

**Board of Directors | Meeting Summary**

Feb 6-7, 2018

Washington, DC

Present

**Directors**

**In Person:** Keith Alverson (National Association of Corn Growers), Melinda Cep (World Wildlife Fund), Keira Franz (National Association of Wheat Growers), Nick Goeser (Soil Health Partnership), Stefani Grant (Unilever), Franklin Holley (Keystone Policy Center), Becky Kenow (Land O’Lakes), Michelle Nutting (Nutrien), Gary O’Neill (USDA-NRCS), Jeremy Peters (National Association of Conservation Districts), Debbie Reed (C-AGG), Jennifer Shaw (Syngenta)

**By Phone:** Margaret Henry (PepsiCo), Marty Muenzmaier (Cargill), Jun Zhu (University of Arkansas)

**Staff and Consultants**

Lexi Clark, Chisara Ehiemere, Kate Fairman, Betsy Hickman, Paul Hishmeh, Rod Snyder, Allison Thomson, Kelly Young, Ray Stewart (Thompson Coburn)

Motions

*Michelle moves to approve November 2017 meeting minutes. Keith Alverson seconds. The motion is passed unanimously.*

*Margaret Henry moves to approve Stefani Grant as chair. Debbie Reed seconds. The motion is approved unanimously*.

*Debbie Reed is elected by ballot for Vice Chair.*

*Michelle Nutting moves to approve herself as Secretary. Jennifer Shaw seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

*Nick moves to approve himself as Treasurer. Jennifer Shaw seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

*Debbie Reed moves to approve the applicants for membership. Jeremy Peters seconds. The motion is approved unanimously***.**

*Debbie Reed moves to approve the 2018 Work Plan with the amendment to add in the annual programmatic calendar. Margaret seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

*Michelle Nutting moves to approve the New Crop SOP with the two changes: updated title, and revised language in Step 2. Margaret Henry seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

*Keith Alverson moves to approve the changes to the Energy Use metric. Nick Goeser seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

*Keith Alverson moves to approve the greenhouse gas metric revisions excluding the factor for ratoon rice. Jeremy Peters seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

*Stefani Grant moves to approve a task force on pest management with the subgroup of the Board selecting the participants. Debbie Reed seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

Next Steps and Action Items

NEXT STEPS: Staff to breakdown Membership Satisfaction Survey results by sector and share with Board

NEXT STEP: FTM staff to create a chronological version of the Work Plan to more easily track progress against deadlines

NEXT STEPS: Board to revisit the idea of creating a Technology Standing Committee before the end of 2018

NEXT STEPS: Staff to include a new item in the Work Plan related to the creation of an annual programmatic calendar

NEXT STEP: Allison will update the Board on new research that is being published in 2018 on methane emissions from ratoon rice production systems

NEXT STEPS: Board subgroup to be formed – consisting of Jennifer, Michelle, Becky, and Margaret – to create the objectives for the proposed Pest Management Task Force

NEXT STEPS: As part of the strategic plan, FTM will work to assess standard costs associated with implementing Fieldprint Projects

NEXT STEP: FTM staff will assess which aspects of strategic planning would best by handled through an outside consultant and present recommendations back to the Board

Next Steps: FTM staff to update the Board on status of the proposed Strategic Advisory Council during a special Board call in March

NEXT STEPS: FTM staff to distribute the first learning module of SPARC to the FTM Board when it is available

NEXT STEPS: Board to revisit franchising opportunities with CFPI at the May meeting

NEXT STEPS: FTM will put out a call for experts to volunteer on several metrics subgroups and will specifically work with the Agribusiness Sector on broadening engagement opportunities

Proceedings

**Opening**

Stefani Grant opens the meeting and led a round of introductions. This Field to Market (FTM) Board of Directors (Board) has three new members: Melinda Cep of World Wildlife Fund, Nick Goeser of Soil Health Partnership, and Jeremy Peters of National Association of Conservation Districts. A note is made the Michelle Nutting’s company, Nutrien, is newly renamed from Agrium following a merger.

Ray Stewart reads the anti-trust statement.

**Old Business**

Rod Snyder reviews Old Business from the November 2017 meeting. The only action item out of that meeting was for FTM staff to review and characterize both internal and public documents for the FTM member portal and public websites. This will be discussed during today’s meeting.

**Approval of November Minutes**

Stefani asks the Board for any changes or corrections to the November 2017 Board meeting held in Kansas City, Missouri.

*Michelle moves to approve November 2017 meeting minutes. Keith Alverson seconds. The motion is passed unanimously.*

**Election of FTM Officers**

The Board discusses the election of officers for the 2018-2019 term. The positions are Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Rod gives a brief explanation of each of the positions and responsibilities.

