

**MINUTES**  
**Meeting with Pierce's Disease Program Interested Parties**  
**Tuesday, October 18, 2005**  
**1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Hirshfeld-Moore House, 814 Lavaca**  
**Austin, Texas**

**Agenda Item 1. Call to Order.** At 1:10 p.m., the meeting was called to order by Kevin Heinz. He said this meeting was the quarterly meeting of Pierce's Disease Program interested parties (excluding PIs), as agreed upon during the July 25 meeting held in Fredericksburg. Heinz thanked all for being present. He called on Vicki Bienski to give a brief overview of the history of the TAMU Hirshfeld-Moore House.

**Agenda Item 2. Review Meeting Agenda.** Heinz reviewed the agenda (ATTACHMENT 1) and said the meeting would be held in a conversational style, with all participants encouraged to engage in discussion. A question-and-answer session would follow each numbered/lettered section of the agenda; however, all were reminded to feel comfortable in participating at any time.

**Agenda Item 3. Update on Activities of Texas Pierce's Disease Growers Advisory Board.** Joy Johnson reported that the TPDGAB has met recently and revised operating procedures (ATTACHMENT 2). The Board is composed of 13 members, with staggered rotation off the Board (6 members in even years; 7 members in odd years) (ATTACHMENT 3).

Johnson said the TPDGAB places priority on seeing the airport site developed, and keeping the growers in the communications loop. She said the TWGGA webserve and the webserve developed by Les Constable are the main means of information distribution. She commented that the structure of the TAMU Pierce's Disease website is helpful, but asked that names/contact information on PD PIs and administrators, and TPDGAB members be included. Heinz said that this could be accommodated.

**Agenda Item 4. Research Update.** Heinz said that since the July meeting, he and the administrative team drafted a document (ATTACHMENT 4) for use by the PIs to provide quarterly reports of research activities. The report asks for information related to significant accomplishments, the impact on PD, publications/presentations; and leveraging of funds from other sources. This draft document was distributed to all PIs for their review and recommendations. All responses were positive, the form was finalized and adopted for use on a quarterly basis. The first quarterly reports have been received and are now posted on the website.

Heinz said that as a follow-up to the July 25 meeting, he and the administrative team are addressing maximizing information flow from the PIs to the growers. The TAMU PD website will serve as the repository for this information. Text and articles are being added to the website on a regular basis, so all are encouraged to view the website periodically. In addition, an Extension newsletter has been developed and will be posted on the website every two months. Newsworthy items (of immediate interest) will

be posted in a timely fashion as well. Finally, the PIs will meet with the growers approximately every six months to provide information/updates on research and activities.

Johnson asked about the request for leveraging funds. Is this style of reporting acceptable? Mark Hussey replied that each faculty member has a workplan laid out which helps as they focus research objectives and priorities throughout the year. Heinz said this workplan serves as the overarching architecture of the entire program, but it can be edited to address changing needs. APHIS, however, must approve the workplan. George Nash said he has just learned the timeline for proposals and workplans will be due by the middle of January, in order for the processing and approval by April 1. Heinz said that this would require a one or two-day meeting in December to allow the PIs to talk about their progress (scientific quality and relevant quality) as well as to defend their budget.

Dennis Gross reviewed the proposed criteria for categories of performance (ATTACHMENT 5) to be assessed in annual reviews of PIs: research, education and service. Gross said the administrative team will be looking critically at all categories and how each PI is progressing in each. Heinz said this type of annual review is standard among researchers, with accepted metrics well understood by all. He said all of the PIs had reviewed the list of accountability measures and agreed with the document. Now, the TPDGAB members should review this list and provide any feedback on appropriateness or changes. A suggestion was made under "2b" to add "trade journals."

Hussey commented that all PIs will be reviewed and measured in all three categories (research, education, and service), even if they might be 100% research.

Johnson said several PIs had wanted PCR machines, and she would like to see more "hands-on" research and wanted to know how that was to be handled. Heinz said that at the July 25 meeting in Fredericksburg, a concern expressed by the growers was a lack of information flow. Communication has become the responsibility of all involved with the project. These meetings, newsletters, researcher quarterly reports, the website, and extension education programs are all examples of increased communication flow with the grower and wine maker community. As a research program, scientists must also communicate with their colleagues and peers. This is accomplished by researcher participation in scientific meetings and publishing in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, publishing in peer-reviewed publications is a way to ensure research rigor and credibility. This communication is the first step to leveraging project activities to external groups. Gross said PCR machines are typically run by technicians and graduate students. PIs oversee this process, but time is leveraged by the use of technicians. Heinz said in answer to Johnson's question on researcher wants for PCR equipment, all PIs received funding on what they requested at the beginning of the fiscal cycle. When it appeared that there may be some year-end funds available due to the fact that researchers did not spend all that was allocated to them, PIs were asked to submit requests for additional expenditures which were not in their original plans of work. These PCR requests were not originally requested nor expected, rather they were presented as an opportunity due to year-end funds.

