

**Board of Directors | Meeting Summary**

April 12, 2019  
Via Teleconference

**Directors Present**

Keira Franz, NWGA; Michelle French, ADM; Stefani Grant, Unilever; Margaret Henry, PepsiCo; Diane Herndon, Nestlé Purina PetCare; Franklin Holley, Keystone; Brandon Hunnicutt, NCGA; Mark Isbell, USA Rice Federation; Michelle Nutting, Nutrien; Gary O’Neill, NRCS; Jeremy Peters, NACD; Ryan Sirolli, Cargill;

Jun Zhu, University of Arkansas

**Staff and Consultants**

Rod Snyder, Field to Market; Betsy Hickman, Field to Market; Lexi Clark, Field to Market; Eric Coronel, Field to Market; Chisara Ehiemere, Field to Market; Paul Hishmeh, Field to Market; Carter Purcell, Field to Market; Jamie Richards, Field to Market; Allison Thomson, Field to Market; Kelly Young, Field to Market; Ray Stewart, Thomson Coburn

Stefani Grant called the meeting to order at 11:06 a.m. and asked Ray to read the Antitrust statement. She then discussed the proposed flexible project framework and asked Rod Snyder to review the timeline:

* Feb. 26 - Board tentatively approves draft framework and moves forward with 30-day member comment period
* Feb. 26 – March 29 open comment period - nearly 60 distinct comments from 20 different member organizations were received
* April 5 – initial responses compiled and shared with all members
* April 12 – Today’s board call scheduled for final review and approval

1. Addressing Member Feedback
2. **Program should be branded in such a way to indicate that the common goal of all project pathways is to document an demonstrate continuous improvement.**   
   Rod synthesized this feedback and noted that branding needs to be finalized prior to the launch in June.

* Michelle Nutting asked for a more specific definition for ‘continuous improvement’ as it is listed several times throughout the framework. Other board members agreed that continuous improvement needed to be better defined.
* The Board agreed to let Field to Market staff determine the overall branding for the framework with input from the executive committee.
* The board proposed a subgroup comprised of the Executive Committee and volunteers including Gary O’Neill and Jeremy Peters.
* Michelle N. also noted that for the overall framework, the board should keep in mind the intention to encourage participation and remove obstacles.

*Final Action – Board subgroup will discuss the principle of ‘continuous improvement’ and will come back to the board on the May call with final recommendation.*

1. **Project duration requirements** – can projects go on indefinitely and are there minimum duration commitments?

* Michelle French noted her concerns about project minimums of longer than one year from a financial aspect. She also asked about possible repercussions for not meeting a time requirement. She suggested not adding duration requirements.
* Michelle N. suggested that claims requirements also provide guidance on the appropriate length of projects (e.g. five years needed for an impact claim).

*Final Action – Verification Committee responsibility.*

1. **Concerns that Incubation Projects do not have the same level of rigor as Insight or Innovation** – Guiderails are needed to strengthen credibility of Incubation projects; also noted a potential disconnect between Incubation projects focused on practices and Insight projects focused on measurement.

* The Board discussed that oversight and guidelines would be set up through Verification committee.

*Final Action – Verification Committee responsibility.*

1. **Desire to see farmers move beyond Incubation and questions around Field to Market’s role in encouraging that advancement** – how can FTM help projects move beyond incubation further into the framework.

* The Board suggested this was more an issue after the framework has been implemented, and that possibly defining ‘continuous improvement’ would assist in determining how FTM would enable advancement.
* Michelle N. noted that QDMPs maintain their own grower databases, which means that FTM doesn’t have a clear role in tracking individual farmer participation throughout the program.
* Michelle F. asked if prior projects count toward the recommended length of time at the next level (e.g. an Insight project that migrates to Innovation).
* Keira Franz asked if projects can be transferred to difference owners/sponors and if Field to Market would facilitate such moves. Rod said that is already an option within our program and has been done at least one or two occasions already.

*Final Action – Verification Committee responsibility.*

1. **Several questions around measuring a subset of metrics versus all eight in both Insight and Innovation Projects** – with concerns that requiring all eight metrics is inflexible.

* Stefani noted that this should be a board decision and added her own recommendation to require all eight metrics for Insight and Innovation projects. Michelle F. agreed that all eight metrics should be measured, even if improvement is not made in all eight areas.
* Michelle N. noted that tracking all eight metrics allow growers to see any potential trade-offs. She also asked if an exclusion was possible if a metric could not be counted, such as water use. Rod confirmed there is a mechanism in place specifically for water use to be excluded for non-irrigated fields.

