
SACRAMENTO ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Marjorie Namba, Chair
Diana Parker, Vice Chair
Mark White
Andrea Leisy
Robert Bailey
Dana Curran
George "Buzz" Link
Jason McCoy
Anthony DeRiggi

A JOINT COMMISSION APPOINTED BY:
County of Sacramento
City of Sacramento
City of Isleton
City of Folsom
City of Galt

MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2013, 6:00P.M.

COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

10590 ARMSTRONG AVENUE, MATHER, CA 95655

ITEM

1. Call to Order – ~~Chair Namba~~ Substitute Chair Mark White

The meeting was called to order at 6:00p.m. by Substitute Chair Mark White.

2. Roll Call – Secretary Kloock

Commission Members present: Robert Bailey, George "Buzz" Link, Dana Curran, Mark White, Andrea Leisy, and Dr. Anthony DeRiggi.

Commission Members Absent: Diana Parker, Marjorie Namba, and Jason McCoy.

Staff Members Present: Vicki M. Kloock

3. Introduction of Commissioners – ~~Chair Namba~~ Substitute Chair Mark White

Commissioner White introduced each of the Commission members present.

4. Public Comments – ~~Chair Namba~~ Substitute Chair Mark White

None made.

5. **CONSENT ITEMS** – Approval of May 2013 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Andrea Leisy and seconded by Anthony DeRiggi to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2013 meeting.

Ayes: Robert Bailey, George "Buzz" Link, Dana Curran, Andrea Leisy, and Dr. Anthony DeRiggi.

Noes: None

Abstain: Mark White

6. The Future of Genetically Modified Foods – Professor Kent J. Bradford, Director of the Seed Biotechnology Center at the University of California, Davis.

Substitute Chair White introduced Dr. Kent J. Bradford, Director of the Seed Biotechnology Center and professor at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Bradford made a PowerPoint presentation on Crop Biotechnology starting with the early domestication of crops by prehistoric man explaining the majority of these changes had already occurred before scientific breeding began. The simple act of plant breeding is a method of genetic modification. By the turn of the 20th century, Mendell had discovered the basics of genetics. Characteristics that have been improved by plant breeding include a higher yield, resistance to pests, seed composition, increased tolerance to environmental stresses, adaptability to mechanization, and increased photoperiod response, and an improvement in the appearance, taste, and nutritional value. Virtually all of these improvements have involved the introduction of genes from related species or races of the crop plant. This has been done since time immemorial by selective breeding. Traditional breeding depends on sexual crosses. This way ALL the genes are mixed and you don't necessarily know what you are going to get. Another limitation of sexual breeding is that you can't get out of the species. With genetic modification, you can choose the specific gene that has the quality you want and cross them with another plant adding this quality. For instance, you can use the gene from Peruvian wild tomatoes, which aren't good by themselves, but have excellent disease resistance, and breed it into our domesticated tomato plants. Over 2000 crop varieties derived from induced mutations have been commercialized, including the very popular red grapefruit and high oleic sunflower. Species are combined by grafting. In Northern California, we always graft walnuts trees. Black walnut trees are on the bottom because they have strong roots and disease resistance. White walnuts are grafted on top because they taste better. In the 1980's, we learned how to move individual genes in DNA. DNA in the chromosomes carry the biological information. Recombinant DNA techniques can now be used to transfer specific genes among organisms. Essentially individual genes can be grafted into the chromosomes of another plant by putting the gene you want to move inside a bacteria which "infects" the plant. The reasons biotechnology use in crop improvement is so important are as follows: 1) Traditional breeding is limited to the traits (genes) that occur within an interbreeding (sexually compatible) population. Specific desired traits may not exist within this population, 2) Traits to enhance production, yield, or quality may exist in other species that could be transferred to crops, 3) Novel characteristics can be introduced into crops to produce new or improved end products, and 4) Biotechnology can enable environmentally beneficial agricultural practices. The biggest use of genetic modification of plants is to make them herbicide resistant so when you treat the area with weed killer, only the weeds die. You no long have to "weed" plow. Almost all cotton grown in the world today is genetically modified as the crop was being decimated by bole weevils. The genetic modification now helps the plant produce a protein that is toxic to bole weevils but has low toxicity to humans and animals. GMO techniques have also been used to produce virus-resistant crops. This type of genetic engineering is basically an inoculation. The global impact of biotech crops from 1996 to 2010 have been as follows: 1) 443 million kg less pesticide active ingredient have been used, 2) there has been a 17.9% reduction in overall environmental impact, 3) 642 million liters less fuel have been used, and 4) 17 billion kg of reduced greenhouse gas emissions has been accomplished which is the equivalent to taking 8.6t million cars off the road. A very important food plant has been waiting approval the they FDA for over 10 years. It is called "golden rice" and it was created to include beta-carotene. It is intended for use in 3rd world countries whose populace subsists almost exclusively on white rice which has no Vitamin A. Thousands of children a day die due to Vitamin A deficiencies. This rice could end that. Science has shown no unique dangers caused by genetic modifications. Numerous scientific reviews have concluded that genetic modification by recombinant DNA techniques presents no greater dangers than genetic changes introduced by other methods. It is the product that should be evaluated, not the method by which it is produced as no health issues have been confirmed for any biotech food. . Three agencies presently regulate biotech crops – the USDA, the FDA, and the EPA. A huge amount of regulatory information is required to register a biotech crop.

7. What Does It Mean to Live in America's Farm-to-Fork Capitol? – Joe Klegseth, Director of Partner Marketing, Sacramento Convention & Visitors' Bureau

Substitute Chair Mark White introduced Mr. Joe Klegseth, Director of Partner Marketing for the Sacramento Convention & Visitors' Bureau (SCVB) who made a PPT presentation on their campaign to have Sacramento labeled as the "Farm-to-Fork Capitol" of the country. He advised the Commission that the idea started a couple of years ago with some local restaurant chefs. They started by educating locals including in the classroom to let them know where their food comes from. They are presently partnering with Raley's and Nugget. It is important for residents to know that the Sacramento Valley is the bread basket of the world. The SCVB got involved in October of 2012. They began by looking at Austin, Texas, who have branded themselves as the "music capital of the world". The campaign was kicked off with a breakfast in NYC and an appearance on several morning talk shows. The goal for the SCVB is to get the whole community involved. They have begun to hold chef-farmer meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at different restaurants. These locations are posted on their website. From Saturday, September 21, 2013, until Sunday, September 29, 2013, the SCVB will produce an inaugural weeklong event celebrating our city as America's Farm-to-Fork Capital. It will kick off on the Capital steps and will end with a dinner on the Tower Bridge.

They have developed a logo and are encouraging restaurants who use local producers to use it. Presently only 2% of what is grown in this region is sold in this region. They hope to increase this percentage thereby decreasing the greenhouse gas emissions produced by moving them all out of the region. They hope to bring people into Sacramento to shop at our many Farmer's Markets. This movement is being backed by Dan Best and a whole section of the SVCB's website is devoted to it.

8. Sacramento County Environmental Management Department (EMD) Director's Report – John Rogers, Environmental Health Division Chief, EMD

Substitute Chair Mark White introduced EH Division Chief John Rogers who referred the Commissioners to EMD's attached newsletters.

9. Environmental News Review – ~~Vice Chair Parker~~ Substitute Chair Mark White

Secretary Kloock advised that, as Vice Chair Parker was absent from this evening's meeting, that all news items would be emailed to them.

10. Commissioner Comments

None made.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05p.m.