

MINUTES
Meeting with Pierce's Disease Program Interested Parties
July 25, 2005
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon (Facilities Tour – Optional)
12:00 noon (Luncheon)
1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Meeting)
Gillespie County Agriculture Extension Building, 95 Frederick Road,
Fredericksburg, Texas

The facilities tour began with a stop at the Gillespie County Airport, to view the site which has been identified for the location of the greenhouse facility and demonstration vineyard. A drawing (**ATTACHMENT A**) illustrating possible development of the area was displayed and discussed by Greg Snelgrove and Jim Kamas.

The tour proceeded to the Langerhan's greenhouse facility in downtown Fredericksburg. Forrest Mitchell and Isabelle Lauziere presented an overview of existing Pierce's Disease research conducted in the greenhouses at that facility. This provided an overview of the type/size of greenhouse facility that is under consideration for the airport location. Questions regarding trapping and data results were addressed. Joy Johnson said she appreciated this briefing as she learned a great deal about the research. This concluded the facilities tour.

The group arrived at the Gillespie County Agriculture Extension Building for a box luncheon (co-hosted by Gillespie County Commissioners and the TAMU Agriculture Program).

At 12:30 p.m., the meeting was called to order by Kevin Heinz. He thanked Jim Kamas and the staff of the Gillespie County Cooperative Extension Service for their assistance with arrangements for the meeting. He acknowledged the cooperation and assistance of the Gillespie County Judge and County Commissioners, and thanked Greg Snelgrove for his assistance with logistics. Heinz thanked the County Commissioners and Dr. Elsa Murano for hosting the luncheon.

Elsa Murano welcomed the group and thanked all for their interest in the Pierce's Disease research and education program. She stated the reason for the day's activities is to encourage communication among all involved with the project – growers, winery owners, Pierce's Disease Grower Advisory Group members, Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association members, APHIS, TDA, USDA, TAMU Ag Program participants, etc. She thanked Jim Kamas for his assistance with meeting arrangements, and the Gillespie County Commissioners and Judge for their assistance and cooperation. She called on Mark Stroehrer, Gillespie County Judge, to make comments.

Mark Stroehrer welcomed all to Gillespie County, and said they are pleased to co-host the luncheon and meeting. He offered thanks to Jim Kamas for his assistance. Stroehrer said although there have been glitches in the past, the group is moving forward now, and that is evident by the excellent participation in this meeting – including representation from APHIS, Congressman Mike Conaway's office, Senator Frank

Madla's office, etc. Stroeher said this is the beginning of a great partnership and confirmed the support and assistance of the County. He indicated that he and the County Commissioners would leave the meeting early as they were scheduled to hold a meeting of County Commissioners.

Murano asked all participants to introduce themselves. Following introductions, Murano presented an overview of the TAMU Ag Program (**ATTACHMENT B**). She spoke about the tripartite mission of the land grant university – teaching, research and extension, and explained the role of each. She said the PD project includes elements of all three parts, and she has named a leadership team to carry out the mission. She identified the leadership indicating Mark Hussey (direct link for TAES), Roland Smith (direct link for TCE), and she serves as the link representing the College of Agriculture. Overall project coordination and management has been assigned to Kevin Heinz, project coordinator.

Murano said that to achieve the project goals, one must 1) identify the problem; 2) develop an approach to addressing the problem; and 3) manage the various aspects of the project to ensure accomplishment of previously identified goals. In identifying the problem, she said “Pierce’s Disease is detrimental to viticulture and can have a devastating effect on grape and wine production in Texas.” This disease has involvement in three areas – microbiology (*Xylella fastidiosa* (Xf)), entomology (glassy winged sharp shooters), and horticultural sciences (host plants, resistant plants). Murano said the department heads of these three TAMU departments serve on the leadership team and are present at this meeting.

The second step is developing a project to address the problem. Murano said the Ag Program is working systematically to establish goals, objectives, specific action steps, timelines and deliverables. The leadership team is identifying needed expertise and materials. Finally, managing the project requires leadership, communication, facilitation and coordination. Murano said the Ag Program has a contractual responsibility to the funding agency (APHIS) to pursue the stated goals and objectives, progress according to agreed upon milestones, and to use funds according to the approved budget. Heinz has been named project leader, working closely with Dennis Gross (Plant Pathology) and Tim Davis (Horticulture). Contractual oversight is provided by Mark Hussey (TAES) and Roland Smith (TCE).