Rod takes nominations for the positions. Those interested in the roles provide a brief explanation of their interest and qualifications for the positions.

*Margaret Henry moves to approve Stefani Grant as chair. Debbie Reed seconds. The motion is approved unanimously*.

*Debbie Reed is elected by ballot for Vice Chair.*

*Michelle Nutting moves to approve herself as Secretary. Jennifer Shaw seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

*Nick moves to approve himself as Treasurer. Jennifer Shaw seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

 **Membership Update**

Kate Fairman presents six applications for membership. The applicants include: American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (Full, Affiliate), Anuvia Plant Nutrients (Full, Agribusiness), LidoChem (Full, Agribusiness), The Amalgamated Sugar Company (Full, Agribusiness), The Seam (Full, Agribusiness) and Soil Health Partnership (Full, Grower). Kate gives background on each organization and why they are interested in joining.

*Debbie Reed moves to approve the applicants for membership. Jeremy Peters seconds. The motion is approved unanimously***.**

Kate presents some updates on membership attrition. Four Field to Market members have chosen not to renew their membership in 2018. This includes Farmers Edge, Healthy Food Ingredients, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council, and Wilbur-Ellis. Additionally, Bioplastic Feedstock Alliance has moved from Full membership to Associate membership. A question is asked about the level of attrition in past years. Rod, Stefani, and Kate clarify that there has been very limited member turnover, but it’s not entirely unexpected as the size of the organization grows.

Betsy Hickman presents results from the Membership Satisfaction Survey. This survey was emailed out to the voting delegates in December. FTM had 22 member organizations respond to the survey. Betsy reviews some key findings of the survey. Most respondents felt FTM brought value to their organization. Several respondents felt that they would like to see more opportunities for engagement with FTM.

Betsy reviews some membership engagement opportunities that the staff has identified. This includes working to find opportunities for organizations not elected to standing committees or the Board, including offering expertise to support staff in advancing specific tasks. FTM staff is formally tracking “task forces” (non-elected participation) and identifying opportunities for growth there. Staff will also work to increase networking opportunities at FTM meetings. FTM is starting a bi-monthly webinar series to engage members, as well. Finally, staff will review membership engagement opportunities that other sustainability organizations offer to see if similar structures would be suitable for FTM.

A Board member suggests that staff redo the survey at the June plenary meeting to get a higher response rate (perhaps as an open poll). Another member suggests more probing questions with opportunitity for explanation. Other suggestions include offering networking and engagement opportunities for new members.

NEXT STEPS: Staff to breakdown Membership Satisfaction Survey results by sector and share with Board

Stefani introduces a request from several member organizations (Land O’ Lakes, Monsanto, and Syngenta) regarding the creation of a Strategic Advisory Council within Field to Market. Stefani informs the group that today the Board will need to determine how to handle future requests from membership, including process and policy. She emphasized that the Board needs ample time to review the request prior to a meeting.

Rod suggests that moving forward, the Board could ask the membership to submit formal requests two weeks prior to Board meetings. All Board meeting dates are published and available to the complete membership at the start of the year. A question is asked whether such requests must be submitted in writing. Stefani agrees and suggests that such a policy should be enacted.

Rod gives some background on the Strategic Advisory Council proposal. Matt Carstens from Land O’ Lakes has reached out on a few occasions about a desire for more senior level engagement in Field to Market. Rod clarifies that a Strategic Advisory Council would not replace the Board of Directors but would provide another avenue for building senior level support for FTM activities. Becky Kenow suggests that including senior level executives and management into our processes would be beneficial to the organization. Becky mentions that other industry associations have similar councils. Jennifer Shaw mentions that FTM already has Advisory Councils that function outside of elected positions, and that this proposed council may be useful for strategic planning.

Continued discussion of this topic is postponed to the second day of this meeting.

**2018 Work Plan**

Rod provides some background on the purpose of the FTM Work Plan. The staff has worked with the Board and committee co-chairs for the past several years to create a Work Plan that guides the priorities of the organization for a 12-month period. Rod mentions that the Work Plan is divided into four categories: Metrics and Tool Development; Governance and Program Development; Program Implementation, Partnership, and Scaling; and Communication, Outreach, and Recognition.

Each of the Standing Committee co-chairs have reviewed the committee-specific work plan items and given their approval. Rod asks for any general comments or feedback from the Board. A suggestion is made to create a chronological version of the Work Plan to help track progress throughout the year. A question is asked about how staff implements the Work Plan. Rod and Stefani clarify that individual staff performance plans are based on the Work Plan and committees also take responsibility for their own specific objectives.

