

Board of Directors | Call Summary

**February 24, 2017**

Present

**Directors**

Keith Alverson (National Corn Growers Association), Suzy Freidman (EDF), Stefani Grant (Unilever), Margaret Henry (PepsiCo), Franklin Holley (World Wildlife Fund), Gary O’Neill (USDA-NRCS), Marty Muenzmaier (Cargill), Michelle Nutting (Agrium), Keith Newhouse (Land O’ Lakes), David Schemm (National Association of Wheat Growers), Debbie Reed (Coalition on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases), Jennifer Shaw (Syngenta), Jun Zhu (University of Arkansas)

**Staff and Consultants**

Catherine Campbell (Marker Campbell), Chisara Ehiemere (Field to Market), Kate Fairman (Field to Market), Betsy Hickman (Field to Market), Paul Hishmeh (Field to Market), Stewart Ramsey (IHS), Jason Schwent (Thomson Coburn), Rod Snyder (Field to Market), Ray Stewart (Thompson Coburn), Allison Thomson (Field to Market)

Motions

*Keith Newhouse moved to approve the January minutes. Marty Muenzmaier seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.*

*Debbie Reed moved to elect Marty Muenzmaier to the Secretary position on the Executive Committee. Margaret Henry seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.*

*Margaret moved to approve Amy Braun of Kellogg as co-chair for the Verification Committee. David Schemm seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.*

Next Steps and Action Items

**Next step:** FTM will create a memo outlining the organization’s intellectual property and other assets. The Board will then be able to decide what level of information is made available to whom and for what purpose.

**Next step:** A subgroup will discuss open source and shared source concepts for Fieldprint Platform 3.0.

**Opening**

Stefani Grant opens the meeting and takes roll. Ray Stewart of Thompson Coburn reads the anti-trust statement. Stefani then moves the conversation to the first order of business, approval of the January Board of Directors minutes.

*Keith Newhouse moved to approve the January minutes. Marty Muenzmaier seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.*

**Executive Committee Vacancy**

Keith Newhouse is retiring from Land O’ Lakes in March 2017, which leaves a vacancy on the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. Rod informs the Board that Field to Market will follow previous precedent for replacing Board members, which is that the organization with a departing member can retain the seat on the Board. Keith’s replacement will be Heather Anfang also from Land O’ Lakes.

Regarding the Executive Committee vacancy, Marty Muenzmaier has indicated a willingness to serve in the position of Secretary.

*Debbie Reed moved to elect Marty to the Secretary position on the Executive Committee. Margaret Henry seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.*

**Verification Committee Co-Chair Vacancy**

The Verification Committee has an opening for co-chair due to Keith Newhouse’s retirement. His replacement must represent the Brands & Retail Sector. Keith Newhouse and Franklin Holley, the current co-chairs, have approached Amy Braun from Kellogg about replacing Keith. Amy is interested in the position. She has been a member of the Verification Committee since its inception.

*Margaret moved to approve Amy Braun of Kellogg as co-chair for the Verification Committee. David Schemm seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.*

**Discussion of “open source” memo from Thompson Coburn**

Rod introduces a presentation from Ray Stewart and Jason Schwent of Thompson Coburn on the topic of open source technology. Ray, Jason, and Michael Parks of Thompson Coburn prepared a three-page memo on what exactly open source means as the Board considers Fieldprint Platform 3.0. Ray gives a little background on the memo, which came about after a discussion during the January 2017 Board meeting. This memo is to give everyone a similar foundational knowledge of what open source software means in the context of Field to Market. The distributed memo is available as an attachment to this meeting summary.

The intellectual property that FTM needs to consider when discussing open source software include: the FTM brands (name and logo, which are both trademarked), FTM metrics, FTM benchmarks, FTM algorithms, and FTM source code. Some of the benefits of open source licensing that Jason highlights include: community based development, no offering of warranties (less responsibility), and rapid scalability. Some of the drawbacks that Jason highlights include: product is available to modify/redistribute, the difficulty of maintaining consistency, and the lack of licensing revenue.

