

**The American Chestnut Foundation  
Spring Board and Committee Meetings  
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center**

**Chapters' Meeting**

**April 5, 2019**

**In attendance:**

**Committee Members:** Carolyn Keiffer Chair, Kathy Patrick, Hill Craddock, Yvonne Federowicz, Mark Double, Glen Kotnik, Greg Miller, John Wenderoth, Allen Nichols, John Scrivani, Cathy Mayes, Yuri Bihun, Larry Grossman, Betsy Gamber (staff liaison), Tom Saielli (*ex officio*, recorder), Kendra Collins (*ex officio*), and Ben Jarrett (*ex officio*)

**Absent:** Carmen Burkhalter, Doug Gillis, Jack Swatt, Ricky Caldwell, Al Faust, Mary Ayres

**Other Attendees:** Thomas Klak, Cathy Mayes, Paola Craddock, Paul Sisco, Brian Clark, Kathy Jones, John Dougherty, Debby Delmer, Robert Sypolt, Kim Steiner, Cartter Patton, Jim Searing, Bruce Wakeland, Brian McCarthy

**Staff:** Dan McKinnon, Jared Westbrook, Samantha Bowers, Brandon Yanez, Shana Zimnoch, Laura Barth, Jim Tolton, David Kaufman-Moore, Cherin Marmon-Saxe, Judy Antaramian and Jules Smith

**Call to Order**

Minutes spring 2019 conference call were approved.

**Discussion relating to Jared's Updated Science Report**

There was a discussion after Jared's updated science report. It was suggested that this committee consider the best way to relay this new information message back to their boards and volunteers.

Hill notes that more important than having a consistent message, it's important that we have our facts straight. Not all chapters will respond the same way to the current results, perhaps a case-by-case, chapter-by-chapter approach makes sense.

Betsy points out that if you get calls from reporters, please forward them to Jules Smith, Media & Communications Manager at the TACF national office. This may include any reporter/story, including general overview of TACF programs, etc.

**Laura Barth provides update on Meadowview Greenhouse (MGH) Goings-on**

Cold stratification study: How long can/should seeds be in storage before planting? Study included cold storage for 0, 28, 56 & 84 days in storage, multiple sources from each region.

Seeds would germinate w/o storage, but at inconsistent rates, usually taking longer than cold-stratified seeds. Time to germinate was faster with longer stratification.

Additional cold storage study, B3F3 stock from IN nursery. Seeds stored in: Peat, sphagnum moss, coconut coir, perlite and vermiculite; and various sanitation treatments: bleach, peroxide, SaniDate, zerotol, and control. Results coming...

Seeds sown late February to early March 2019.

Grafting study: Getting ready to really gear up grafting at Meadowview. Grafting workshop will be this Saturday after board meeting (April 6, 2019).

Long-term goals at MGH: Grow *good* seedlings in an environmentally safe way. Solution report showed high alkaline mix, low in Fe and B.

IPM – pesticides only used if necessary after other treatments employed, including, clean environment, pest tracking (e.g. sticky aphid cards, etc.), biocontrols, such as lacewings and lady bugs; aphid bate such as marigolds and nasturtiums. Also, establish plants around MGH that attract beneficial insects.

Landscape cultivars? Laura would like to breed for desirable horticulture traits such as compact forms and soft burs.

### **Chapter-specific breeding plans (Tom)**

At the fall 2018 meeting in Huntsville, AL, we discussed the Chapter-Specific breeding plans.

Tom reminds chapters to...

- a) Keep working on it
- b) Use genomic data to help plan Clapper program, eliminate inferior lines.
- c) Think about other options such as transgenics, GCO's and Phytophthora resistance
- d) Refer to Jared's questionnaire, if haven't already

Question – is this a plan or strategic document? How much detail do we incorporate into it? Probably we want to keep these short and bulleted.

How does Jared's presentation factor into it? If working with Clappers, use data to inform decisions about lines to keep or eliminate. Also consider how much resources to devote to traditional breeding.

Paul Sisco wants to make the best use of what we already have at the chapter level – get an analysis of the best trees in chapter seed orchards so we know about the *chapter material* – how resistant? How Chinese? This can be informative to the chapters' and national breeding program, and can help provide some relief.