NEXT STEP: FTM staff to create a chronological version of the Work Plan to more easily track progress against deadlines

Rod reviews the first section of the Work Plan, Metrics and Tool Development, and highlights where the Board will participate. A question is asked if a Technology Standing Committee would potentially be added in 2018. Rod responds that the Technology Advisory Council will be most useful in 2018 while Fieldprint Platform 3.0 is being built out. He states that a standing committee might make more sense in 2019 to help manage the tool once it’s built, and the Board should revisit this question before the end of this year.

NEXT STEPS: Board to revisit the idea of creating a Technology Standing Committee before the end of 2018

Rod covers the second section of the Work Plan: Governance and Program Development. He mentions that the bulk of the Board’s work falls into this section. This includes the overall organizational business model, governance, standard operating procedures, and licensing. Several items in this section will be discussed in detail later in this meeting. A question was asked about improving FTM’s data privacy policies. Staff has signaled to the American Farm Bureau Federation that we are interested in signing on to their grower data privacy principles.

A suggestion is made that we should create an annual programmatic calendar that tracks key deadlines, meetings, program reporting, etc. so that members can view this information all in one place.

NEXT STEPS: Staff to include a new item in the Work Plan related to the creation of an annual programmatic calendar

Rod covers the third section of the workplan: Program Implementation, Partnerships, and Scaling. Most of the work in this section will fall to the Standing Committees.

Finally, Rod covers the fourth section: Communication, Outreach, and Recognition. Again, most of this work is the responsibility of standing committees and staff.

*Debbie Reed moves to approve the 2018 Work Plan with the amendment to add in the annual programmatic calendar. Margaret seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

**New Crop SOP**

Allison Thomson provides an overview of the New Crop Standard Operating Procedure. FTM has a previous version of the SOP, written in 2014, which is outdated and has not ever been used. The newly proposed SOP includes a several step process for including a new crop in Field to Market’s program. The first step would be a member organization bringing forward a request to the Board. The Board would then consider several items, such as funding, importance to membership, and support from relevant grower organizations. Staff would provide the Board with expected workload. Allison then reviews the six steps of integrating a new crop into the FTM program once it’s received Board approval.

A question is asked on if a new crop request must come from the grower sector or from any member organization. Allison answers that a request can come from any member, but must have support from the relevant crop grower organization. Rod clarifies further that the relevant grower group does not need to be a formal participant in FTM, and that staff can engage them outside of membership.

A question is asked on what “support from relevant grower groups” means. Does it mean a concrete, written affirmative in support or just general interest? Rod says that criteria is up to the Board to establish. A suggestion is made to alter the language in step 2 to include “in consultation with the member requesting the crop, university, government, and industry experts, as well as the relevant grower organization.”

Another comment is made that the title of the document should be changed to “SOP” in place of “guide.” A Board member asks that staff revisit how documents are titled to make it easier to search for. Stefani clarifies that this document clean-up is part of the effort to publish a public-facing standards page on the FTM website. Rod also mentions that the New Crop SOP would be public.

*Michelle Nutting moves to approve the New Crop SOP with the two changes: updated title, and revised language in Step 2. Margaret Henry seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

**Metrics Revisions**

Allison moves on to the proposed revisions to the Energy Use Metric. The new features include incorporating transportation backhaul credit, allowance for renewable energy generation on farm, introducing an energy loss factor based on USDA pump efficiency information, and removal of user-specified co-product. It will also include updates to the crop protectant embedded energy, and update to the energy index, update to the calculation of truck volume for transportation factors, an update to fertilizer energy aspects based on GREET database, and an update on cotton drying energy estimates.

Allison informs the Board that FTM has responded to the public comment period and indicates that those who originally commented have no further concerns. The next steps for the Energy Use Metric include implementation and pilot changes in FPP 3.0, and running scenarios and document the approach and results in the peer-review journal.

A question is asked on how the changes are published, and if older documents are updated/taken down. Allison answers that it is updated across all FTM resources and publications, and it is marked on older documents and public comment requests that it has been updated.

*Keith Alverson moves to approve the changes to the Energy Use metric. Nick Goeser seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

Allison then explains proposed revisions to the greenhouse gas metric, specifically related to rice methane. She has worked with a group of technical experts over the past year to develop the changes for this metric. The goal of updating this metric was to develop a scientifically defensible method that allows growers to evaluate practice influence on methane emissions. It will include emissions modifiers based on six practices: flooding management, residue management and rotation, nutrient applications, organic matter amendments, crop variety, and ratoon cropping.

Allison asks the Board to approve the changes to the metric, with the understanding the ratoon factor would be added in later. Houston Engineering will create a placeholder in Fieldprint Platform 3.0 for ratoon cropping in the meantime. Keira Franz mentions that existing studies on methane from ratoon systems are so dated that they don’t reflect current farming practices; therefore, more research is needed.

