

 **Board of Directors | Meeting Summary**

August 9, 2017

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (ET)

By Phone

Present

**Directors**

Keith Alverson (NCGA), Heather Anfang (Land O’ Lakes), Stefani Grant (Unilever), Margaret Henry (PepsiCo), Franklin Holley (WWF), Marty Muenzmaier (Cargill), Michelle Nutting (Agrium), Gary O’Neill (USDA-NRCS), Robert Parkhurst (Environmental Defense Fund), Debbie Reed (C-AGG), David Schemm (NAWG), Jennifer Shaw (Syngenta), Bob Young (AFBF), Jun Zhu (University of Arkansas)

**Staff and Consultants**

Lexi Clark (Field to Market), Chisara Ehiemere (Field to Market), Kate Fairman (Field to Market), Paul Hishmeh (Field to Market), Rod Snyder (Field to Market), Allison Thomson (Field to Market), Kelly Murray Young (Field to Market)

Motions

D*avid Schemm moves to approve the June minutes. Debbie Reed seconded the motion. The motion is passed unanimously.*

*Debbie moves to approve new members. Franklin Holley seconds. Motion is approved unanimously.*

*Robert Parkhurst moves to approve Houston Engineering as an Affiliate Member. Michele Nutting seconds. Motion is approved unanimously.*

*Robert moves to approve the new Standing Committee co-chairs. Keith Alverson seconds. Motion is passed unanimously.*

*Debbie moves to approve Tom Ruff for the Technology Advisory Council. Michele seconds. Motion is passed unanimously.*

*Bob Young moves to approve $50k contingency for technology vendor transition. Robert seconds. Motion is approved unanimously.*

*Margaret Henry moves to approve final Impact Claim Protocol as presented to the Board. Michele seconds. Motion is approved.*

Next Steps and Action Items

Next Steps: Staff to present FY 2018 budget at the October Board meeting

Next Steps: Staff to present an update on both the Walton Family Fund grant request and the General Mills Foundation grant request at the October Board meeting

Next Steps: Staff to present an update and suggestions for a solution to office space at the October Board meeting

NEXT STEPS: Rod will approach Ryan Kurtz at Cotton Inc. about serving as co-chair on the Education and Outreach Committee

NEXT STEPS: Paul to provide updates to the Board on projected costs for ongoing improvements and upgrades to Fieldprint Platform 3.0 over time

NEXT STEPS: Release final version of the Impact Claims Protocol to the membership

NEXT STEPS: Discussion at October Board meeting on which verification documents should be public facing vs. reserved for members only

Proceedings

**Opening**

Stefani Grant opens the meeting. Rod Snyder takes roll. Stefani reads the anti-trust statement to the group. Stefani then calls for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 20th Board meeting.

*David Schemm moves to approve the June minutes. Debbie Reed seconded the motion. The motion is passed unanimously.*

**Old Business**
Rod recaps the old business from the June 20th Board meeting. A Board subgroup was formed and will meet later this month to explore additional funding for Fieldprint Platform Version 3.0.

A request had been made to work on developing a spreadsheet that inventories all of Field to Market’s intellectual propriety. Work is underway on this and will be presented at the October Board meeting.

The creation of a page on the Field to Market (FTM) webpage to explain FTM’s standards and protocols is underway. This will include the Impact Claims protocol once it’s finalized by the Board. This public facing information will help us be more in line with ISEAL’s transparency requirements.

The Verification Committee is working with the Metrics Committee, as well as the Science Advisory Council to draft an Impact Claims Calculation Guide, which will be approved later in 2017.

Rod reports that an MOU has been finalized with the Canadian Field Print program. This was approved by the executive committee and was reviewed by FTM’s legal counsel. A grant application has been submitted to the General Mills Foundation by FTM to support staff time related to work on the possibility of franchising Field to Market’s program in Canada.

 **Finance and Operations Update**

Rod then moves onto the finance update for FTM. As of June 30, 2017, FTM has $792,929 cash on hand. Revenue for the year has totaled $1,389,063 in revenue and expenses have totaled $1,087,221. For operations updates, Rod covers several points, including the finalization of the FTM 2016 audit, which is available on the FTM website. Betsy Hickman completed the 2016 annual report, which was mailed to members last week. Form 990 for FTM FY 2016 will be filed with the IRS on Friday and then available on the FTM website.