Murano said that she and the leadership team believe effective communication is an essential component for the success of the Pierce’s Disease project -- internally between researchers and Extension specialists; and externally with the funding agency (APHIS), stakeholders, other partners (TDA, TT, UH, etc.). She identified that what the Ag Program needed from the Pierce’s Disease Grower Advisory Group (PDGAG) was advice as to information delivery (its relevance, the most effective vehicle(s) of delivery, etc.); as well as advice with regards to access to Fredericksburg resources (facilities, growers, etc.). Murano acknowledged the urgency of solving or managing the Pierce’s Disease problem for the Texas wine and grape growing industries to remain successful; and as a result the need for focused research that delivers management strategies and solutions to the stakeholders in a timely manner. She stressed the need to focus on the

main goal... to control Pierce's Disease and hopefully eradicate it from Texas. She and all members of the PD project are fully committed to this goal.

Heinz presented an overview of the PD Program (**ATTACHMENT C**). He said the program has grown tremendously, pulling together the best people available (from TAMU, TAES, TCE, ARS, UH, TT, etc.) to form the current research and education leadership team. He said we have much to celebrate as well as move forward past growing pains. As the program expands, demands also increase.

Heinz spoke about plan implementation. He said the plan, dated April 2005 "Texas Research and Education Plan to Combat Pierce's Disease," is a robust, aggressive plan that addresses a broad range of biological issues associated with Pierce's Disease. Rick Naber questioned what does A&M need from the PDGAG? Cord Switzer asked where can he find a copy of the plan?

Murano explained that APHIS and TAMU have a contractual agreement. This agreement has been signed and we cannot erase that and start from scratch. We must honor that agreement. We need industry input, and ask that growers continue dialogue with TAMU.

Joy Johnson said you ask for input, but we have not had that chance. We want communication with TAMU during the process. How will we avoid communication problems in the future? Cord Switzer asked for clarification – we have a 1 year budget, but a 5 year plan; before next year, he suggested that we have definite coordination with industry and stakeholders.

Heinz said the industry stakeholders will be key to helping keep the program relevant, and as a result industry input is desperately needed. The PD Executive Committee, together with TAES and TCE leadership, will do its best to match research expertise, programming, and resources with industry needs and the agreed upon goals of the Plan.

Heinz said the plan implementation includes: detection, research, education and infrastructure. He reintroduced Dennis Gross and Tim Davis as members of the leadership team, and said that the team has been meeting regularly since appointed. With regard to fiscal oversight, they will make certain the budget is appropriated in the most relevant areas. Measures of research effectiveness will include: (1) timely delivery of industry extension education programs, (2) communication, demonstration and evaluation of translational and discovery research, and (3) other metrics demonstrating scientific rigor and relevancy to programmatic goals.

Heinz presented an overview of the process that was used to develop the April 05-March 06 budget.

Joy Johnson asked when did the new administrative leadership begin? April? May? Cord Switzer asked what date? Murano said she became Vice Chancellor and Dean on January 3. She is unable to pinpoint the exact date of appointment of the PD team; however, it has been an evolution of new leadership. Prior to the naming of one single

leadership team, there was an appearance of the program having a multitude of leaders representing a variety of interests. To correct this problem, and in an effort to provide the most effective response to stakeholders, she realized the need to name one single project coordinator. Tim Davis mentioned the memorandum dated June 21, 2005 drafted by Murano and sent to APHIS that announced the newly formed leadership team and project coordinator..

Joy Johnson asked who is accountable? Murano responded that Dr. Murano is ultimately responsible.. She has developed a new leadership structure with Heinz as coordinator, and the leadership team will help in making certain the contractual agreements with APHIS are upheld. Murano said she recognizes the frustrations of the past, but believes the openness and dialogue (as evidenced today) will lead to a successful program.

Cord Switzer said he is not asking questions to be confrontational. He is just trying to set up a timeline in order to plan for the future and time management.

Murano acknowledged the occurrence of past difficulties. She asked the stakeholders in attendance to give TAMUS a benefit of the doubt, as we will continue to work and remedy past problems and improve the alignment of the program to efficiently and effectively address the problem of Pierce's Disease.

