

 **Board of Directors | Meeting Minutes**

January 25-26, 2021
*Conference Call*

**Directors Present**

Jenny Ahlen, Environmental Defense Fund; Luisa Camargo, Mondelez; Sarah Fox, Nutrien; Keira Franz, National Association of Wheat Growers; Michelle French, ADM; Margaret Henry, PepsiCo; Diane Herndon, Nestle Purina; Franklin Holley, Keystone Policy Center; Brandon Hunnicutt, National Corn Growers Association; Gary O’Neill, USDA NRCS; Jeremy Peters, National Association of Conservation Districts; Megan Weidner, Bunge; Jun Zhu, University of Arkansas

**Staff and Consultants**

Rod Snyder, Field to Market; Betsy Hickman, Field to Market; Allison Thomson, Field to Market; Jamie Richards, Field to Market; Ray Stewart, Thomson Coburn; Sarah Alexander, Keystone Policy Center

Motions

* *A motion was made by Diane Herndon and seconded by Margaret Henry to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously.*
* *A motion was made by Michelle French and seconded by Jeremy Peters to request Indigo Ag CEO and Kathryn Elmes (applicant) meet with the Executive Committee to discuss their membership application and provide more information including 1) full scope of the company, not just carbon market; 2) their vision for pre-competitive collaboration in the sustainable ag space; and 3) what they expect to gain from Field to Market membership. Motion passed unanimously.*
* *A motion was made by Brandon Hunnicutt and seconded by Margaret Henry to approve the 2021 Work Plan. Motion passed unanimously.*
* *A motion was made by Michelle French and seconded by Jeremy Peters to adjourn the meeting at 3:42 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.*

Next Steps and Action Items

* *Request a meeting with Indigo Ag leadership to review their membership application for further clarification.*
* *Following the Metrics Committee recommendation, integrate COMET-Planner tool into the Fieldprint Platform as a supplemental soil carbon assessment tool and provide members with educational resources related to it.*
* *Schedule a follow-up call with the Board following the Executive Committee’s meeting with Indigo Ag on their membership application.*
* *Provide summary of breakout discussions on strategic planning for 2022-2024 and schedule a follow-up call with Board to include staff feedback.*

Proceedings

**Opening**

Board Chair, Brandon Hunnicutt called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. Ray Stewart read the antitrust statement. Brandon reviewed old business from the November Board meeting.

**Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda included review and approval of the meeting minutes from November, revocation of lapsed members and review and approval of new standing committee and advisory council members.

Lapsed Members:

* Agspring
* Biological Products Industry Alliance

Committee and Advisory Council Appointments:

* Education and Outreach Committee co-chair – Krista Maruca, OCP North America
* Technology Advisory Council – Pamela Bachman, Climate Corp; Greg Landau, Regen Network; Alyssa Whitcraft, NASA Harvest

*A motion was made by Diane Herndon and seconded by Margaret Henry to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously*

**Membership Updates**

Membership application review

Brandon reviewed the membership application from Indigo Ag and noted that the Executive Committee asked for it to be considered separate from the Consent Agenda to allow for additional discussion. The Board discussed the implications of membership and historical interactions with Indigo Ag. The Board also discussed potential next steps and any precedent on membership applications. The Board asked Thompson Coburn to review Field to Market’s bylaws and other policies about membership and agreed to take action on the membership application during the second day of the Board meeting.

Member recruitment priorities

Brandon reviewed membership statuses from 2020 and Rod Snyder reviewed any changes in membership levels from 2020 into 2021. Brandon next discussed recruitment priorities, targets and strategies and asked the Board for assistance in making connections to companies and organizations. Brandon also reviewed the list of committee vacancies.

**Finance and Operations Update**

Rod reviewed the November 2020 financials and reported cash on hand of $752,634 with revenue at $2,224,226 and expenses of $2,440,645. He noted that the revenue does not include the Payment Protection Program loan. Once the loan has been forgiven by the lender according to the Small Business Administration’s guidelines, that amount will be reflected in total revenue for FY 2020.

Rod next reviewed additional recommendations from the HR Assessment completed in 2020, including a reorganization of the Field to Market staff structure as well as the hiring of a grant writer consultant. He noted that Field to Market received several resumes and chose to work with the D.C. Regulatory and Legislative Services agency, which has traditionally been a government relations firm and has recently expanded into grants development services. With their extensive federal and agriculture relationships, this made them a good fit for Field to Market.

The Board also discussed the 2021 meetings and events calendar with respect to in-person events and travel timelines. All events through Q1 would remain remote and Field to Market will evaluate the current landscape to make a decision about the June Plenary no later than 60 days prior to the event.

**Strategic Plan Dashboard and Implementation**

1. Convene Diverse Stakeholders

Brandon reviewed member engagement evaluations from 2020 and discussed the planned events for 2021. The Board discussed topics for the Cross-Sector Dialogue series. Brandon and Rod provided a recap of the Biden Administration Transition team call with the Board of Directors.