NEXT STEP: Allison will update the Board on new research that is being published in 2018 on methane emissions from ratoon rice production systems

*Keith Alverson moves to approve the greenhouse gas metric revisions excluding the factor for ratoon rice. Jeremy Peters seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

**Pest Management**

Chisara Ehiemere leads the group in the discussion about pest management. Chisara reminds the group that FTM is a science based, outcomes based, and technology neutral organization; therefore, any solution around how we evaluate pesticide use must be consistent with these principles. She reminds the Board that pesticides application data is used in the calculation of four sustainability metrics in the FTM program: energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, water quality, and habitat potential index.

Last June, at least two members companies in the Brands & Retail sector approached FTM about questions they were receiving on pesticides. FTM staff talked with members of the sector to understand the type of questions that different members were receiving. Chisara reviews these questions with the Board. FTM staff then took this information and did a benchmarking comparison with other ag sustainability programs and standards, including: The Sustainability Consortium, Potato Sustainability Index, Cool Farm Tool, SAI Platform, and Better Cotton Initiative.

Staff is recommending that the Board create an ad hoc Pest Management Task Force to help address questions coming from membership. This new task force would determine how to best meet the needs of member companies in measuring and communicating issues related to pest management. This task force would conclude its work and make a recommendation to the Board and General Assembly prior to November 2018. The task force would also participate in The Sustainability Consortium’s (TSC) IMP Innovation Project. Chisara goes over the timeline for the TSC Innovation Project.

The Board discusses the makeup of a potential Pest Management Task Force, including the need for expertise but also balance in perspectives. Chisara mentions that the task force would also be responsible for assessing whether establishing a new pest management metric in our program is advisable. The Brands & Retail sector has not necessarily requested this. Another Board member suggests that the Board should set what the objectives of the task force should be before they vote to create a task force. A proposed timeline is to have an update in June at the General Assembly meeting, and for the task force to complete their work by the November General Assembly.

NEXT STEPS: Board subgroup to be formed – consisting of Jennifer, Michelle, Becky, and Margaret – to create the objectives for the proposed Pest Management Task Force

*Stefani Grant moves to approve a task force on pest management with the subgroup of the Board selecting the participants. Debbie Reed seconds. The motion is approved unanimously.*

**Fieldprint Project Updates**

Lexi Clark leads an update on Fieldprint® Projects. FTM has 46 active Fieldprint Projects, including 14 new projects for 2017. In addition, 24 previous Fieldprint Projects have been sunset. There are 2,850,000 estimated acres enrolled in the Fieldprint Platform, and it is used by 2,400 growers. Fieldprint Projects span 32 states.

Lexi informs the Board that staff is still working on the Fieldprint Project Handbook. The document will be finalized later this spring.

**FTM Goal Statement**

Stefani and Rod open a discussion on FTM’s Goal Statement. The current goal is to have 50 million acres into the Fieldprint Platform by 2020. FTM is far short of that number, with only 2,850,000 acres enrolled at present. Rod highlights that it would take 414 new Fieldprint Projects each year to reach the goal, which is currently unattainable.

Rod presents some key questions for the Board to examine. He asks if FTM should develop analysis to better understand overall sourcing potential of existing members, if a reduction of acreage goal should be considered, if the timeline should be extended, if a recommendation should be brought to General Assembly in June 2018, and if any additional narrative is needed to explain any changes to the public. A board member suggests that the revamp of FPP 3.0 could be a legitimate reason to reset and revise the goal.

A comment is raised that the Board could benefit from greater understanding of the current 2,850,000 acres in the platform. What made the inclusion of those acres successful? A Board member gives some history on why the 50 million acres goal was set. At the time, FTM set a goal as an aspirational target. 50 million acres is about 20% of commodity crop acres in the US. Betsy suggests that we need a better understanding of the potential reach of our current and prospective qualified data management partners. Paul shares a preview of the Fieldprint Platform Survey Results and says that many potential API partners don’t think there is enough demand yet in the marketplace for field scale sustainability dat.

Rod mentions that this entire discussion is closely related to our Strategic Planning conversation, which is also on the Board meeting agenda. We should keep these questions in mind throughout the meeting.

**FTM Strategic Planning**

Stefani leads a discussion regarding the creation of a strategic plan for Field to Market. She says that when she requested feedback from FTM staff prior to Rod’s annual review, she noted that FTM staff was responding to too many disparate requests from membership and that some activities may not have been strategic. Stefani and the executive committee feel that it would be helpful to set more strategic direction to guide staff time and planning, as well as the overall vision for the organization.

Stefani reviews the proposed timeline for strategic planning. She would like to kick off the discussion today, work on a plan and draft a document prior to the June meeting, and aim for Board approval in August.