We are getting the grant money needed to do this at Virginia Tech, so we'll be able to analyze chapter B3F2's. Maybe this year.

Greg Miller mentions that as chapters move forward with GCO's, look for other interesting hybrids to include, as well as American chestnuts. May be useful down the road...can't hurt.

## **Communication tools (Sara)**

Soon to be available to all chapters – consistent communication tools!

There are three core communication tools that chapters and staff are working on.

Note, maybe it's not necessary to always say the same things, every time. However, it would be very helpful to have a consistent message *most* of the time. For example, we want to press the 3BUR concept when we give presentations, right?

Elevator Pitch: Succinctly describes the chestnut foundation/ breeding plan for those times when you only have five minutes to describe what we're doing. Easy short handout. Not ready for primetime, but getting there.

FAQ card: Good thing for volunteers to keep handy; hand out at events. Has a few of the basic answers to questions about us/our work

Core presentation: An up-to-date presentation that covers the basics, pertinent info, including 3BUR, help find trees, etc. Nice standard presentation that can be edited as needed. 28 slides

- Maybe we can get the presentation out soon, for all those upcoming events.
- Also, maybe we can provide a narrated version on website? Cool idea.

In light of Jared's new data – What do we tell members and cooperators? Especially if there is a plan to put in new, maybe big plantings?

The one message to bring to chapters is simply, we will use these data to inform each chapter about the best material to work with and the inferior lines that can be removed from traditional breeding and repurposed in the transgenics program.

We will have a webinar to present this information in a factual, scientific way that is contextualized to be fair and open-minded. This will help us present a unified message, not a dire message. Coming soon, stay tuned.

Also, we will likely have an in-person science meeting later in the summer, involving science staff and many of our long-term researchers. We will consider all information from all angles and develop strategies and options for chapters to consider.

## **Volunteer software (Betsy)**

We have been looking into volunteer software for some time. Looking at options to help us track volunteer involvement, hours, etc. We want this to be something that can be accessed from our website and will benefit the entire organization (vs. external, like Cabot Cheese).

Carolyn points out that this can have multiple benefits, including building relations, grant funding, etc.

Betsy wants to form a small ad-hock group to review potential software and plan how it will be put in place. Plan to have something to discuss by next meeting.

Volunteers for committee can email Betsy. (John Scrivani & Kathy Jones volunteered).

### **Chapter outreach (Jules)**

If you have a newsletter (electronic, print or both) Username/handle, etc., please let Jules know so that she can stay up-to-date on the stories coming out of the chapters.

Also, we are coming out with new brochures that are nice, 8.5 x 11 bi-folds, so they can be easily printed on legal paper. Nice for chapters who need a bunch of brochures tomorrow.

Please visit the chapter resource page, there's cool stuff for you there.

### **WordPress (Yvonne)**

Using WordPress helps with communication at various scales. Yvonne demonstrates a WordPress site she helped create for the MA/RI chapter. Allows for the creation of forums (e.g. educators' forum, etc.). The forums allow conversations on-line. You can also upload images, plugin's, etc. Lots of features. Can be fun and helpful for chapters, though it may not be ready for chapters to launch into (?) – if interested, please contact Yvonne, and She will work with you.

### **Chapter Sharing**

The recent resignation was discussed.

John Dougherty – What would Bill say? He's not here, but he has always been open to using multiple tools to achieve our mission. After all, this is a plant-science & technology program, we need to investigate all possibilities and tools available – i.e. there is an option for everyone.

Yuri, says the VT/NH chapter has decided to incorporate transgenics in their program, and it was certainly contentious, but by embracing 3BUR, they feel they opened opportunities. Yuri will also be stepping down as chapter president and from the Chapters Committee.

Greg Miller adds that we now face multiple paths, but can't know with certainty which path is best. We don't necessarily have to integrate all options in all chapters, so the beliefs and attitudes within individual chapters can be respected, just as long as we make sure that as an organization, we keep a diversified portfolio.

The good news is there's something for everyone. The bad news is; some folks are worried that one method (transgenics) is wrong at any level. There is a lot of strong feelings, and potentially some (or a lot of) misinformation surrounding GMO's, and that is certainly something we need to be clear about as we move forward with our program.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

