



Manitoba Flax Growers Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Minutes

Tuesday, February 17th, 2015 @ 10:50 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (CST)

Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre

Breakout Room #1

1808 Wellington Avenue, Winnipeg, MB.

Attendees:

Ernie Wiens, *Vice-Chair*
Brad Rasmussen, *Finance Chair*
Hugh Drake
John Dueck
Cam Laxdal

Regrets:

Eric Fridfinnson, *Chair of the Board/Research Chair*
Chris Raffard, *Communications Chair*
Anastasia Kubinec, *Observer*

Present:

Monika Haley, MFGA (*recording*)
Maureen Jordan, FCC

Members: 13

Guests: 25

The Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 10:50 a.m.

Welcome – Ernie Wiens, Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair welcomed members and guests to the MFGA Annual General Meeting.

Research

MFGA initiated research projects improving flax through agronomic and biotechnology work. Investing these dollars is to improve the yield and competitiveness in flax. A grower survey was supported with 74 participants. The survey was lengthy but important. This is the first one done in eight years. The purpose of the survey is to help understand what producers are doing in terms of successful production and not so successful production. The best management practices information will be available in the spring.

Promotion/Communication

MFGA feels good about the new website and this is where you can find out what MFGA is involved in and about the markets and health benefits of flax. MFGA is pleased about flax receiving a health claim which is only one of eleven approved in Canada because of its ability to, when consumed on a regular basis, reduce cholesterol. Dr. Grant Pierce of the St. Boniface Research Hospital has released positive research results for flax and hypertension. This extremely positive result is a tremendous accomplishment for the flax industry.

Triffid

MFGA is pleased to report that the Triffid is more controlled through vigilant testing and through the reconstituted flaxseed program. A word of encouragement for producers is to get certified seed or reconstituted seed this year. If you grow your own seed, test it before it goes into the ground. The flax industry does not want another fiasco – thank you for your cooperation and consider flax for 2015. Flax is a good fit for a rotation crop.

In conclusion, thank you to Monika Haley and Maureen Jordan and to the MFGA Board of Directors: Eric Fridfinnson, Brad Rasmussen, Chris Raffard, Cam Laxdal, John Dueck, Hugh Drake and Anastasia Kubinec with MAFRD for all their hard work over the past year.

Annual Business Meeting

1. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Laxdal/Dueck to approve the agenda as circulated.

Carried

2. Approval of minutes of last AGM – February 18th, 2014 (see attached)

MOTION: Wiens/Dueck to approve the minutes as circulated.

Carried

3. Business arising from the minutes

There was no other business arising from the minutes.

4. "Notice to Reader" Financial Statement Year Ending July 31st, 2014 (see attached)

Mr. Rasmussen presented the Financial Statement for Year Ending July 31st, 2014. The revenue was \$151,794 with expenses at \$177,893. This deficit was planned with reduced acres and the effects of Triffid. Mr. Rasmussen encouraged everyone to attend Ms. Kubinec's presentation this afternoon to see improvements in the coming season. He reported there is over one year of expenditures in reserve.

MOTION: Drake/Laxdal to approve the Financial Statement Year Ending July 31st, 2014 as circulated.

Carried

5. Appointment of Auditors

Mr. Rasmussen recommended appointing PriceWaterHouse Coopers.

MOTION: Rasmussen/Rourke to appoint PriceWaterHouse Coopers as Auditors for the 2015/2016 Fiscal Year.

Carried

The Vice-Chair challenged producers to support the industry and allow the check-off to remain with MFGA rather than asking for a refund. MFGA is always open to suggestions on how to run the organization better.

6. Resolution to approve all actions of the MFGA Board over the past year

MOTION: Dueck/Rourke to approve all actions of the MFGA Board over the past year.

Carried

7. Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission (SFDC) – Wayne Thompson/Erwin Hanley

Erwin Hanley, Chair, SFDC

Mr. Hanley thanked Mr. Wiens for the invitation to participate at CropConnect and invited everyone to attend CropSphere in Saskatoon in 2016. SFDC has been very busy this past year with great opportunities ahead. They held a planning session last year and are building on six (6) key pillars to build the SFDC Board. Linda Braun retired after 17 years and was an integral part of SFDC. Wayne Thompson has taken the Executive Director role and is doing a great job so far.

