**MINUTES**

**LOUISIANA CRAWFISH PROMOTION & RESEARCH BOARD**

**October 9th, 2018**

**USGS NATIONAL WETLANDS RESEARCH CENTER**

**700 CAJUNDOME BLVD.**

**LAFAYETTE, LA**

**Call to Order:**

David Savoy called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

**Roll Call:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT** **MEMBERS ABSENT**

David Savoy Ralph Babin

Robert Buller Wayne Romig

Wylie Jewell

Jody Meche

Bill Pizzolato

Greg Faulk

Chandra Scarber

Kip Lastraps

**Declaration of a Quorum:**

A quorum was declared with 7 members present and 3 members absent.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes from the August 9th, 2018 Board meeting were read.

**MOTION BY**: Jody Meche seconded by Kip Lastraps to approve the minutes from the October 9th, 2018 Board meeting. Motion Carried.

**Collections & Financial Report:**

David Savoy called on Ron Harrell to present the collections and financial reports. He reported to the Board the current condition of accounts.

**MOTION BY:** Jody Meche seconded by Wylie Jewell to accept the financial report as presented. Motion Carried.

**Promotion & Research:**

Donald Dartez and Rodney Hess reported to the Board on the activities of the Board’s website and Facebook page. The engagement numbers and likes on the Facebook page have both increased. Heavy promotion of Louisiana crawfish will begin in January and continue in the months of February, March, April and May.

Next, an update of the automated crawfish peeling machine was reviewed. Since the last meeting, images were collected of crawfish to use in the machine-learning pipeline for the vision system. The machine vision system components have been selected and the system structure refined. In addition, the initial subsystem designs, for both the mechanical and controls systems, have been developed. The team also visited the facilities at Gulf Crown Seafood to see their shrimp peeling process. To date, the project is on schedule. The purchase requisition for the procurement for this equipment is underway. In addition, data on the Louisiana crawfish population continues to be collected not only for use in both training the vision and control algorithms of the device, but also to help refine the specifications of the design. Having objective data on average crawfish sizes, etc. is extremely valuable information and drives the sizing and distribution of many of the design subsystems. This means that in the next quarter, there will be experimental testing of the shell cutting forces and continued tuning of the machine vision system. In addition, the development of the subsystem prototypes that began in the last quarter will continue.

Neil Melancon, Louisiana Farm Bureau, next presented to the Board a sponsorship request of the “Feasting on Agriculture” segment featured on *This Week in Louisiana Agriculture (TWILA)*. This sponsorship provides the Board to the following: pre-segment and post-segment audio bumpers featuring the Board logo and the use of crawfish in segments as often as possible. This sponsorship will also include the weekly price check on crawfish, which will engage Louisiana residents in thinking about their weekend crawfish plans and promote the Louisiana crawfish industry.

**MOTION BY:** Greg Faulk seconded by Chandra Scarber to approve the *This Week in Louisiana Agriculture* sponsorship in the amount of $7,000.00. Motion Carried.

Next, Holly Clegg gave a report on her promotional campaign for Louisiana crawfish. Consumers that are searching for crawfish recipes are served Holly’s recipes as top options. She continues to post her recipes, videos and blogs on multiple social media platforms such as: YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest to promote Louisiana crawfish and to refer consumers to the Board’s website page. One of her Louisiana crawfish recipes is being featured in a new Tailgating EBook. Another recipe was also featured on the homepage of a newspaper in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Lafayette and multiple recipes are featured on the EatFit app, Azumio Health, Slender Kitchen and the Food Channel site.

Jessica Lange gave a report on the billboard campaign. Location ideas and a budget were discussed for the 2019 billboard campaign. If the promotional grant by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture is approved the Board would like to use the $30,000.00 grant money towards the 2019 campaign for a total amount of $75,000.00 allocated to the 2019 campaign.

**MOTION BY:** Robert Buller seconded by Wylie Jewell to approve up to $75,000.00 for the 2019 billboard campaign. Motion Carried.

The Board discussed the issue regarding the fee proposal for inspection/testing of imported seafood and the potential ramifications for crawfish.

Next, contract renewals were discussed.

**MOTION BY:** Kip Lastraps seconded by Chandra Scarber to approve the renewal of Jessica Lange’s contract for 2019. Motion Carried.

**Board Business:**

The Board next discussed the crawfish season.

**No public comment**

The date for the next Board meeting will be Wednesday, January 23rd, 2019 at 1:00 P.M. at the USGS National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette.

**MOTION BY:** Jody Meche and seconded by Wylie Jewell to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried.