members.

**ACTION #2** A motion was made by Jeffery Sylvester, seconded by Sammy Noel and carried, to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented.

The LDAF May 2019 assessment collections report was then presented by Kyle McCann. For the month of May assessment collections paid to the Board (net) was \$85,038.66. The year to date net assessment collections were \$1,243,512.74 and year to date refunds were \$100,100.28 or approximately 8% of total collections. The year to date collections was below the budget estimates.

Scott Soileau then reviewed the May 31, 2019 financial operating report. He reviewed each of the various fund balances and discussed the current financial position of the Board. The Board discussed their current financial position and the current fund balances in regards to refunds and disbursements.

**ACTION #3** A motion was made by John Denison, seconded by Jeffrey Sylvester and carried, to receive and file the financial and collections reports.

The Board next considered going into a joint executive session with the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board. Since the Boards would be discussing pending litigation, Chairman Fontenot stated that in the interest of time and consistency the boards could meet together.

**ACTION #4** A motion was made by Dane Hebert, seconded by John Denison and carried, to go into a joint executive session of the Boards.

The attendance included all the La Rice Research Board Members present and listed above. The Louisiana Rice Promotion Board members in attendance were Christian Richard, Tommy Faulk, Ronald Habetz, John Owen, Jimmy Hoppe, Michelle Estay for Commissioner Strain, and Kent Brown. The attorney attending was Dennis Blunt. Chairman Fontenot asked the following individuals to attend the executive session: Kyle McCann, Andy Brown, Betsy Ward, Michael Klein, Rogers Leonard, Wade Baumgartner, and Benjy Rayburn.

The executive session was held.

**Action #5** A motion was made by Dane Hebert, seconded by Damian Bollich and carried, to adjourn executive session and reconvene the LRRB meeting agenda.

Chairman of the Col-Rice Subcommittee John Denison then gave a report on the Col-Rice Board activities. The Board met recently with representatives from administer the program. Mr. Denison reported the contracted 3 tenders per year were purchased, meeting the agreement obligations. Louisiana was reported to currently receive 14% of the funds generated from these purchases. Year 2020's purchases had not been scheduled at the time of the meeting or this report to the LRRB.

Chairman Fontenot reported that John Denison had served in 2018-2019 as an interim director on the Col-Rice Board and thanked him for his service.

**ACTION #6** A motion was made by Jude Doise, seconded by Gerald Leonard and approved that John Denison serve as Louisiana's director on the Col-Rice Board.

LRRB Col-Rice Committee was then discussed, as members currently serving were asked their pleasure on continuing to serve on this subcommittee. All agreed to continue in this role. Dane Hebert, Eric Savant, David LaCour, Jeffery Sylvester, Gerald Leonards were reappointed to this subcommittee by unanimous consent.

Dr. Rogers Leonard then updated the board on the LSU Foundation Endowed Chair Progress, following a presentation of funds for this chairmanship to Dr. Groth during the Field Day. Dr. Leonard explained the initial appropriation of \$1 million was already seeing interest and being dispersed accordingly. The second appropriation of funds of \$500,000 would see interest being dispersed in FY2020.

John Denison then gave a brief IP committee report. The MOU was reported to have another year under its current term. Members currently serving on this committee include John Denison, Alan Lawson, Sammy Noel, Jude Doise and Jason Waller. All members agreed to continue serving in the capacity and were approved by unanimous consent.

The pending legal issues were previously discussed during executive session. With no further questions for Dennis Blunt, the board continued on with the approved agenda.

The USA Rice Farmers Association Report was given during the Field Day by Ms. Betsy Ward. No further questions or actions were taken.

Dr. Linscombe gave an update regarding the USA Rice Foundation and thanked the board for their support. Dr. Linscombe discussed the potential for more equitable contributions from states to the Foundation based on income. He continued by discussing the success of the USA Rice Sustainability Report and the continuation of Funding from NRCS. The Foundation hopes to continue funding for this project from NRCS beyond 2020. He concluded his report by mentioning Louisiana currently has 2 participants in the USA Rice Leadership Program and they encourage more Louisiana applicants for the 2020 class later this year.

Dr. Leonard then called upon Dr. Groth to give a LSU AgCenter update and associated projects. Dr. Groth cited the completion of numerous projects funded by LRRB, with only the building expansion and mill construction projects left to complete. He invited any in attendance to view the building expansion project and estimated it would be completed in approximately 2 weeks. Groth also stated 4 or 5 other projects such as the equipment shed, well pump and others had been adorned with signage denoting the contributions for said projects from the LRRB.

Kyle McCann then briefly reviewed the ethics training and reporting requirements for Board members. Members will receive reminder emails. The Board also discussed the desire for reminder texts. Chairman Fontenot pledged to work with Andy Brown in establishing a LRRB group text for reminders and event opportunities.

Mr. McCann then informed the board of a change in auditors required by the state. McCann said the former company was J. Walker & Company, APC and the newly appointed auditor would be Heinz & Macaluso, LLC.

Mr. McCann further notified the LRRB that the required compliance questionnaire had been completed and would need to be approved by the LRRB.

**ACTION #7** A motion was made by John Earls, seconded by Jude Doise and carried, that the Board approve the audit compliance questionnaire and send it to the auditors Heinz and Macaluso, LLC.

Chairman Fontenot then discussed the need for a document retention policy. With the ability to move document storage into the new facilities, it was seen as the proper time to look into what records needed to be kept in perpetuity and what could be discarded. Electronic back-up of files was also discussed, requesting a call for projects relating to the electronic archiving of files be considered by the LSU AgCenter. A proposed document retention policy was presented by Kyle McCann and Chairman Fontenot.

**ACTION #8** A motion was made by Dane Hebert, seconded by Eric Savant, and carried to adopt the document retention policy as presented (policy is attached to minutes).

Chairman Fontenot briefly reported on the updating of the physical address for the LRRB.

**ACTION #9** A motion was made by Damian Bollich, seconded by Alan Lawson and carried to notify the Secretary of State of the updated address.

Chairman Fontenot brought up the election of officers.

**ACTION #10** A motion was made by Jeffrey Sylvester, seconded by Sammy Noel, and carried to reelect all officers for the 2019-2020 term whereas Richard Fontenot – Chairman, Dane Hebert – Vice Chairman, and John Dennison – Secretary/Treasurer.

The next meeting date was tentatively set for Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. This would be the project review meeting. Committee meetings were also tentatively scheduled prior to the full meeting. Both IP and Col-Rice will meet October 29<sup>th</sup>, with IP meetings at 10:00 am and Col-Rice at 1:00pm. A meal will be provided between meetings for both committees.

Other business included remarks on a successful rice field day and thanks to Dr. Groth and all LSU AgCenter faculty and staff. John Denison inquired about the possibility for a sign to be constructed on I-10 noting the research station. Dr. Groth and Linscombe reminded the board that the station property does not extend to the I-10 frontage, but Dr. Leonard and Groth would research other options.

The public comment period was then conducted. No public comments were provided.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:44 pm.