

MINUTES
Harvest and Health Protection Subcommittee
February 11, 2010
Reedley, California

The meeting of the Harvest and Health Protection Subcommittee was called to order by Chairman George Nikolich on February 11, 2010, at 1:33 p.m. in the conference room of the California Tree Fruit Agreement in Reedley, California. Mr. Gary Van Sickle recognized a quorum.

Subcommittee Members and Alternates Present:

Wayne Brandt (A)	Jeannine Martin	Rick Milton
Blake Carlson	Harold McClarty	George Nikolich
		Mike Reimer

Subcommittee Members and Alternates Absent:

Jennifer Harmon (A)	Craig Ito	Marco Luna (A)
Bobby Ikemiya	Daniel Jackson	Chris Valadez
		Gordon Wiebe

Government Representatives:

None

Others Present:

Dale Janzen	Corina Tamez	Gary Van Sickle
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Minutes

Chairman Nikolich stated the June 9, 2009, meeting minutes and the August 14, 2009, teleconference minutes required action.

It was moved by Mr. Mike Reimer, seconded by Mr. Harold McClarty, to approve the meeting minutes of June 9, 2009. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Mr. Mike Reimer, seconded by Mr. Harold McClarty, to approve the teleconference minutes of August 14, 2009. The motion passed unanimously.

2009 CTFA Residue Data Results

Mr. Van Sickle informed that the 2009 CTFA Residue Data results were included in the meeting packet. He reported that Primus has been collecting the data the past four years. He stated the report indicated that five fungicides and three pesticides were detected and noted that both the chemical name and trade name were shown for each. He said that phosmet is often used as a last resort. Other materials with heavy use include Scholar®. In response to a question, Mr. Reimer stated for organic items that USDA accepts accidental sprays if it is under 10 percent of EPA's tolerance. He said that based on the report, almost all peaches, plums and nectarines are under

the 10 percent tolerance. He further stated there were no findings on Lorsban®, which is a positive attribute for the industry.

Mr. Wayne Brandt asked if the 2009 CTFA Residue Data Results should be introduced to the media. Mr. Harold McClarty noted that it may be news worthy to make an announcement on KMJ radio. He also questioned if some radio news had an agenda on peach, plums and nectarine or if it was the Environmental Working Group (EWG), and if the industry should proactively respond to the EWG's reports. Mr. Van Sickle stated that CTFA responds to such reports through the Alliance for Food and Farming. Mr. McClarty asked if CTFA generated press releases when issues arise. Mr. Van Sickle responded that press releases are issued by the Alliance and they handle the media questions. Mr. Mike Reimer stated that he didn't think CTFA should publish information about residue samples, as they do have pesticides. Mr. Van Sickle stated that one of the purposes of the Residue Data will be to provide the information to USDA.

Mr. Blake Carlson commented that it was important for the industry to be proactive. He said that agriculture should be promoted by crop care companies, and they should be publishing ads announcing that their products are safe and use messaging such as "protecting the food supply." He further noted the crop care companies should be responsible for announcing their products' safety, not the industry.

Mr. Gary Van Sickle stated that CTFA relies on Primus to do the random sampling. In response to a question from Mr. Wayne Brandt if others can be used for the sampling, Mr. Van Sickle responded that the random sampling changes from one year to the next. Mr. Brandt said it was important to keep a third party status for sampling. Mr. Van Sickle referred to the report, noting that "O" stands for "organic" samples and "W" stands for "washing" before testing. In response to a question from Mr. Mike Reimer if Primus is including testing of new compounds, Mr. Van Sickle indicated he would follow-up with Primus. Mr. Van Sickle also informed that the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) conducts testing of produce at retail. Mr. Harold McClarty asked why the organic industry thinks that conventional is an enemy, and that the industry does not bash organics. Mr. Rick Milton asked if it would be beneficial for the industry to be a member of the Environmental Working Group (EWG). Mr. Van Sickle responded it would not be appropriate.