Rod presents some key questions that the staff and executive committee feel the Board should address: a.) What is FTM’s Theory of Change and how do we define our role in catalyzing continuous improvement? b.) How do we respond to evolving landscape of emerging sustainability programs and standards? c.) How does our Supply Chain Sustainability Program create shared value throughout our membership and across the industry?

Rod presents four potential pathways for the organization. The four options are: roundtable, measurement framework, continuous improvement program, and trust mark. He believes the success of Field to Market is contingent upon the organization being very clear about the kind of program we intend to be.

A Board member comments that FTM needs to assess what the organization has learned in the past decade, as that will inform decisions moving forward. Another board member mentions concern about overall market demand for sustainable sourcing in commodity crops and that the number of Brands & Retail companies has not kept up with the growth in other sectors.

A suggestion is made to create focus groups to work with growers to discern what is useful to them. Stefani mentions that the Executive Committee has suggested doing focus groups for Brands & Retail as well. A point is made that for Brands & Retail, a lot of the current work is focused on 2020 targets and deadlines. It would be valuable to FTM to look at what happens after 2020.

Another board member states that the reason his organization joined was to reduce the number of questionnaires or surveys growers were given and to have a program that was outcomes based. A member suggests that FTM already functions as a trust mark in some ways, and the FTM name has brand equity. FTM should work to ensure this continues, and not abandon the work that has been done to build this recognition. Another board member thinks that FTM’s strength is providing a pre-competitive measurement framework that can be used to evaluate progress against a number of goals and commitments.

A question is asked if there has been analysis done on what is needed for a Fieldprint Project at different scales would cost. This would include staff members needed, upfront costs, etc. Lexi says she has some insight, but it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what requirements are needed. Rod says it has been challenging for staff to assess implementation costs for organizations participating in the program, because not many companies want to disclose that level of information. Therefore, it’s challenging to gauge scalability.

A Board member says that our 50-million-acre goal might be unattainable; however, aiming for it will make significant positive impacts on the supply chain and provide some success stories. Rod adds that he would suggest at least changing the timeline of the goal. Another member points out that the goal would need some clarification, like how we are counting acres.

Rod and Stefani suggest the Board hold a check-in call sometime between now and the May Board call to finalize process and timeline for the strategic plan.

NEXT STEPS: As part of the strategic plan, FTM will work to assess standard costs associated with implementing Fieldprint Projects

NEXT STEP: FTM staff will assess which aspects of strategic planning would best by handled through an outside consultant and present recommendations back to the Board

**FTM Program Standards**

Rod opens a discussion on FTM’s Program Standards. The goal with publishing FTM’s standards is to achieve greater transparency around FTM’s program requirements and governing documents. This is a by-product of 2017 discussion of the Board to document all of FTM’s assets and intellectual property. Rod names specific documents that are being considered for this transparency effort.

Rod says that additional work on our programs narrative is needed. FTM is still working to better define its Theory of Change, which impacts how we talk about the program. Betsy points out that FTM has a lot of brand equity; however, as FTM pivots to a more public profile, we need to be ready for the kinds of inquiries that we will inevitably receive.

**END OF DAY ONE**

**DAY TWO**

Stefani opens the meeting and reminds the group of FTM’s anti-trust statement.

**Finance Update**

Rod kicks off a finance update. FTM will be closing out and reconciling the 2017 fiscal year within the next few weeks. As of November 30, 2017, FTM had $1,032,468 cash on hand. January through November revenue stands at $2,748,921 and expenses were $1,903,016.

**Operations Update**

Rod asks Allison to give an update on hiring the Research Analyst position. The position was posted in November, and as of yesterday, Eric Coronel has been hired. Eric currently works with John Deere and has a PhD in Agronomy from the University of Illinois. This role will replace some of the technical work that has historically been handled by our outside consultant, Stewart Ramsey. Allison hopes to have Eric work on updating benchmarks for FTM.

Rod updates the Board on a potential new office lease for FTM. FTM has outgrown its current office space. The suite directly next to FTM’s current office is larger and will become vacant in 2018. FTM has secured a broker to assist with obtaining new office space, and the primary focus is on the suite next door. FTM is waiting on a proposal from the landlord to present to the Board.

 Rod anticipates two options will be made available: one for Suite 802, and one for a combined option of Suites 802 and 803. A question is asked if the combined space would allow for a much larger conference space. Rod will follow up with the architect.

Stefani and Rod will send out notice for a special Board call in March once the final lease proposal is received.

