

MINUTES
LOUISIANA SWEET POTATO COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 29, 2010
10:00 A.M.
LSU Ag Center
8592 Hwy 1
Mansura, Louisiana 71350

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Larry Fontenot called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Rene Simon called roll. A quorum was declared.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Lee Jones
James Deshotel
Ryan Quebedeaux
Randy Deshotel
Nelson Bordelon
Larry Fontenot
Larry Thibodeaux

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kelsey McKoin
Venoy Kinnaird
Kenneth Thornhill
Mark Fields
Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Larry Fontenot reported that the minutes for the April meeting were mailed to the members.

MOTION made by Randy Deshotel and second by Lee Jones to approve the minutes from the April 26, 2010 meeting. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial statement from May 31, 2010 was mailed to each member. René Simon discussed the financials and updated the Board on bills paid.

MOTION made by Ryan Quebedeaux and second by Nelson Bordelon to approve the financial statements from May 31, 2010. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Simon reported on his trip to Washington DC in June to the National Sweet Potato Council mid-year visit. Brian Breaux, Sweet Potato Commodity Director for Louisiana Farm Bureau accompanied him on the trip. They visited Louisiana's Representatives or staff members, Senate Staff members and USDA. Some of the issues raised were H2A/AgJobs, Disaster Assistance for the 2009 crop, funds needed for the USDA Research station in North Carolina, the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court's ruling concerning pesticide applications, and USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service's method for reporting the sweet potato crop.

Mr. Simon is working with Tad Hardy, LDAF State Entomologist, Craig Roussel, LDAF Horticulture Director, and Lamb Weston to consider the possibility of moving sweet potatoes from pink tag areas to the plant in Delhi which is in the green tag area.

Mr. Simon discussed that public interest groups are voicing concerns over Bisphenol A (BPA) levels in canned goods. It has been alleged by these groups that the use of BPA can have adverse health affects. Can liners used at canneries contain BPA. Mr. Larry Thibodaux also added to the discussion and how it relates to Bruce Foods. The use of BPA in these liners significantly extends the shelf life of canned products and if discontinued the products in the can would only be good for 6 months. By using BPA the shelf life is 3 years.

Mr. Simon discussed the closing of the Allen plant in Hessmer. Mark Fields resigned from the Board and is moving to a plant in Texas. It was discussed that the Allen plant in Arkansas may accept Louisiana sweet potatoes from pink tag areas. Craig Roussel reported that it had been done in the past and Matt Garber reported that he had sent some before and routed them around green tag areas. Mr. Roussel indicated that LDAF needs the Louisiana sweet potato industry to formally request that LDAF make contact with Arkansas on this issue. A letter from the industry would be helpful. Mr. James Deshotel requested that Commissioner Strain call Arkansas to discuss the possibility of shipping from pink tag areas.

The United Fresh trade show will be held in New Orleans in May 2011. The Board would like a presence there, and will discuss further the January meeting.

REPORT FROM DIANE ALLEN AND ASSOCIATES

Al McDuff and Nancy Steiner began by asking that the Sweet Rewards Recipe Contest be open to the use of canned, processed and fresh sweet potatoes.

MOTION was made by Mr. Randy Deshotel to open the contest to all and Mr. Bordelon second the motion. It was passed by voice vote.

DAA discussed Southern Eagle, a beer distributor in the New Orleans area, that distributes a beer made by Lazy Magnolia Brewery in Kiln, MS that is made using Louisiana sweet potatoes. This might be a cross-promotion opportunity.

DAA gave an overview of current marketing programs, including printed ads and newspaper marketing. DAA also suggested continuing to use Holly Clegg, the Quickie System for image storage, the recipe contest, and trade journal advertising.

The Board requested that all information about Allen Canning be removed from the website. They suggested that DAA & Associates look at the possibility of using bill boards for advertising.

CONSIDERATION OF 2010 – 2011 BUDGET

Mr. Simon reviewed the proposed budget for 2010-2011. Commission members requested that \$10,000 be added to the advertising budget for a total of \$120,000 for advertising.

MOTION was made by Mr. Jones to accept the budget with an additional \$10,000 being added to be used for billboard ads. The total advertising budget will be \$120,000. Mr. Randy Deshotel seconded the motion. It passed unanimously by voice vote.

REVIEW REQUEST FOR YIELD ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2009 CROP YEAR

Most of the request for yield adjustments had been reviewed at the April meeting however the Board members had been passed over because of lack of a quorum when they recused themselves. Todd Parker Assistant Commissioner of LDAF's Agriculture and Environmental Sciences consulted with Marvin

Montgomery, General Counsel for LDAF. Mistery Parker and Montgomery came to the conclusion that if the Commission members abstained from voting, a quorum could be maintained and the integrity of the vote would be intact.

Those considered were:

James Deshotel

MOTION was made by Mr. Quebedeaux and second by Mr. Jones to accept the application for reduction in yield. Motion passed.

Lee Jones

MOTION was made by Mr. Quebedeaux and second by Mr. Bordelon to accept the application for reduction in yield. Motion passed.

Venoy Kinnaird

MOTION was made by Mr. Jones and second by Mr. J. Deshotel to accept the application for reduction in yield. Motion passed.

The actions by the Commission at this meeting complete the consideration of all yield reduction requests received before the deadline. All requests now have been heard and acted upon.

NOMINATIONS FOR EXPIRING COMMISSION MEMBERS SEATS

Mr. Bordelon (shipper), Mr. Jones and Mr. Thornhill, (growers) just completed their first term as members of the Board.

A recent change to state statutes created a 13th position on the Commission, adding a third processor. However, with the closing of Allen Canning, one of the processor positions may not be filled. Also, state law requires that the Commission submit a list of nominees to itself to fill vacant positions. The nominees are Mr. Bordelon for shipper position, and Mistery Jones and Thornhill for grower positions. They were nominated for their second term. Mr. Calvin Keys was the nominee as a processor. He was nominated for his first term.

MOTION was made by Mr. Bordelon and second by Mr. Jones to accept the above nominees. It passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Simon read the resignation letter from Mark Fields. In the letter Mr. Fields wanted everyone to know how much he enjoyed working with the Board, Commission and the growers over all the years.

The Chase Station will host their annual field day on August 24th.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be in Mansura at the Ag Center in January 2011. The date and time will be announced at a later date by the Chairman.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION made by Mr. Quebedeaux and second by Mr. Bordelon to adjourn. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.