Jason then discusses the recommendations for FTM from Thompson Coburn. They recommend that FTM does not pursue open source licensing. The software and algorithms of FTM could be modified and result in inconsistencies in the data collected. FTM would need to clean/verify the data, which would be an added expense for FTM. Rod then opens the topic for discussion.

Comments are made that Thomson Coburn’s presentation was very black and white, and does not include most current use of open source licensing. Another approach could include more controlled licensing to ensure consistency by limiting the ability to modify. Furthermore, FTM should be viewed as a standards body rather than a software company. This raises a concern over what the objectives of FTM are and how this fits into open source licensing. Another option would be shared source, with elements available to FTM members and not the general public. Questions are raised on how FTM could still control use of the product, even in shared source scenarios. Licensing would still come into play here as a means of regulating usage.

A question is asked if developers have to share their improvements, even if they aren’t associated with the FTM program or do not use FTM’s branding. And would companies care if a data set has the FTM brand associated with it or not, if data is run through a modified calculator? Jason clarifies that control of improvements and updates can be somewhat controlled via licensing. FTM could require developers to license their modifications back to FTM. A concern is raised on if there is enough trademark value surrounding FTM to make this valuable. What size and how many development companies would want to work on this?

A question is asked if there is versioning control, specifically as we move toward our 50 million acre Fieldprint goal. Paul Hishmeh explains how this works in the current Fieldprint Platform. Currently, API partners must accept all updates within the platform to ensure integrity and consistency in the datasets. Allison Thomson shares her prior experience with open source software and comments on the high overhead costs and time for operating an open source model. This would include governance approval for things like metrics changes, which would have to move through the Metrics Committee and then General Assembly. A question is asked on what factors/elements are currently being protected by being closed source.

A comment is made that with the current FTM governance structure, member organizations may suggest changes to FTM metrics and algorithms. This negates the need for shared source licensing. A question is raised about how many member organizations have asked FTM for full access to the algorithms and source code. FTM has not received any requests from member organizations to share all intellectual property except for the case of Syngenta, which has a legacy agreement with Field to Market on licensing that makes their relationship slightly different from other qualified data management partners. A question is asked about whether another company could follow a similar approach to Syngenta. Rod says that the API serves as a more efficient and cost-effective approach, especially toward the goal of validating results or data sets. A comment is made that if the platform went open source, there would be concern on the usability and value of the data. A suggestion is raised that FTM can be open and transparent with respect to metrics and algorithms without being fully open source. Some information could be provided only to members, and some information could be provided publicly.

A suggestion is made for FTM to create a subgroup to discuss what open source/shared source would mean for verification and Fieldprint Platform version 3.0. Jennifer and Franklin volunteer. A suggestion is made to look at ISEAL standards on transparency as a set of guiding principles for this discussion.

**Next step:** FTM will create a memo outlining the organization’s intellectual property and other assets. The Board will then be able to decide what level of information is made available to whom and for what purpose.

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**Review of RFP for Fieldprint Platform 3.0**

Stefani turns the meeting over to Paul to discuss Fieldprint Platform 3.0. Jennifer informs the Board that because Ag Connections, a subsidiary of Syngenta, wants to potentially bid on the RFP, she will recuse herself and drop off the Board call.

Paul gives a report on the recent Technology Advisory Council (TAC) call, which was held to review the RFP for version 3.0. He provides a timeline for selecting a vendor. The RFP is slated to go out on April 10th to qualified partners, with proposals due the week of May 1st. Vendor selection would happen around May 15th. Eventually, a release for the Fieldprint Platform 3.0 would happen no earlier than December 2017. FTM members will be eligible to bid on this, but a conflict of interest clause needs to be added to the RFP. Companies would need to recuse themselves from selection process if they bid. If a member company wants to bid, they need to prove they have a firewall that separates FTM member activity from Fieldprint Platform development services.

**Adjournment**

Stefani provides a reminder of the 2017 meeting schedule. The next Board call will be Wednesday, March 29th, from 10 AM – 12 PM. Stefani then adjourns the meeting.