*Subcommittee and Workgroup Updates*

* Racial Justice, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee - Brandon discussed the ongoing work of the Subcommittee and noted that the next steps include possible custom training for the Board or members, as well as expanding the criteria for the Farmer and Trusted Adviser of the Year awards.
* Innovative Finance Workgroup - Betsy Hickman will be the staff liaison for the workgroup and reviewed the roster of members as well as the various topics being evaluated by the workgroup. The workgroup plans to do a landscape assessment of innovative finance mechanisms with a goal of piloting some of the most promising, scalable options within Field to Market Continuous Improvement Projects..
1. Provide Science-Based Leadership

*Soil Carbon Metric Revision Options*

Allison Thomson discussed progress on the soil carbon metric and support for Fieldprint Platform development. She noted the Metrics Committee recommended adding an existing third-party tool, COMET-Planner, as an optional educational feature in the Platform, which would provide additional information and enhance capabilities for projects and farmers. This feature would be optional and could be a first step in understanding data that could then be used when considering future practice changes and opportunities for participation in ecosystem service markets. The Board discussed the need for more education around soil carbon and current state of markets. A suggestion was made to record today’s soil carbon presentation from Allison for members to access in the Member Portal.

*Update on 2021 National Indicators Report and Research Database*

Allison reviewed the layout and topics for the 2021 National Indicators Report as well as differences between the 2016 and the current report. Allison also discussed the concept of the Research Database as well as the application for funding through the Foundation for Food and Ag Research (FFAR). The funding request is currently under review and is pending approval. The FFAR funding would enable Field to Market to develop the technical infrastructure of the database and deal with any potential legal ramifications or barriers associated for data privacy.

*Data Analyst Program*

Rod introduced the idea for a training to help members to more effectively analyze data collected in projects. The development of the training program is included in the 2021 Work Plan and the Board will be updated throughout the year.

*Qualified Data Management Partners*

Rod provided an updated on the standardized Data Management License Agreements as well as the recruitment efforts underway for new QDMPs.

Day Two

Brandon reconvened the Board at 1:04pm.

**Membership Application Review**

The Board continued its discussion of the membership application from Indigo Ag, including its options as stated under the bylaws and other policies.

*A motion was made by Michelle French and seconded by Jeremy Peters to ask the CEO and applicant for Indigo Ag to meet with the Field to Market Executive Committee to discuss their application and provide more information on; (1) the full scope of Indigo Ag’s work and (2) what Indigo Ag can offer Field to Market as a member and what they expect to gain as a member.*

The Board discussed the implications of asking for more information from an applicant.

A motion was made by Margaret Henry to amend the original motion to specify the requests from the Board of Directors. Michelle French and Jeremy Peters accepted the friendly amendment, which reads as follows:

*A motion was made by Michelle French and seconded by Jeremy Peters to request Indigo Ag CEO and Kathryn Elmes (applicant) meet with the Executive Committee to discuss their membership application and provide more information including 1) full scope of the company, not just carbon market; 2) their vision for pre-competitive collaboration in the sustainable ag space; and 3) what they expect to gain from Field to Market membership. Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board also discussed the timing of the request and asked that the Executive Committee follow-through on the request as quickly as possible.

*Motion passed unanimously.*

**Strategic Plan Implementation continued**

1. Scale Impact Through Partnerships

Betsy updated the Board on the Continuous Improvement Accelerator program including project statistics and asked the Board for support in promoting the Partnership Exchange. Rod provided an update on the work through the Bayer grant on behavioral science research with trusted advisers.

1. Enable Credible Communications

Rod reported that the Verification Committee is working on the development of an impact report to clarify Field to Market’s Theory of Change. The Committee is recommending a case study or report that would describe project goals and design within the Accelerator and the type of changes measured.

Rod also reviewed the outstanding questions around Scope 3 reporting and acknowledged that it is also being discussed amongst other protocols. Field to Market will work on alignments with other existing tools and programs in use by the value chain. He also noted that this will be an ongoing discussion for the Verification Committee, which would benefit from additional Brands & Retail Sector participation.

Rod also provided an update on key harmonization and alignment work with SAI Platform and ESMC. A roadmap of Field to Market alignment efforts is being developed to document all existing partnerships that have been formalized. This roadmap can then also be used as a rubric for evaluating the benefits of future alignment efforts. The Board discussed the current relationship with ESMC and asked for all documents that have been sent to ESMC to be resent to the Board.

**Review and Approval of the 2021 Work Plan**

Rod reviewed the structure of the 2021 Work Plan and highlighted several new workstreams. He also noted areas within the work plan that are part of the new proposal to the Walton Family Foundation. The Board discussed possible additional resource needs and the role of the new grant writer consultant to help with this.

*A motion was made by Brandon Hunnicutt and seconded by Margaret Henry to approve the 2021 Work Plan. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Next Steps on 2022-2024 Strategic Planning Process**

Brandon reviewed the overarching questions for the Board to consider for the 2022-2024 strategic planning process. The Board then moved into sector-based breakout groups to discuss. A follow-up Board call will be planned for later in Q1 to review the summary from this discussion along with staff feedback.

*A motion was made by Michelle French and seconded by Jeremy Peters to adjourn the meeting at 3:42 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.*