Rod and the FTM staff will be working with our accounting firm on a draft of the FY 2018 budget. This will be shared with the Board in October for approval. With the recent change to FTM’s by-laws, the budget no longer needs the approval of the full General Assembly, just the Board. FTM has submitted a grant request with the Walton Foundation for $525,000 over eighteen months (9/1/17 – 2/28/19). As mentioned earlier in the meeting, FTM has also submitted a grant request to the General Mills Foundation for $50,000 to support staff time related to the work on the Canadian Field Print Initiative alignment. An update on this can be expected at the October Board meeting.

Finally, Rod leads a discussion on office space for FTM. The suite next to the current FTM office is available. This space is fifty percent larger and would accommodate the increase in staff. FTM staff is doing a little more research on office space in Washington, DC and will present the information to the Board at the October meeting.

Next Steps: Staff to present 2018 Budget at the October Board meeting

Next Steps: Staff to present an update on both the Walton Family Fund grant request and the General Mills Foundation grant request at the October Board meeting

Next Steps: Staff to present an update and suggestions for a solution to office space at the October Board meeting

**Membership Update**

Kate Fairman presents five members for approval to the Board. They include Hortau (Full, Agribusiness), IntelliFarms (Full, Agribusiness), Houston Engineering (Associate, Agribusiness), the MIT Joint Program (Affiliate), and Texas Tech University (Affiliate). She gives background on all five organizations.

Houston Engineering is a vendor candidate for Fieldprint Platform Version 3.0. They had applied for Associate level membership because they felt it was more appropriate for the organization to be non-voting, given their interested in the Fieldprint Platform. It is suggested the Board hold off on assigning Houston Engineering to a sector until the vendor discussion later in the meeting. If selected, it would be more appropriate for Houston Engineering to be part of the Affiliate sector, which is consistent with the memberships of other contractors.

A question is asked about whether FTM has a policy on member organizations not soliciting other members about services during FTM meetings. Rod clarifies that this is not a formal policy at this point but could be put in place.

*Debbie moves to approve new members. Franklin Holley seconds. Motion is approved unanimously.*

Kate informs the Board that the National Potato Council will not be renewing their membership for 2017. National Potato Council is a part of several initiatives, including the Potato Sustainability Index (PSI) and the Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops (SISC).

Stefani suggests that Houston Engineering be approved as an Affiliate member to remain consistent with other vendors.

*Robert Parkhurst moves to approve Houston Engineering as an Affiliate Member. Michele Nutting seconds. Motion is approved unanimously.*

**Standing Committee Co-Chairs**

Rod and Stefani present changes to the Standing Committee co-chair positions. Caroline Wade, who was a co-chair for Education and Outreach, moved from the Illinois Corn Growers Association to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which resulted in two co-chair positions for TNC. After discussions with TNC, it was suggested that Ryan Kurtz from Cotton Inc. replace Caroline as co-chair in order to ensure that the grower sector retained two positions in committee leadership.

*Robert moves to approve the new Standing Committee co-chairs. Keith Alverson seconds. Motion is passed unanimously.*

NEXT STEPS: Rod will approach Ryan Kurtz at Cotton Inc. about serving as co-chair on the Education and Outreach Committee

**Data and Technology Updates**

Paul Hishmeh suggests an addition to the Technology Advisory Council, Tom Ruff from Climate Corporation. A clarifying question is asked on if Technology Advisory Council members must be from FTM member organizations; Rod answers that they do not as it is not a voting body.

*Debbie moves to approve Tom Ruff for the Technology Advisory Council. Michele seconds. Motion is passed unanimously.*

Paul then gives an update on Fieldprint Platform version 3.0. This starts out with a review of the vendor selection process. There were fourteen responses to the RFP, which were then reviewed by a team of five outside evaluators and three internal evaluators. In-person interviews with the top three finalists were completed on July 25.

The reviewers feel that Houston Engineering is the best option for building Fieldprint Platform Version 3.0. Paul highlights a few reasons that the reviewers preferred Houston Engineering: they were responsive, well prepared, had strong technical management, and had relevant past performance. Houston Engineering seemed to have the best overall value for FTM’s needs.

Houston Engineering has a good mix of software engineering, agronomy experience, geo-spatial sciences, as well as expertise in technologies that underpin Version 2.5. Paul also answers some questions from the Board on qualifications on Houston Engineering.

A question is asked on how projected pricing works for the proposal and negotiation. Paul states that FTM outlined a body of work, and then proposals were received that priced solutions based on time they think the product would take to build, their previous work, and some other guidelines from Paul.

