



**WINE RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
WASHINGTON STATE WINE COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
June 23, 2017  
Prosser, Washington**

Attending: Joy Andersen, Dick Boushey, Brian Carter, Kevin Corliss, Rick Hamman, Julia Kock, Mike Means, Kay Simon and Bruce Watson

Absent: Scott Williams, Wade Wolfe

Guests and Staff: Melissa Hansen (WSWC), Steve Warner (WSWC), Thomas Henick-Kling (WSU)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

**Review 2017 Research Survey Results/Research Priority Review**

Melissa Hansen reviewed responses from the open-ended survey question for research topics before the Committee reviewed the current priority list. Research looking at organic pest management and vineyard production was mentioned numerous times as a topic for research. Steve Warner said that two groups of international wine professionals recently visiting Washington's wine industry asked why there are not more organic/sustainable grapes produced, in light of the state's low pest and fungal disease pressures. Although organic materials are often included in trials, such as organic mildew materials, it was agreed that specifically listing organic and sustainable could highlight ongoing efforts to develop sustainable production methods, which include organic strategies. The Committee also added a new topic to Emerging Issues: Comparative analysis of Washington State viticulture practices to other wine regions (e.g. sustainable pest and disease management systems). The 2017-18 Research Priority List will be distributed to WRAC for final review before sharing with the research community.

The research topic rankings of the Research Survey will be used to help guide WRAC funding decisions. Concern was expressed that the chart for Question 15 (Viticulture Climate Impacts) did not reflect responses. Hansen will review the survey data to determine if the responses were properly weighted. (Her review did find that Q. 15 had been incorrectly weighted; correction has been made and the correct version was resent to the Committee.)

**Research Program Improvement Options**

Hansen shared a spreadsheet summarizing key elements of research programs of five commodity groups. She interviewed those involved with research for tree fruit, grains, potatoes, hops, and



Oregon's wine industry. A variety of information was collected, v from number of board members making funding decisions to use of pre-proposals to university presence during funding decisions. The pre-proposal process is used by several commodities, including the tree fruit and grain commissions. It has been a useful way to provide feedback to researchers before the final RFP is submitted. The grain commission requires a 1-2 page preproposal of all new and continuing projects that are changing objectives in September. Short presentations (10 min.) are given in October and feedback is provided so that improvements to the RFP can be made before the submittal deadline in December.

Industry input is a key part of the Research Review for the tree fruit, grain, and Oregon wine programs. Tree fruit uses ad hoc committees of 20-25 members for each of the five research topic categories to provide rankings of projects from the Research Reviews (rankings are based on industry need and quality of proposal). The grain commission asks representatives from each county and any industry member attending to provide a ranking of the projects.

There was Committee consensus that asking for input at the Research Review could help encourage industry involvement and better understanding of research. WRAC would still have final decision in the funding process.

Hansen was directed to conduct the 2018 Research Review under this concept of asking interested industry members to participate. Hansen will develop a score sheet to be used by industry members at the Research Review.

The preproposal concept has merit and will be implemented for FY19 to allow development of a timeline that doesn't interfere with harvest.

### **Approval of 2017-18 Calendar**

Dates were adjusted for the 2017-18 calendar. The annual meeting date was set for June 22, 2018 under the assumption that ASEV would be the last week of June. Depending on the ASEV date, the annual meeting may need to be moved to the next week (June 29).

### **Election of Officers**

- A motion was made by Kay Simon, seconded by Brian Carter, that Rick Hamman be elected Chair for the 2017-18 term. The motion was unanimously approved.
- A motion was made by Mike Means, seconded by Bruce Watson, that Dick Boushey be elected Vice Chair for the 2017-18 term. The motion was unanimously approved.

Nine of the 11 WRAC members submitted a letter of intent to serve for another year, 2017-18. Joy Andersen submitted her notice of retirement. Mike Means verbally shared at the meeting his intention to step down.

### **New WRAC Members**

WRAC was asked previously to rank, in order of qualifications, the eight potential WRAC candidates. Hamman shared those rankings: three candidates were ranked high. There was discussion regarding the benefits of having additional members on the committee. The number of proposals submitted has increased in the last two years and that trend is expected to continue as the research program



grows. The Committee nominates members for appointment by the Wine Commission's Board of Directors. The next WSWC board meeting is August 17, 2017.

- A motion was made by Brian Carter and seconded by Bruce Watson, to nominate Linn Scott to fill the enology seat of Joy Andersen. The motion was unanimously approved.
- It was moved by Bruce Watson and seconded by Joy Andersen, to nominate Russ Smithyman to fill Mike Means' position. The motion was unanimous.
- A motion was made by Mike Means and seconded by Joy Andersen to expand the number of WRAC members up to 13 members. The motion was unanimously approved.

There was discussion regarding the merit of having an enology representative from the state's largest winery on the committee. A resume came in very late in the process (too late to be vetted and considered by the entire Committee). There was consensus that the Committee would review the late resume and provide feedback to all Committee members within the week. The Committee can then decide if action is warranted via an email vote. Hamman will meet with one of the top three candidates to learn if the candidate has solid understanding of the Washington wine industry.

Chair Hamman appointed Linn Scott to serve as Lead for researchers Tom Collins and Carolyn Ross.

#### **Review WRAC Member Preferred Qualifications**

Hamman discussed the need to revise the preferred qualifications of members. The current wording states that members should have three to five years of experience in the wine industry. The Committee believes it important to have three to five years of experience in the *Washington* wine industry so that candidates have solid understanding of Washington viticulture practices, research needs and issues and be acquainted with Washington researchers. There was unanimous consensus to insert "Washington" in the wine experience qualification.

#### **Research Program Objective**

Hamman shared results of the Survey Question that asked for the top research objectives for the next 5-10 years. Grapevine Viruses (13) Labor/Mechanization (8) and Climate Change (7) were the top most important issues.

A research program objective is needed if the industry is to apply in the future for federal research dollars. The WSWC's Research Committee has developed a draft outline of the need for a research program objective. A technology roadmap developed by the Washington tree fruit industry was distributed to the Committee prior to the annual meeting. The wine industry research objective is not intended to be as detailed as the tree fruit industry document. The Pest Management Strategic Plan for Washington State Wine Grape Production was revised in 2014 and contains a variety of research needs. The plan should be evaluated for progress on its research needs.

Wade Wolfe provided Hamman with a few thoughts on long-term research focus areas:

1. Establishment and maintenance of clean (grape) plant program (with emphasis on viruses, but not to the exclusion of other pathogens)
2. Impact of vineyard practices on wine quality, including irrigation, mechanization, climate mitigation, etc.



3. Impact of winemaking practices on wine quality, including microbiology, tannin management, etc.
4. Maintaining effective pest and disease control programs

Thomas Henick-Kling shared that he would like to update the WSU Research Roadmap developed by WSU in 2008. He will share the document with WRAC.

Due to time constraints, work on the Research Program Objective will continue at a future date.

There being no further business, Hamman adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Hansen  
Research Program Manager  
Washington State Wine Commission  
June 26, 2017