**Additional Membership Update**

Stefani informs the group that McDonald’s will drop down to Associate membership. McDonald’s informed the FTM staff of this yesterday. A question is asked if McDonald’s involvement in the Potato Sustainability Index and the US Roundtable for Sustainable Beef affected their decision. Rod will reach out to Kendra Levine to learn more.

**Communications Update**

Betsy gives an update on overall 2017 media impressions. FTM had 219.4 media impressions in 2017, a 217% increase over 2016 numbers. Part of this jump is in how FTM tracks media impressions, moving from manual staff work to a service that collects impressions in an automated fashion. There was also a significant increase in FTM media coverage, much of it focused around the Sustainability Leadership Awards. Betsy also reviews the Q1 outreach and engagement opportunities for FTM staff.

Betsy presents results from a grower sustainability survey conducted in conjunction with Farm Journal with 550 farmers from producers from Farm Journal’s subscriber base. She highlights five key takeaways from the survey results. The first takeaway is that few are using sustainability tools, and a majority are unaware of company goals. The second is that farmers recognize consumer needs will affect operations but seek independence. Third, the survey finds that farmers need economic incentive to scale adoption of sustainability practices. Fourth, few farmers know their carbon footprint, though they are farther ahead on other sustainability practice including conservation tillage and cover crops. Finally, the fifth takeaway, farmers know consumers want sustainability but disagree on pace of change and also view their definition of sustainability as divergent from consumers. Betsy urges the group to think about the results and assess where FTM could incorporate the information into our strategic planning.

**Strategic Advisory Council**

The Board revisited the request for a Strategic Advisory Council, which was raised on Day One of this meeting. A suggestion is offered to use this proposed council as a way to engage C-Suite level leaders on major programmatic decisions for the organization. Another Board members mentions that FTM needs to evaluate the resources and time needed to prepare for a meeting of this nature.

Another Board member comments that a council like this calls into question the role of the Board of Directors. A point is made that FTM originally had more senior level executives involved in the organization, but staffing changed as the organization moved toward implementation of an overall strategy.

A suggestion is made that even having one meeting with senior executives on strategic planning for FTM would be beneficial. It could allow FTM to assess if it is heading in the right direction and help to establish senior level champions across the industry.

The discussion moves to who would be invited to participate. A suggestion is made to first ask the companies that sit on the Board, and to then look at types of organizations that are missing. The Board could suggest companies to approach from membership.

A comment is made that it would be beneficial to take the time to write a purpose statement and scope of work before sending invitations to participate. Rod says that the primary focus in 2018 could be to help shape and otherwise react to the strategic planning concepts. Rod suggests two check-in points: initial planning and final documentation.

A concern is raised that the Agribusiness Sector is so broad and large that more than two participants would be needed. While FTM strives for balance amongst sectors, this specific council, as a non-governing body, doesn’t necessarily need to have the exact same representation as the Board.

Next Steps: FTM staff to update the Board on status of the proposed Strategic Advisory Council during a special Board call in March

**Sustainability Programming for Ag Retailers and CCAs (SPARC)**

Betsy provides background on the Sustainability Programming for Ag Retrailers and CCAs (SPARC) initiative. SPARC is a partnership between Agricultural Retailers Association, the American Society of Agronomy, Environmental Defense Fund, and FTM. The vision and mission of the group are presented. Betsy also reviews the Theory of Change for the SPARC initiative.

The key audiences for SPARC are decisionmakers at ag retailers, Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs) and agronomists retained on staff by ag retailers, and independent CCAs. There are four phases to the SPARC initiative. The first phase is equipping trusted advisors, the second phase is making the business case to ag retailers, the third phase is mobilizing sustainability champions, and the final phase is assessing outcomes and impacts.

SPARC has received $250,000 in funding from the Midwest Row Crop Collaborative (MRCC) that will support several critical elements in 2018. This includes six learning modules that are targeted to crop advisers and ag retailers. The MRCC funding will also cover two Farming Facing Toolkits: one for CCAs and one for ag retailers. Additionally, the funding will cover the creation of four economic case studies and support for FTM engaging with key stakeholders in meeting the goals of the program.

Betsy reviews a roster of those involved in the SPARC Steering Committee, and those who help coordinate between SPARC and MRCC. Rod adds that the educational materials that are being developed are open source and will be publicly available.

A question is asked on when the modules will be available to share with the Board. Betsy clarifies that the first module is in draft form, and FTM staff will distribute it when completed. A question is asked on timeline for the modules. Rod says that the funding is for 12 months, so the goal is to have all modules ready by the end of the year.

NEXT STEPS: FTM staff to distribute the first learning module of SPARC to the FTM Board when it is available

**Fieldprint Platform 3.0**

Rod leads a discussion about the funding for Fieldprint Platform (FPP) 3.0. FTM has acquired more than 50% of the necessary funding for the project. Chisara continues to reach out to foundations and member organizations about funding opportunities. Staff will continue to update the Board on progress.