Paul reviews next steps with the Board. None of the vendors, including Houston Engineering, have been informed of this decision. The target start with Houston Engineering is September 1. Paul is working with FTM’s law firm, Thompson Coburn, to draw up a contract with Houston Engineering. FTM will working on funding and budgeting for Fieldprint Platform 3.0. Paul will work on a plan to transition between ZedX, FTM’s old vendor, to Houston Engineering.

Rod thanks Paul for his leadership during the vendor selection process. He also gives a little more background on funding for Fieldprint Platform 3.0 to the Board, including funds from the Walton Family Foundation.

NEXT STEPS: Paul to provide updates to the Board on projected costs for ongoing improvements and upgrades to Fieldprint Platform 3.0 over time

Paul and Rod make a request to the Board to allocate contingency funding for the transition from ZedX to Houston Engineering. Within FY 2017 budget, membership allocated for $150000 for hosting and maintenance for the current Fieldprint Platform. Beginning on Sept 1, FTM will incur costs for two vendors: ZedX (per contract) and Houston Engineering. Staff is requesting $50,000 of contingency funds to cover this transition.

*Bob Young moves to approve $50,000 contingency for vendor transition. Robert seconds. Motion is approved unanimously.*

**Impact Claims language**

Chisara Ehiemere covers revisions made to the Impact Claims Protocol Document. All but one change suggested in June by the Board and General Assembly were accepted and incorporated. In June, it was suggested that references to three- and five- year project benchmarks would be removed in documents. However, the Science Advisory Council is now rethinking this as a project benchmark is a legitimate and reasonable way to establish a starting point for a project. The Verification Committee’s recommendation is keeping three-year project benchmarks in the documentation. Chisara asks the Board’s opinion about whether this breaks protocol for FTM. Opinions are given that it does not change the meaning.

*Margaret Henry moves to approve final Impact Claim Protocol as presented to the Board. Michele seconds. Motion is approved.*

Chisara then explains to the Measurement Claims Calculation Guide. This was shared at the Verification Committee meeting at the June Plenary and General Assembly, and then discussed by the Committee in July. A question is raised about whether this is the final draft and if it would go out for a comment period. Chisara answers that some changes will be made and recirculated. Chisara requests additional comment be sent by end of next week**.**

Chisara covers some feedback from the Science Advisory Council on the Impact Claims Calculation Guidance. Kellogg’s has agreed to let FTM to use their real data to plot and test out two different options for calculating trendlines (e.g. linear regression). This will help the Verification Committee make a final recommendation.

Chisara covers next steps for Impact Claims Calculation Guide. This includes exploring data sets for implications of different analysis methods, finalizing decision on what to include in this iteration of the guide (both Science Advisory Council and Verification Committee), and building the guide for the different metrics using the agreed-upon approach.

NEXT STEPS: Release final version of the Impact Claims Protocol to the membership

NEXT STEPS: Discussion at October Board meeting on which verification documents should be public facing vs. reserved for members only

**Rice Methane calculations**

Allison Thomson gives some brief updates on the Metrics Committee. The rice methane metric is currently undergoing review. The rice methane subgroup has held several calls in 2017 to review options for revising the methodology. The subgroup recommends that FTM adopt the methodology in the 2014 USDA guidelines documentation, which is customized for US rice systems. This requires a literature and data analysis to determine the relevant practices. FTM hired an intern named Mathias Marcos from UC Davis to conduct a review this summer. His findings were shared with the full Metrics Committee on August 7th. Allison then shares a table that highlights the method overview. The next steps for the rice methane subgroup include gathering feedback from rice grower groups, finalizing document for internal and peer review, and then proceeding with the metric revision approval process with the Board (likely by end of 2017). Allison highlights one more upcoming revision for metrics: energy use. Recently, FTM’s intern Wil Mannes identified some relevant updates to default values in the energy use metric. He also conducted additional comparison with ZedX and IHS documentation that need correction for Fieldprint Platform Version 3.0. FTM is in the process of finalizing documentation now, with two Science Advisory Council members serving as peer reviewers.

**Meeting Schedule**

Stefani gives a quick review of dates for future 2017 meetings. Franklin Holley gives some background on the October Board meeting, which will be held at the Oak Springs Garden Foundation in Upperville, VA on October 11-12. The Mellon Foundation, who own Oak Springs Garden Foundation, are interested in learning more about Field to Market.

Field to Market’s Fall General Assembly and the Sustainable Agriculture Summit will be held November 14-16 in Kansas City, MO.

**Adjourn**