Hussey said that faculty have various means of obtaining equipment. In fact, TAES provides an equipment program for faculty. Resources are announced, and faculty are provided an opportunity to submit proposals for funding of equipment. Hussey said that other sources of funding are available throughout the year for PIs access. This TAES funding represents yet another way for PIs to leverage their resources.

David Kostroun said the research criteria may be hard to meet for discussion/review in December. Gross said the administrative team will look carefully at quarterly reports to make certain PIs don't over commit themselves.

Johnson said she is impressed with the majority of researchers. She asked if the administrative structure has established ways for getting them together to discuss issues. How can growers talk/meet with them? Heinz said the PIs are all encouraged to get together and discuss issues at all times (via e-mail, phone, fax, in the field, etc.). For example, Julio Bernal has just reported on his interactions with the USDA in the Rio Grande Valley. Most PIs appear to be dialoguing well. Hussey said that all are encouraged to work together, and the performance metrics reflect that opinion. Gross said this type of networking is typical of extension and research at TAMU. Heinz said that growers should be able to contact PIs, and that contact information will be placed on the website.

Rick Naber asked when does the TPDGAB have input in the workplan process? Heinz said that at the December meeting, we will have a proposal structure to discuss. Hussey said the PIs will present their workplans and proposals at the December meeting, and they can then meet with the administrative team and TPDGAB if needed. Heinz said the process will be developed, reviewed, and adopted in preparation for a meeting in December. Bienski will schedule the meeting in early-mid December.

**Agenda Item 5. Extension/Education Update.** Heinz said that in response to the discussions at the July meeting, the Extension faculty (Kamas, Hellman, Black) met and developed a newsletter which will be published every two months and housed on the website. Members of the audience who have viewed the website agreed that the newsletter is useful. Having this material on the website provides for an easy archive, as well as accountability by the PIs.

In addition, brief news releases (one-page or less) of timely information will be posted on the web (<http://piercesdisease.tamu.edu>). For example, Forrest Mitchell has posted an item about *Xylella fastidosa*. Gene Estes said that this is an important issue for growers, and appreciated the immediate access. Heinz said researchers are often nervous about putting out too much information too early in a research process for fear of theft of ideas. He said, however, that everything the researchers are generating is being added to the website.

Les Constable asked if he could be sent an e-mail whenever a newsletter or news item was added to the website. Heinz said because new items are being added on a daily basis, he would encourage all to view the site periodically. He said the website is a work in progress and feedback is welcome at any time. Because the site is hosted by

TAMU, certain rules must be followed, related to advertisements, etc. Discussion ensued and Tim Davis said that he believes he would be able to accommodate this request through extension channels.

Johnson asked about information from the vineyards participating in the surveys. Bobby Guerra said the database is an "APHIS" function and is being developed. He needs equipment to allow computer access by growers. A staff person will enter the GIS data manually into the computer.

**Agenda Item 6. Update on Gillespie County Airport Facility.** Hussey said that following the meeting in July, he began meeting with Drs. Heinz, Gross and Davis every two weeks to go over the progress and activities related to PD. Dr. Roland Smith (Extension counterpart) has been unavailable due to health issues, but Dr. Ed Smith has been kept informed.

Hussey said that he engaged professional project planners from the TAES facilities planning group in September in Fredericksburg to discuss the plans for the site – what are the needs? cost estimates? In fact, at 5:00 p.m. on October 17, he received the preliminary cost estimates (\$500,000). He has not had an opportunity to review these in detail, but will be doing so with Drs. Heinz, Gross and Davis.

Hussey said plans call for a temporary facility – which is a "pre-engineered" "modular-style" facility: three greenhouses; field cages; research laboratory; parking facility; inoculation vineyard; and research vineyard. This year, \$70,000 has been earmarked for the development project. Since a preliminary cost estimate has been received based on the draft drawing, Hussey said he would be bringing the group back together (within the next 2-3-4 weeks) in order to get the project moving.

**Agenda Item 7. Budget Overview.** Hussey said that at the meeting in December, the cost of the airport development will come out of the budget (right off the top). The bottom line is the planning document will be in place, development will start after the first of the year, with completion in February-March 2007, if all timelines are followed and resources are available. He said the TAES facilities design group will be heading this project.

Greg Snelgrove said the meeting in September was a very positive day. Heinz brought the right people to the meeting in order to get the project moving. Snelgrove said that when all were present, many items associated with the airport development were discussed -- water mains, easements, etc. He said that possibly another avenue may be possible for development of the facility.

