



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY
MIKE STRAIN DVM
COMMISSIONER



**LOUISIANA INDUSTRIAL HEMP PROMOTION AND
RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD TENTATIVE MINUTES (*PENDING BOARD APPROVAL)
November 15, 2022
9:30 AM**

**Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry Building
LDAF Veterans Memorial Auditorium
5825 Florida Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70806**

NOTE: This is a draft of the minutes from the November 15, 2022 meeting of the Industrial Hemp Promotion and Research Advisory Board. A final version of these minutes will be made available after approval of the board at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Representative C. Travis Johnson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. John Ford led the Pledge of Allegiance.

OATH OF OFFICE

Board members were sworn in by LDAF Attorney Paeton Burkett and completed the required Oath of Office forms.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Ms. Erica Morse.

The following board members were present:

Mr. Blaine Jennings representing LA Farm Bureau Federation, Inc.; Dr. Reeve Legendre representing Louisiana State University Agricultural Center; Dr. Janana Snowden representing Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center; Mr. Timmy Thompson representing the Speaker of the LA House of Representatives; Representative C. Travis Johnson representing the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural Development; Dr. James Smith representing the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural Development; Mr. Arthur Walker representing a consumer of industrial hemp; Mr. Chris Fontenot representing the Louisiana industrial hemp industry; Mr. John Ford representing Louisiana Black Farmers Cannabis and Hemp Association; Mr. Willis Nelson representing Morehouse Parish Black Farmers and Landowners Association; Mr. Matthew Moreau representing the Louisiana Cannabis Association; and Dr. Ansel T. Rankins Sr. representing the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner.

A quorum was declared.

The following board members were absent:

Laura Kelley Shivers representing a licensed grower of industrial hemp; Paige Christopher Melancon representing a licensed processor of industrial hemp.

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Others Present:

Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry Commissioner Dr. Mike Strain; Lester Cannon, Director of LDAF Seed Programs Division; David Johnston, LDAF Seed Programs Coordinator; Brent Cutrer, LDAF Industrial Hemp Program Coordinator; Todd Parker Confidential Assistant to Commissioner Mike Strain, Tina Ficklin, LDAF Seed Program Specialist; Megan Moore LDAF Public Information Director; LDAF Attorneys, Staff Paeton Burkett and Amy McInnis; Erica Morse Industrial Hemp Administrative Coordinator.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Burkett stated Dr. Ansel Rankins is serving as designee for Dr. Mike Strain and Dr. Strain is present to complete the opening statements.

OPENING STATEMENTS

Commissioner Mike Strain provided an update on the Louisiana industrial hemp industry. He stated we're looking for ways to grow the industrial hemp industry and briefly explained past industrial hemp legislation, and that Louisiana was the first state in the union to have their hemp plan approved by the federal government. He further stated that Louisiana's laws must mirror the federal law and farm bills to have an approved state hemp plan.

Commissioner Strain informed the board members there was a decrease in licenses issued and a decrease in acreage planted since 2020 due to difficulty in growing outdoors in Louisiana's climate and licensees acquiring poor quality seeds without documentation of germination reports. Industrial hemp samples are tested at the LDAF Agricultural Chemistry Laboratory. Vast majority of hemp grown in Louisiana is indoor grows for floral hemp and about 2% grown for fiber and 2% grown for seed. LDAF also intends to move towards performance-based sampling for consistently low THC varieties to alleviate some of the costs of growing hemp.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Nominations were received for officer positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary-Treasurer. Dr. Smith motioned to nominate Mr. Art Walker for Chairman; Mr. Walker rescinded his nomination for chairman. Mr. Ford motioned to nominate Representative Johnson as Chairman and Dr. Snowden motioned to second it. The motion passed unanimously to accept Representative Johnson as Chairman. Representative Johnson motioned to nominate Mr. Moreau for Vice Chairman and Mr. Fontenot motioned to second it. The motion passed unanimously to accept Mr. Moreau as Vice Chairman. Representative Johnson nominated Dr. Snowden for Secretary-Treasurer and Mr. Ford motioned to second it. The motion passed unanimously to accept Dr. Snowden as Secretary-Treasurer.