Paul Hishmeh provides updates to the Board about the ongoing work related to the development of FPP 3.0. Paul lets the group know that the Platform has been migrated over to Amazon Web Services and is no longer being hosted by our previous contractor, ZedX. This transition allows complete control of the Platform by Houston Engineering, the new vendor for FPP 3.0. Until FPP 3.0 goes live, Houston Engineering will provide service on FPP 2.5.

Paul informs the group that hosting on Amazon Web Services and monthly support from Houston Engineering is much less money than ZedX, creating a significant cost savings.

Paul goes over implementation status for FPP 3.0. Staff has been working with Houston Engineering to remain in sync with the proposed timeline. Paul then highlights the accomplishments to date for FPP 3.0. This includes a re-write of metrics in a different programming language and framework to support the new technology. FTM staff and Houston Engineering staff have also made progress at including new crops into the technology.

FTM staff and the Houston Engineering team have been working on discovery, investigation and planning for FPP 3.0 enhancements. Paul and Allison cover the details, which fall into five areas: management templates, N20 metrics revisions, Habitat Potential Index metric, Fieldprint Platform Calculator User Interface, and the Project Administrator/Claims abilities. Paul also covers a key features roadmap for FPP 3.0.

Paul presents a few more details on the budget status for FPP 3.0, including all expenses incurred to date. Based on the current burn rate, FTM would likely spend $1,200,000 by the end of 2018, although some of that is dependent upon release dates for certain features and functionality.

Next, Paul covers several items that require FTM staff attention in future months. This includes focusing time on development of a data stewardship policy, ensuring ongoing dialogue with current and potential partners for API integration, exploring needs related to qualified data management partner license fees, and continue discussions with NRCS regarding support and collaboration on FPP 3.0. Paul also needs to schedule a Technology Advisory Council meeting and continue monitoring the progress and budget for FPP 3.0.

Paul also updates the Board on the status of data management partners. FTM has communicated closely with all partners on the status of FPP 3.0 updates. All present partners will require upgrades when FPP 3.0 goes live. At present, FTM has not charged an on-boarding fee for data management partners because the process is being piloted. Rod says that the current plan is to maintain a waiver on fees while partners are utilizinsg FPP 2.5

**Fieldprint Platform Integration Survey Results**

Rod reminds the Board that in past meetings, it was suggested that FTM staff investigate barriers and opportunities for expanding to additional data management partners. FTM Board members worked with staff to draft interview questions for current and potential partners. FTM also hired a consultant, Andrew Arnold, to help with the interviews. The initial list for potential interview subjects was 60 companies. This was eventually filtered down to approximately 20 companies, and interviews were conducted in December 2017 and January 2018.

Paul reviews the survey instrument and the list of the 20 participating companies. Some participating organizations are current members of FTM, while others are potential members. The respondents varied in roles within the companies, resulting in a range of perspectives. One of the key themes that resulted from the survey involved a perceived lack of demand for field level sustainability data.

Paul also presents some key themes around API vs On-Premises deployment of the FTM metrics and algoriths. Most of the surveyed companies were satisfied or preferred an API approach. Rod says that one of the key decisions for FTM in the future is whether to allow on-premises deployment, which would require additional protocols to ensure consistent application of the metrics.

Paul then moves on to key themes concerning data privacy and confidentially. Most respondents assumed that FTM would provide a well-defined, robust data privacy policy. A grower opt-in model was mentioned by several participants. Lastly, Paul states that Colorado State University and NRCS will continue to work together and update each other on how to prepare for necessary scale in future years of the FTM program.

**Capacity Building**

Rod gives some background on FTM’s role in training and capacity building. Rod says that as FTM has tracked membership engagement, the organization has realized that not all members are at the same starting point for sustainability discussions. FTM has been brainstorming ways to engage and help boost knowledge across the membership.

The first idea is a new webinar series, *Field to Market in Focus*. The webinar series would be centered around key aspects of the FTM program, such a Fieldprint Project Success. A question is asked about whether the series will be open to non-members. Rod asks the group’s opinion. A Board member suggests it could be valuable to explain the program to outside audiences. It is suggested that if the webinar was open, it could be used as a recruitment tool. Chisara cautions the group that if FTM public standards have not been solved yet, it can be risky to put out a public webinar.

Rod also presents the possibility of a Field to Market Sustainability School, which be a one-day training workshop to increase base knowledge of FTM members. This training would be significantly different from a typical FTM business meeting, as it would be focused on learning rather than setting FTM policy. Rod asks the Board if they feel this type of training opportunity is needed within the U.S. food and ag space.

