



AMERICAN PECAN PROMOTION BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

December 15, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Walden-Ralls called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. CT on December 15, 2023. Mr. Adams gave an invocation. Ms. Walden-Ralls led the meeting participants in a Pledge of Allegiance.

A. ROLL CALL

Mr. Quiros called the roll and determined the following members were in attendance:

Mike Adams
Deborah Walden-Ralls
Paul Quiros
Phillip Arnold
Trent Mason
Larry Salopek
Brittan Bagley
Brycen Salopek
Steve Zaffarano
Phillip Arnold
Larry Don Womack
Guillermo Humphrey
John Hutchens
Romulo Garza
Mollie Willis

The following guests were in attendance:

Anne Warden – APPB Staff
Serena Schaffner – APPB Staff
Emma Garner – APPB Staff
Kristi Mosquera – APC Staff
Alex Caryl – USDA Staff
Mathew Collins – USDA Staff
Alison McMillon
Catherine Clark
Samantha McLeod

Brent Brinkley
Blair Krebs
Mathew Bailey
Travis Britt
Wayne Watkinson
Marianne Brown
Steven Norman
Rich Walden
Marco Lebaron
Dan Cluck

B. ESTABLISH QUORUM

A quorum was confirmed at 10:08 a.m.

C. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Ms. Walden-Ralls dispensed reading of the Minutes from October 23, 2023, Board Meeting as it was provided to members in advance, and she followed with a request for comments. Upon none made, Mr. Womack moved to approve the Minutes of the October 23, 2023, Board Meeting, and the Board voted in unanimous approval.

II. CHAIRMAN REPORT

Ms. Walden-Ralls relinquished her time to Ms. Warden to provide a CEO report. Ms. Warden discussed the proposed Unified Pecan Promotion Plan (UPPP), distributed to members by email on December 15, 2023. She asked members to review it in advance of the February APPB Meeting.

Ms. Warden stated that APPB is looking for nominations for three central region and two importers Board seats. Ms. Caryle stated that USDA sent out a notification for those interested in providing a nomination, and nominations should be sent to awarden@eatpecans.com.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Walden-Ralls stated committee assignments would be emailed following this meeting.

Ms. Walden-Ralls asked Ms. Warden to report on efforts to select an audit firm to evaluate compliance of assessments owed.

Ms. Warden stated that the APPB will partner with the American Pecan Council (APC) to issue a joint RFP in January. APPB and APC will then, respectively, choose an audit firm.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Walden-Ralls called on Mr. Adams to give the Marketing Committee report. Mr. Adams turned over the reporting to Ms. Warden. She referred to prior information provided to the Board about an agency that specializes in communicating and outreach to an agricultural audience. Following the receipt of proposals, Ms. Warden recommended APPB choose the agency Paulsen. Upon a motion made by Mr. Mason, the Board unanimously approved Paulsen.

Mr. Warden introduced Ms. Schaffner, the new Managing Director of Global Marketing and Regulatory Affairs.

Ms. Schaffner provided three marketing updates. First, November and December holiday marketing was successfully executed, and results will be provided at the February meeting. In addition, to get consumers closer to the point of purchase, December funds were shifted to a media network that creates shoppable recipes on popular consumer sites. Ms. Schaffner reported the effort has already exceeded benchmarks with 95 percent of recipe visitors clicking through to a retail site. Second, Ms. Schaffner announced that the Q2 marketing efforts will focus on the nutrition benefits of pecans. Third, Ms. Schaffner said that to drive more pecan sales, APPB staff is preparing an RFP for a shopper marketing agency.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Walden-Ralls informed the board that the Executive Committee voted in favor of a provisional process for reimbursement and exemptions of assessments on U.S.-grown pecans collected at the U.S. border if these assessments should have been collected by the first handler. As a result, Ms. Walden-Ralls asked the Board to consider the resolution sent by email, which will allow staff to immediately begin considering reimbursement or exemption requests to evaluate if there is sufficient documentation. The resolution can be reconsidered at the February meeting to determine if it should be continued, discontinued or amended.

Upon a motion made by Mr. B. Salopek, the Board unanimously approved the resolution, along with attached details on documentation required to consider a reimbursement or exemption request.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Walden-Ralls requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Womack moved to adjourn. The Board approved the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul A. Quiros, Secretary

Approved after review of the Board and USDA:

Deborah Walden-Ralls, Chairperson