Dacota Julson asked if PD research will suffer in any way due to funds? Heinz said that this will be discussed at the December meeting. The funds for development must be taken off at the top, before other allocations. Hussey said that the TPDGAB will be a part of the process in providing feedback and helping TAMU Agriculture to determine priorities for the PD project. Again, this goes back to the issues of leveraging resources. Hussey said that the administrative team will listen to the concerns from PIs, stakeholders, etc. as it is extremely important to have input from all.

Heinz said that as we continue in the PD project, we must also consider the annual operational costs (utilities, etc.) just for keeping things working.

Johnson said it took a lot to get this going. It appears as if you guys are reactionary, with little response, unless someone calls or pushes, no one does anything. Hussey said that just recently Vice Chancellor Elsa Murano talked about the speed of things moving in the federal government, state agencies, private sector, etc. Let's look at how we are moving. In August, we received information from the facilities planning/design group; In September, the TAES facilities group went to Fredericksburg to look at the site. Johnson said that sometimes just a phone call, any communication, helps in keeping people informed. Hussey said we are committed to keeping the process moving. Johnson asked can TAES increase their funds through APHIS? Nash said that the funding is set at \$1.2M to include the overhead. Heinz said that communication is never perfect; however, we respond to everything as soon as possible. A great amount of time has been spent on setting up the website so that all growers statewide could have immediate information. David Griffith said that project has moved. The website is a great improvement. Communication has improved. He is pleased with the lightening process speed of actions (as compared to DC). Griffith said don't ever hesitate to call once, twice or several times if you feel as if you have not received an answer.

The meeting adjourned for a brief break (2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.).

**Agenda Item 8. Final Discussion/Questions.** Heinz opened the floor for questions.

Naber asked if the PD program has a \$40M budget in California, can the Texas delegation get some of those dollars? Griffith responded that he will look into that.

Johnson asked if anyone can give a history of the legislative end? Constable said that at the state level, not the congressional level, Craig Parker would be the person to contact to write down a brief history. Johnson said that she would check with Parker on this.

Julson said the Grape Camp will be held in November and Jim Kamas is scheduled to speak for an hour. Would any other speakers be available from TAMU Agriculture? Johnson asked that at least one administrator give an overview of the overall plan of the program. Julson said that she would send the date/time information to Heinz for consideration.

Johnson said that she would like to see some type of timeline/schedule/calendar for the PD project, listing important activities and deadlines. Heinz said that he has communicated with the PIs in developing their schedules for quarterly reports; bi-monthly newsletters; and annual plans of work. Johnson said she just does not want to get in a crunch at budget time (like last year). She would like reassurance from administration that they are on schedule. Hussey said that he meets with the administrative team every two weeks to make certain that things are moving forward. Now that APHIS has announced a deadline of January 15, it is extremely important that

we stay on target. He said he will continue to work with the administrative team to ensure timeliness.

Johnson asked can researchers be contacted/e-mailed directly? Heinz said certainly, he encourages communication among the stakeholders and the researchers.

Alphonse Dotson said that he wondered about the burning desire of all involved to move the project forward. This burning dedication is needed for people to move at full speed. In his former career, when people go half-speed, people get hurt. If asked to call Sam Jordan or if other growers are asked to call Conaway or Hutchison, they will fight or scrape for more money for the project. How you fight and lose is important to him. But he wanted to know if there were techniques in place to insure the dedication of all. He was also concerned about possibilities of redundancy in the program. Everything needs to stay on a positive scale, as no one knows when discovery will happen. He will continue to scrutinize the individuals and what they are telling him and you. If we need to get an answer, lets work together to get it. But if we need to tell someone this has already been done, then this must be said to keep the project moving forward in a positive manner.

Heinz said that in terms of quarterly reports, the significance of work is conscientious, problem-solving, oriented research. He stressed that the stakeholders' participation is a valuable part of the project. He also reported that all on the executive team, and some of the researchers, will be attending the upcoming meeting in California as a means of staying informed as to what is happening nationally. Nash said the reason for the early deadline (January) is because APHIS will get with California to check on duplication of effort.

Dotson said he appreciates that. Texas still needs assistance with PD and we shouldn't worry about being fazed out. He mentioned the efforts of Ed McIlhaney (Michigan State University). He said it seems as if all states are now developing vineyards, and this is a plus to the US (but there are different problems in each of the states). Dotson said the development of wineries across the US is seen as an increased economic benefit for each state.

Johnson asked what are the plans for the January symposium? Heinz said he will visit with Jim Kamas regarding the 2006 event.

Snelgrove said ten months ago these meetings started in Fredericksburg. He believes today's meeting was really productive -- Good group dynamics; Good plan in place; Good leadership; and a challenge which requires everyone's work.

Dotson expressed his thanks to the TAMU leadership team for turning it around.

**Agenda Item 9. Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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