As an example of this effort, Heinz said we are laying out on the table the budget process whereby all are provided information and everyone is brought up to speed. He said prior to the current budget, two agreements were active with APHIS – one through TAES and one through TCE. Each addressed a different aspect of the program, each funded different researchers and extension specialists, and each had different starting and ending dates. At a January 10, 2005 held in Austin, the Pierce's Disease Task Force (PDTF) developed three writing teams that were to develop three separate research and education areas, and it was requested that each team develop a \$400,000 annual budget to support the proposed work. The combined total budget addressed by the PDTF was \$1.2 million. At a latter date, APHIS added \$200,000 to support the statewide vineyard survey. In a meeting held in Austin on May 6, 2005 among representatives of APHIS, TAES, TCE, and TAMU, APHIS confirmed a PD target dollar amount of approximately \$1.113 million. However, upon review by Fort Collins, APHIS reported that the project was \$250,000 over budget. In response to this shortfall, and in an effort to obtain results of a rapid budget audit, all spending was frozen from June 2-9. Guidelines used by the Executive Committee to resolve the budget shortfall were: no employees were to be terminated, and the integrity of the program was to be maintained. He worked with all agencies involved to seek cost savings. It was decided to reduce the APHIS survey costs by \$50,000. The remaining sum was obtained by an across the board reduction in each of the project leaders' budgets. In making these budget cuts, none of the PIs have reduced their plans of work.

Heinz showed a slide indicating TAMUS cost share for the project, including salary, fringe benefits, and indirect costs totaling \$456,000. With regard to personnel management, Heinz said the leadership team wants to insure personnel accountability

in terms of relevancy and productivity. They are also considering the use an external assessment group to provide suggestions.

The development of the Gillespie county facilities will be a multi-year project. \$70,000 has been set aside for infrastructure in the current budget. An Ag Program employee, Jim Dunn, is identified to work with the PD leadership team in coordination of this activity.

With regards to external communication, Heinz said this meeting is a start. He said a web-based support structure has been suggested by Joy Johnson and Cord Switzer as a repository of information. Heinz suggested holding quarterly meetings of the executive committee and advisory group. He said he wants to make certain that all processes and communications are inclusive of all industry participants, and he requested assistance in obtaining names/contact information of individuals to include.

Joy Johnson said growers questioned why the sticky cards are not being picked up. Heinz said all of those are being delivered to one person for handling and data collection. Joy asked how can we get information from researchers about what bugs are in the vineyards? When and where? Heinz said Forrest Mitchell has been the "point man" to provide this information.

Gene Estes made a recommendation that meetings be held quarterly with a least one person from administration. Unanimous agreement.

Steve Johnson asked what can we learn about the numbers of bugs you find in the field? Is there training available for the trappers? Forrest Mitchell responded by saying the trappers can identify the insects. He trained APHIS collectors to identify the insects, but then there was budget cut. Now, it is very doable.

Forrest asked is there an interest in the growers' community to learn to identify insects?

Bill Blackmon asked can you go in a vineyard and tell if it has PD?

Cord Switzer asked how can the growers suggest/request/propose ideas for research. Forrest Mitchell answered by saying call us up, come by and talk to us. Ed Smith said that if growers talk to any TCE employees, they will share that information with TAES researchers.

Heinz said the PD leadership team will begin the budget process three months in advance with APHIS, in order to meet the deadlines. Discussion followed regarding the timing for the federal budgets. Gabe Parker asked if we could double the funding? To increase funding from state or federal legislative appropriations, Murano reminded the group that because of the TAMUS system processes, private individuals have greater flexibility than TAMUS employees in contacting Congressmen. She welcomed the opportunity to assist in the process as permitted and warranted.

Rick Naber said we want to help with legislative contacts and federal funds. Murano said the quarterly meeting will be effective in helping to identify needs for additional

funding and in maintaining effective communication among TAES, TCE and the producers. During this time, we could put together a list of needs for legislative requests. Heinz said, again, we want to make certain that discussions are all inclusive and everyone has a voice. He asked who should be a part of these discussions? Joy Johnson said the TxPDGAG, TWGGA, Alphonse Dotson (incoming president of TWGGA), Dakota Julson. A resolution was made for Kevin Heinz as project coordinator to provide information directly to Joy Johnson for dissemination. Unanimous agreement.

Cord Switzer asked about possible posting on a website: can we have the plan on the website? These presentations from today's meetings? Budgets? Heinz asked what are the most appropriate means of communication with wine growers? Ed Hellman said he currently has a website, but he will need additional funding to keep it updated. Gary Carpenter and Bobby Guerra said the APHIS website site may serve as a resource/link. Heinz said a Texas PD website might serve as an information source with links to APHIS, other partners, researchers' own sites, etc.