Blue Ribbon Panel

Chairman Nikolich referred to the Blue Ribbon Panel Report in the meeting packet. He said a full version of the report had been sent previously to the Subcommittee. In response to a question from Chairman Nikolich, Mr. Van Sickle stated the report was not available on CTFA's website but would have the report added very soon. Mr. Van Sickle stated that discussion of the report took place in October 2009 and the Alliance put together information on their website. Chairman Nikolich stated he had searched the Alliance website and was unable to locate the report. Mr. Mike Reimer stated the report should be posted on the Alliance website, and as a resource document in the PPN Advocate section.

Mr. Van Sickle reported the Alliance responds to issues on the industry's behalf, such as the Chicago Tribune story last summer. Mr. Van Sickle referred to the fourth page of the Blue Ribbon report, stating the panel is made up of respected positions. Chairman Nikolich asked if the report should be sent to Sales Desks. Mr. McClarty said he found the information

Mr. Nikolich sent the subcommittee helpful and he made it available to his sales desks. He said that an information page should be made available for Sales Desks so they can respond to potential crisis. Mr. Reimer noted it would be more appropriate for the industry to know where to get the information and who at CTFA to contact. It was suggested that Mr. Gordon Smith, while conducting Sales Desk meetings, announce the resources available and who to contact in case of an issue. It was suggested that staff compile a list of possible questions.

Crisis Management

Mr. Van Sickle showed the group CTFA's Crisis Management Plan binder, indicating it is very much like a recipe, and you just follow the steps. He noted that in the beginning sections of the binder is information on handling a media response and how to evaluate and measure if there is a crisis. Further on, it provides information on conducting a meeting, including the preparation of an agenda, and the other steps that need to be implemented during a crisis, such as accessing funds. He also pointed out CTFA maintains two contingency funds, one for crisis management, and another for research. The research fund can be spent in advance, if needed, to help avoid a crisis. Mr. Harold McClarty stated he feels the members of the Harvest and Health Protection Subcommittee should be the first ones called, and the Executive Committee should meet jointly with the Harvest and Health Protection Subcommittee. Mr. Reimer agreed, stating this would be possible. Mr. Reimer also pointed out it is not appropriate for individuals to speak until after a committee meeting, and the committee needs to set the priority direction for the industry.

Ms. Jeannine Martin commented when individuals receive calls, it is important they refer the caller(s) to the proper people for response. Again, Mr. Reimer pointed out the importance of handling calls carefully, especially if someone ate our products and got sick. Mr. McClarty also commented that if there is going to be a recall, procedures need to be conducted with industry involvement. Mr. McClarty also pointed out that the media attempts to talk to farmers, and acknowledged it is important to get CTFA involved as soon as possible, and confirm the problem is necessary.

Food Safety Research

Mr. Van Sickle pointed out Dr. Suslow's research progress, indicating he found poor survival of non-pathogenic isolates of *E.coli* 157:H7, salmonella and generic *E.coli* following applications of high concentration on maturing peach, nectarine and plum fruit at the UCD experimental orchard. Position of the fruit, relative to direct sunlight intensity, affected the rate and maximal extent of die off. Survival was poorest on plums. Salmonella survived better than *E.coli*. Mr. Van Sickle also pointed out Dr. Suslow had worked with chlorine dioxide gas, which he confirmed to be an effective disinfectant on both intact fruit surfaces and mildly abraded, scuffed skin. He noted the log reductions were in the proper range for minimizing any problems. Mr. Van Sickle then directed the group's attention to Dr. Suslow's proposal for 2010, noting that research would continue with the chlorine dioxide gas, and Dr. Suslow's previous research of working with a generally recognized as safe (GRAS) formulation as a post-harvest disinfectant for post-harvest plant pathogens. Dr. Suslow would also continue to evaluate the survival of surrogate non-pathogenic *E.coli* on peaches, plums and nectarines in the experimental farm orchards. He also noted Dr. Suslow will begin initial observations of systemic uptake of contaminated water or water from manure-applied orchards to try and disprove that there is any systemic uptake into the tree and into the fruit. Mr. Reimer pointed out the water system can be a

great source but it could also jeopardize a situation if pathogens are in the water. He noted this has occurred in some vegetables, and it is important for industry to alleviate concerns about systemic uptake. It was pointed out that many growers still use manure on their crops.