Debbie read speaks from her experience at C-AGG with successful training programs. C-AGG has found it useful to bring their participants up to a common understanding of key terminology and issues. A Board member comments that this might be better suited for a webinar rather than going to the expense of an in-person training, at least in 2018. It would also allow participants to select which topics they are most interested in and be less of a resource draw on FTM staff.

A Board member comments that there are two different areas being considered in this discussion – one is baseline knowledge for FTM members and the other is providing a broader service to the greater ag sustainability community. Rod clarifies that both options are under consideration. A suggestion is made to wrap this entire conversation into the strategic planning process.

**Harmonization Updates**

Rod gives an update on several harmonization efforts with other sustainability organizations. First, Rod provides an overview of a meeting with the Canadian Field Print Initiative (CFPI) that was held in DC in December. Currently, CFPI has been working on finalizing a business plan to address their long-term financial viability. FTM will propose a set of “franchise” requirements for operating in a new territory (e.g. Canada). Some of the issues that need to considered include mission alignment, metrics alignment, crop alignment, process alignment, financial viability, and annual compliance reviews.

Michelle is helping FTM staff with the work pertaining to CFPI alignment. She believes there is low risk and high reward for FTM, she would suggest that FTM moves forward with more serious consideration. A comment is made that franchising may allow for an easier pathway for FTM to include new crops, as the workload for introducing a crop could be shared. Pulse crops are given as an example.

Chisara adds that once the CFPI business plan is in place, FTM could move forward with exploring business-related items like Canadian trademarks and registrations. Michelle says that this is being set up as a good test case for FTM to explore operating its model outside the U.S. Ray Stewart points out from a legal perspective that “franchise” can be a loaded term as it is regulated by the Federal Trade Commission. He suggests FTM finds another term with fewer legal/regulatory complications. Rod reminds the group that FTM and CFPI have an existing memorandum of understanding to pursue greater collaboration and alignment between the two countries’ programs.

NEXT STEPS: Board to revisit franchising opportunities with CFPI at the May meeting

Rod then moves on to other harmonization updates. A final Letter of Agreement (LOA) has been signed with the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, and a task force is being formed to guide future work including a potential feed pilot.

Regarding the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, a dairy feed task force has been working to collect technical information for the creation of corn silage and alfalfa benchmarks and metrics.

Another harmonization effort involves ongoing discussions with the Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops (SISC). SISC has proposed a merger between FTM and SISC, with a modified membership dues structure to accommodate specialty crop supply chains. The Executive Committee feels that a merger of the two organizations is not the right fit for FTM at this time, particularly as we face a strategic planning discussion in 2018. Rod states that a more realistic opportunity would be to pursue a common data collection tool for specialty and commodity crop growers by adding SISC metrics onto the Fieldprint Platform.

**Standing Committee Updates**

Lexi gives an update on the Awards and Recognition Committee. The committee is currently accepting nominations for the farmer spotlight series. Lexi provides an overview of the nomination period. The committee is also finalizing a white paper on value-added opportunities or incentives that Fieldprint Projects should consider for growers.

Kelly covers the Education and Outreach Committee updates. The committee is working on farmer-facing factsheets for each metric in Field to Market’s program. The committee is also working on economic case studies in Illinois and Iowa, and those should be available soon. Additional economic case studies will be conducted with growers in Indiana, Tennessee, Georgia and Nebraska. Rod asks for Kelly to connect with both Soil Health Partnership and National Association of Conservation Districts on this project. Kelly also presents an update on the audience personas work that committee undertook in October. This work will allow FTM to put things into terms that different audiences can understand.

Allison provides an update from the Metrics Committee. The next item from the Metrics Committee to the Board will be on recommended revision on Soil Conservation. This revision centers around NRCS moving from the RUSEL2 model to the WEPP model for soil erosion. A documentation will be released for member and public comment later in 2018. The committee continues to talk with NRCS on the STEP tool for water quality. They have also initiated a pilot project in Indiana with CTIC to test a quantitative water quality metric. Finally, two subgroups are planning to reconvene this year: Irrigation Subgroup and Soil Carbon Subgroup. A question is asked on how companies can join a subgroup. Staff says a call for experts could be arranged.

NEXT STEPS: FTM will put out a call for experts to volunteer on several metrics subgroups and will specifically work with the Agribusiness Sector on broadening engagement opportunities

Chisara gives an update on the Verification Committee. At the May Board meeting, the committee will present a framework on evaluating project sampling proposals from FTM member organizations. The committee did not reach a consensus on one approach, and settled on a framework instead. The committee is exploring input data claims, which could help fill a need between measurement claims and impact claims. The committee is also working on third-party verifier training, which will be completed in 2018.

**Adjourn**