NEW BUSINESS

The board members conducted a general discussion covering several industrial hemp topics. The topic of how to establish a competitive market in Louisiana was discussed by board members. It was mentioned there are very few processors in the state of Louisiana and facilities to process industrial hemp within Louisiana are needed. It was suggested to have a legislator contact National Council of State Legislators to see if any states have completed a market analysis for hemp. It was also suggested that the board contact the USDA Economic Research Service and USDA Agriculture Research Service. It was clarified that industrial hemp is intended to grow outdoors on a large scale and processed in large amounts. Hemp intended for consumption should be grown in clean soil as it is a phyto-accumulator and can pull

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pollutants from the soil. It was suggested that hemp genetics should be researched for outdoor grows in Louisiana and that establishing genetics that could sustain against the elements would encourage farmers to grow hemp. More research is needed as well as extension agents to assist farmers are needed.

The board discussed that the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development ('DOTD') has a research facility for compounds used on highways; since a large amount of hemp can be used for hempcrete, DOTD could also be a potential route to use industrial hemp.

Louisiana needs to start developing plant-based plastics that can eventually breakdown in the environment.

Unapproved outdoor grows also have the potential of releasing pollen that could potentially pollute and harm healthy grows.

A question was brought up about the difficulty of bringing new varieties into the state of Louisiana. Mr. Cannon informed the board the U.S. hemp industry intends to move towards certified hemp seed. Certified seed is seed that has been rigorously tested for genetic purity and quality as well as having stable characteristics. Since there is a lack of certified hemp seed, Louisiana has not been enforcing the requirement certified seed. Mr. Jennings stated that bringing in varieties is fairly easy with the proper documentation of Certificate of Analysis (THC test), germination report, and purity report. LDAF staff can also test hemp seed that lack germination and purity tests. LDAF emphasized that growers should obtain seed from reliable sources.

Ms. Megan Moore, Director of Communications, informed the board that if there is any information the board would like to share with the public, it should go through LDAF so it could be shared with LDAF's established audience on social media platforms and LDAF's Market Bulletin publication.

Attorney Paeton Burkett reviewed the expectations and requirements for the board. Mrs. Burkett also explained how to avoid a 'rolling quorum' to comply with Louisiana's civil law. Attorney Amy McInnis further explained that any texts or emails about board business could be subject to public records. Additionally, board members are required to complete a one-hour Code of Ethics training every year and complete a Sexual Harassment Acknowledgement form. Civil Law trainings that cover public records and open meetings law for state board and commission board members are available through the Louisiana Attorney General's office monthly.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Brian Bolyer, a licensed industrial hemp seed producer and owner/founder of Okhish Mound Farms provided information on his perspective on outdoor fiber production. He has teamed up with the National Hemp Growers Co-Op in Mississippi, and he is the coordinator for their seed trials focusing on fiber and grain. He stated they found the potential for viable seed to be grown during the wintertime. Their partner company in Texas is teaming up with Texas A&M to calculate the carbon credits. They signed a MOU with Troy University for the development of bioplastics to support the automotive industry and are also working with Domma Distribution to end one-time use plastic packaging for specific uses. In New Orleans they will soon start working to bring in hemp wool as a substitute for fiberglass insulation. They also recently signed a contract with a builder in New Orleans to provide enough hemp biomass to produce 10 homes as a test project for low-income housing. Homeland Hempcrete in North Dakota is working on this project along with the university to obtain numbers on energy consumption. The homes would be about 1200-1800 square foot. About 4.5 tons of biomass are needed per unit. They were able to grow about 2 tons per acre and are looking to increase their yield to 4.5 tons per acre. He said if they can grow

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4.5 tons per acre, one home could be built with the hemp ready for harvest after 90 days. Mr. Bolyer was asked what equipment was used to harvest his fiber hemp crop. He stated that no special equipment was purchased, and that it's treated like cutting hay, allow it to rest and bale it like hay. Fifty pounds of hemp seed per acre was planted, at a rate of 22,000-25,000 seeds per pound.

Mr. Bolyer reiterated that there is no processing in Louisiana and products are brought out of state for processing which greatly increases the end-product costs. He mentioned that a lot of hemp seed companies have poor paperwork. He thanked LDAF Seed Program for working with licensees to overcome the challenges that pervade the hemp industry.

Mr. Frank Johnson the Chief Creative Officer of Courtesy Groves. He stated that Courtesy Groves educates the public on cannabis awareness and this plant could change Louisiana's reputation and economic growth. He provided words of encouragement and his expectations for the board members. He requested that our farmers need extension agents to educate the public on the hemp plant.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next board meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 9:30 am. It was also noted the board is required to meet at least twice a year and additional meetings can be held at the call of the board's chair.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Dr. Legendre motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Moreau moved to second it. The motion passed unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.