Gene Estes asked what is the process for growers to send suspect plants/insects for identification? Dave Appel and Dennis Gross responded that the TAMU Plant Diagnostic Laboratory can be contacted. It was mentioned that recent regulations with overnight shippers may require permits for shipment of plant material/insects.

The meeting broke from 3:10 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.

The meeting reconvened with the PD Program researchers and extension specialists providing a 3-5 minute overview of their individual programs.

Mark Black said he is looking for a supplemental host of bacterium.

Joy Johnson asked why does the disease occur in some fields and not others?

Dave Appel said his plan of work involves diagnosis and epidemiology. He said he is working on a guide for diagnosis of PD in Texas and should have something for review by December. He has focused efforts on epidemiology of PD regarding the rates of disease progress within vineyards. Gene Estes asked is this information available to growers now? Appel replied not at this time; however, he did present this information at the annual meeting in January. He will build diagnostic guides and information will become available.

Izabelle Lauziere said she has been working on the sharpshooter project since 2000. She has been conducting basic biology studies that will form the foundation of most management practices. She has identified three insects which may carry the disease. She has also identified two parasitoids which are natural enemies of the GWSS. She has developed methods for rearing these parasitoids, which are currently unidentified. A goal of her project is to better understand parasitoid-GWSS interactions and to develop successful biological control methods that will lead to a reduction in GWSS populations within target vineyards.

Forrest Mitchell reported that Julio Bernal was unable to attend the meeting, so he relayed information on Bernal's behalf. Bernal has developed a plan of work in collaboration with ARS in Weslaco. Heinz interjected a meeting he had with Dr. John Goolsby who revealed that the ARS lab is primarily focusing on host plant – GWSS – natural enemy interactions in South Texas, particularly how they relate to California agricultural situations. He is looking at commercial vineyards and their relationships to wild hosts. He is assessing how landscape effects influence GWSS and natural enemy population dynamics, and how these effects may be managed to the benefit of grape growers. Dr. Bernal's program, which is very focused on conducting field studies in Fredericksburg, will also begin to address which plants harbor insects and which do not.

Mitchell said he is conducting sampling programs in conjunction with APHIS to determine what is the range of the GWSS in Texas, and can we detect the bacterium in them? He has identified two additional pests in vineyards – one of which is a spittlebug. He is also looking at how long pesticide treatments work, and identifying preferred feeding sites of GWSS. Gene Estes asked if his studies show if there is anything new in the behavior of the GWSS? Does it overwinter or not? Mitchell said he hopes his analysis will show what percentage of GWSS are carriers.

Ed Hellman said he is conducting a statewide vineyard survey with Jim Kamas and Penny Adams, visiting all vineyards in the state and obtaining information for development of statewide GIS system (landscape view of distribution, etc.). He said a graduate student is studying a vineyard with PD in Fort Davis (West Texas). He has also developed and maintained information on a website. Rick Nader asked can we get Forrest's pictures out on Ed Hellman's website. Forrest said he would send them to Ed, and Ed said he would place them on the site.

Jim Kamas talked about the survey of vineyards in Texas. He is producing a map which indicates vineyards with and without PD. He is also working with Lisa Morano (UH) to explore the diversity of wild vines. He recently traveled along the Texas coastline sampling wild vines as part of the survey. Kamas said he working on an update of a PD management publication issued in 2000. He has been very active in meeting with growers, and handling the arrangements for the annual symposium in January. Kamas said he has money in his budget for development of a research and demonstration vineyard at the Gillespie County Airport facility. A second, smaller, inoculation vineyard is proposed as well.

Cord Switzer asked about the vineyard in Stephenville? Why are resources used to support two facilities rather than one? Forrest Mitchell said the vineyard in Stephenville was put together with materials/supplies from a previous project, and the cost for establishing it was small. He is using that vineyard for research purposes, infecting vines and destroying diseased ones.

Cord Switzer asked do we have acreage available here? Forrest Mitchell and Jim Kamas responded.

Joy Johnson asked about the three departments involved in research and education – entomology, horticulture, plant pathology. What is the distribution (is there a balance) in funding among those three? Heinz responded that he could not provide an exact number; however, the three are about equal in terms of researchers and research dollars (excluding infrastructure development) going to each researcher.