*Final Action – Future discussion by Board of Directors is needed.*

1. **Concern about connectivity of projects in advancing continuous improvement if weather, pest pressure and other uncontrollable variables are not better accounted for within project reporting and claims.**

* The Board will keep in mind as the project framework moves forward.

*Final Action – no action needed.*

1. **Board needs to consider whose role it is to determine cost and resources for implementation of projects (FTM or member)** - FTM has limited visibility into B2B agreements.

* The Board discussed how Field to Market would know any of the costs or resources for implementation of projects and agreed this should be a member responsibility. Currently, Field to Market is not funding any project, but may be able to provide additional materials or resources for companies that are looking to start a project for the first time.

*Final Action – Field to Market staff will develop better educational materials for project sponsors.*

1. **Understanding what the Board would like to delegate to the Verification Committee versus what issues need to be resolved at the Board level with respect to verification/claims/assurance.**

* Michelle N. noted that if Verification affects the business model, it should come before the Board. Rod confirmed that protocols from the Verification Committee have always come before the Board and the same process could be followed in this instance as well.
* Betsy suggested added that the licensing fee structure should be added to a future board meeting agenda as several associate members have recently asked about this could change under the new framework.

*Final Action –* *Add to a future board meeting agenda.*

1. **Board needs to consider how new project pathways affect requirements for QDMPs. Do we need to amend license agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities when supporting project claims** – QDMPs are concerned about duplicative reporting requirements.

* Stefani noted that this could be a staff responsibility.
* Michelle N. requested that staff work with Thompson Coburn to consider the line between FTM’s business and QDMPs’ business, where FTM might be infringing on the business of the QDMP.

*Final Action – Staff will work with legal counsel to amend license agreements as necessary.*

1. **Request for how the Flexible Project Framework can elevate the role of the trusted farmer adviser in achieving continuous improvement** – is this a mandated requirement in all projects?

* The Board agreed that this would add another hurdle, and they were not ready to broach this yet. They also noted that inclusion of a trusted advisor in a project could be recommended as a best practice.

*Final Action – Do not require trusted advisers in all projects.*

1. **What guidelines will FTM use to aggregate acreage in projects to meet Strategic Plan Targets (7.5M acres by 2021) – concerns about double claiming or double counting.**

* Rod noted that Field to Market is committed to avoiding double counting and suggested that the Verification Committee would be responsible for ensuring integrity of programmatic reporting. The Board agreed with this suggestion.

*Final Action –* *Verification Committee responsibility.*

1. **Questions around the specific requirements for Innovation Projects in providing incentives – what is recognized and what is not**.

* The Board asked for some clarification and Rod noted that we would need to define what meets the allowable standards for grower support and incentives within Innovation Projects, but that it was too early in development to do so now.
* The Board suggested this become a Verification Committee responsibility, with the caveat that they be flexible in their definition; with the overall goal of encouraging participation in projects.

Final Action *– Verification Committee responsibility.*

Next steps:

Stefani reviewed the previously received friendly amendments to grammatical changes in the Flexible Project Framework and the separation of project registration and reporting requirements from claims eligibility.

**Stefani summarized the final actions for each comment and moved its adoption. Michelle Nutting seconded the motion. Carried unanimously.**

1. Other Business
2. **October Board Retreat Dates**

In order to accommodate the Senior Executive Forum on October 8, Field to Market staff is considering the best date for the board retreat later that same week. Board members were asked to contact Rod if they had any known schedule conflicts that week.

1. **Fieldprint Platform 3.0**

Margaret noted that API partners are having a difficult time with Fieldprint Platform 3.0 integration and that there are challenges with some of the results being generated. Rod responded that all API partners (with the exception of Land O’Lakes Truterra Insights tool) are still operating under the 2.5 platform, so any results currently being reported are within the old system. He also clarified that the 3.0 platform is using a new erosion model from NRCS and that we are experiencing some issues with the erosion values. He also confirmed that Paul Hishmeh and Houston Engineering are working with NRCS to address the problem. In the meantime, the previous version of the Fieldprint Platform is still fully supported. Gary offered assistance with engaging with key NRCS staff on this issue. A status update will be included on an upcoming board agenda.

There being no further business the call was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.