FDA Hearing on Traceability Highlights

Chairman Nikolich explained he had put together several of the key testimonial remarks for the group to review. Based on the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) report, he indicated the produce industry is a likely candidate for elements of traceability regulations. Mr. McClarty noted the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) should only go as far as a commodity level. Chairman Nikolich indicated each price point is supposed to have its own identity on the GTIN bar. It was the Chairman's thought that the FDA regulation probably will not go to a level below commodity. Mr. McClarty pointed out it would be difficult for many packers to do, indicating there is also concern that they will have to provide more than what is practical. He indicated a major buyer has come forward who now wants to buy fruit by variety. The GTIN will be different if it goes beyond a commodity basis. Mr. McClarty said it would be helpful if all of the packers were on the same page and provided the same level of information. Mr. Reimer suggested the possibility of having a formal statement indicating the level the industry can meet. There was also discussion of the relationship of the GTIN and the current CTFA food safety number requirement. The Chairman indicated it's possible to use zeros on some of the GTIN values. Mr. McClarty indicated there would be concern that someone might use the system for inventory control. It was also added some of the buyers want all of the container's markings on the sales manifest. Again, Mr. Reimer pointed out the new PTI marking will render the CTFA food safety number useless, and questioned the need for identifying grower blocks. The Chairman indicated the PTI is being discussed as if it was mandatory, although it isn't yet. He indicated that it is currently being used between some marketers and customers. Mr. McClarty noted many packers want to be in compliance by the third quarter milestone. Many will be getting directives from their buyers this spring. Mr. Reimer also noted similarities to the grape deal and also the needed date coding on their containers. The Chairman also indicated the numbers go beyond tracing and they can also potentially involve inventory control, market control, quality control, etc. It was also noted as FDA considers new regulations for traceability that they need to be careful not to interfere with the marketing programs. Tracing records might help identify the origin of food borne illness, but it won't prevent the illness. The records can help locate contaminated product, but again, it won't prevent contamination. The Chairman summarized traceability will not prevent an illness. Mr. McClarty added the industry is only as strong as the weakest link. He thought possibly consideration should be given to mandated third-party type inspections. He pointed out there are still substantial stone fruit shippers who are not third-party certified. Mr. McClarty also felt it is time those shippers be brought in line, noting that everyone should be following good safety practices. Again, Mr. McClarty clarified that it is not wise to endorse any particular auditor, but again, the concept of a food safety program is important.

Chairman Nikolich explained the one up, one back traceability did not work for tomatoes, noting that the problem had been tried to get beyond that level, and it appears FDA is taking a reasonable approach to the situation. The Chairman also thought it would be months instead of years before the FDA mandates food safety traceability. He also thought there is a possibility that such a mandate may not be quite as onerous as the PTI potential. He also noted software companies, such as Famous, might be beneficial for some. Mr. McClarty felt that in his packing

shed, it very easily could clog up the packing lines depending on the application. He also noted each of the different store groups all want something slightly different, and it would be preferable to have a level playing field. It was discussed about the possibility of having some type of statement to industry in regards to taking a proactive approach and setting an industry policy. Mr. Milton expressed concern that such a policy might actually be used against the industry, especially the packers. Mr. McClarty responded care needs to be taken, especially if a buyer dictates unreal demands. The Chairman indicated it's important for people to know their options and to stay away from the policy aspect of the matter. It was agreed that information should be put together and presented at the Joint Meeting to update the industry on the status of the produce traceability initiative and the GTIN. Mr. McClarty advised that all packers need to be prepared to have a GTIN marking on their containers, depending on their buyers needs. Mr. Reimer pointed out that if it is necessary to modify regulations, in regards to the CTFA lot identification number, this would need to go before the Compliance Subcommittee. The Chairman indicated he would prepare the presentation for the industry meeting next week.

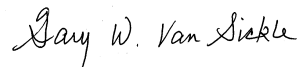
Items for Future Discussion

Mr. Van Sickle pointed out articles in the agenda folder regarding the health situation in the Kettleman City area, and the claims in relationship to water contamination.

Closed Session

The Chairman asked if there was a need for a closed session. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Gary Van Sickle
President