Joy Johnson asked if the goal is to move Isabelle Lauziere's research to the airport, what about the infrastructure cost? Rick Naber said he understands the funds from APHIS cannot be committed to brick and mortar. Heinz said that was correct (there will be a move to a new facility to be built at the airport location) and that buildings (derived from funds associated with the APHIS contract) must be considered "temporary."

Joy Johnson asked can we go out and get funding for the buildings/construction? What about TDA? Fundraising? Lobbying state government? Discussion followed regarding opportunities and timelines for such contacts. Mark Hussey said the TAMUS policy prohibits construction of permanent facilities on property not owned by TAMUS.

Roland Smith (representing TCE) said a lot of good discussion has taken place. This is a very complex problem that requires a multifaceted approach. He said TCE is interested in working with all of the industry in addressing their concerns.

Mark Hussey said that TAES is committed to working on complex problems like PD. The partnerships with other agencies (TDA, APHIS, USDA) and faculty at others universities helps to insure obtaining the very best to work on this issue.

Cord Switzer asked how can you help us get funds from others like the Bruce McMillan Foundation? Mark Hussey responded that we will need to continue to work together, talk about funding opportunities, identify priorities and alternative funding opportunities.. Murano said the TAMU Development Foundation coordinates A&M's submissions to other foundations. Certainly, we would like to work with you.

Cord Switzer asked what are other possible avenues to explore for funding of these projects? We need your help in identifying them and how to approach them successfully. Ed Smith said TCE and TAES are well coordinated, and it is incumbent on the industry to look at and identify research and education needs for the next five-ten years, and then overlay that with funding needs.

Joe Davidson commented that APHIS is pleased to be involved in this project. He asked Bobby Guerra to comment on his trapping project. Guerra said he is trapping 27 vineyards (out of 28) on a biweekly basis. The traps are collected and sent to Stephenville, where Forrest Mitchell performs the insect counts and assesses the occurrence of bacteria within a subset of the insects. He asked growers if they have any concerns/complaints on trapping, to please contact him. Gene Estes asked if he could be added to the list of vineyards for the trapping project for next year. Guerra said he does not determine the list, but his request has been noted.

Joy Johnson expressed thanks to Craig Parker for his dedicated work over the past several years. She thanked the Ag Program for scheduling this meeting and said the

group is appreciative and grateful for the expertise and talent in the Ag Program. Johnson gave a brief history of the TxPDGAG. She said the TxPDGAG was formed by Ed Hiler to provide support and facilitate information between growers and TAMU. Ron Lacewell made it clear to the group that they could be independent. She named the 7 original members (Craig Parker, Alphonse Dotson, Joe Duran, Bill Blackmon, Bobby Cox, Jim Johnson, Jerry Watson), and said TxPDGAG was expanded to 13 members (Joy Johnson, Patrick Johnson Tom Barkley, Sam Jordan, Gene Estes, Anthony Fasano). She said the group met at 8:00 a.m. July 25, and developed a list of issues for discussion today. She was pleased that most of those issues have been addressed today. She mentioned that there may always be a little bit of tension from the growers with their desire for immediate and relevant data. She said she believes we now have a vehicle in place to get dialogue going. She did want all to understand that most of the growers and vineyard owners are pursuing their dreams in this industry and putting all of their time, money and effort into these vineyards; thus, there is an immediate need for information. We are passionate. Johnson said the growers will always have an eye on making sure the program is run efficiently and effectively.

David Kostroun (TDA) expressed thanks to Elsa Murano and Kevin Heinz for facilitating this meeting. Commissioner Combs was unable to attend, but did propose suggestions for consideration. All of those have been discussed in today's meetings.

William Roeder, County Commissioner, said this has been the best meeting of grape growers he has attended. He thanked all for their participation, and again confirmed that Gillespie County is pleased to work with the Ag Program on the facility at the airport.

Kevin Heinz recapped the discussions of the day, and reiterated the two resolutions which were proposed, discussed and unanimously agreed upon:

- 1) To hold quarterly meetings (July-October-January-April); and
 - 2) To facilitate communication by a direct link from Kevin Heinz to Joy Johnson.
- Alphonse Dotson commented that the communications should be all inclusive of the industry as well as independent growers. Heinz agreed with Mr. Dotson and that inclusive communication is the intent of the PD Executive Committee. Johnson said that inclusive communication is her understanding as well, and by working closely with Dacota Julson (TWGGA) and others, she would be able to develop lists for information distribution.

Elsa Murano closed the meeting by thanking all for their participation and input in the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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