One of the key pillars in research is with breeding. With AAFC withdrawing their breeding program, the only one left is with Dr. Helen Booker of the Crop Development Centre. It's important to support her program and SFDC will assist to secure funding to the breeding program's success. Manitoba and Saskatchewan have to come together to make this work. This will be a challenge and a great deal of discussion will take place on the future of flax breeding.

SFDC will continue to work hard provincially, federally and academically to further the advancement of the flax industry.

Wayne Thompson, Executive Director, SFDC

Mr. Thompson thanked Mr. Wiens for the invitation to talk today.

Mr. Thompson indicated he was previously with the Western Grains Research Foundation. He farmed in S.E. Saskatchewan on his family farm. He started his position with the SFDC on August 1st, 2014 and is an honour for him as Linda Braun has done a great job for SFDC over the past 17 years.

The breeding programs are important to SFDC and are a huge issue on their radar going from three to one breeding program. SFDC has some familiarity with breeding programs as they have worked with CPS and Viterra's breeding program with their research on the Northern Adapted project. SFDC is diving back into breeding since the Triffid situation is now recovered.

Market development is also a priority. SFDC is working with the Flax Council and MFGA to make sure the health claim is promoted through the www.healthyflax.org website pushing to consumer and industry. SFDC's value added study to assess the current state of flaxseed and fibre processing will wrap up and the report will be available soon. This study will be used to further develop a strategy for SFDC and access the potential opportunities and needs for value added in western Canada.

SFDC is also monitoring the policy and transportation issues that need to be addressed. There is a lack of data about flax to properly assess the impact on flax but the industry is working on it.

The relationship between the MFGA, FCC and SFDC is strong and is to become more linked and coordinated to build an even better flax industry across western Canada for flax growers.

The Vice-Chair thanked Mr. Thompson for his report.

AgrInnovation Program (AIP) – Agronomic Research

Dr. Dribnenki reported the AIP is supported by the FCC, MFGA and SFDC. Six research activities are being conducted as a result of our AIP funding program. These activities are:

- **Activity 4 – Disease Management. \$530,250** Pasmus is the most prevalent flax disease in Canada. Pasmus increases the prevalence of lodging thereby reducing yield and quality of seed. This project will study virulence of pasmo and screen to identify genetic resistance for breeders.
- **Activity 5 – Seed Quality. \$150,150** The objective of this study is to determine whether there is a yield loss from the use of farm saved seed versus pedigreed seed. Seed size and seeding rate will be evaluated for seedling vigour and performance of flax varieties.
- **Activity 6 - Mitigating Soil Moisture Extremes. \$214,668** In the prairies, claims under crop insurance are most frequent for excess moisture (28% of claims) and drought (22% of claims). This study will evaluate adaptability of flax varieties to soil moisture extremes and to develop tillage options and strategies to mitigate and manage adverse soil moisture conditions.
- **Activity 7 - Abiotic Stress – Transcription Factors. \$124,500** This research work will identify transcription factors associated with heat and drought stress. Transcription factors are proteins that regulate expression of large number of genes (behave as master genes). Gene markers will be developed so that breeders can select for these factors in order to improve stress tolerance in future flax varieties.
- **Activity 8 - Optimizing Integrated Weed Management in Flax. \$218,129** Weed management is a major factor involved with yield and yield stability. Effective weed management should slow the spread of herbicide tolerant weeds. The objective of this study is to determine how effective combinations of agronomic practices impact weed growth and flax yield.
- **Activity 9 - Genetic Improvement for Drought. \$360,732** The purpose of this research project is to identify genes for drought tolerance. Gene markers will be identified that will help breeders accumulate drought tolerant genes into new flax varieties.

Dr. Dribnenki noted that the flax industry needs to regain its position in Canada, move the flax industry forward and catch up for lost time. This can be done by rediscovering agronomics to determine what works best.

8. Nominating Committee – Cam Laxdal, Chair

The Chair of the Nominating Committee reported the current directors are as follows:

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| ➤ Eric Fridfinnson | ➤ Chris Raffard |
| ➤ Ernie Wiens | ➤ Hugh Drake |
| ➤ Brad Rasmussen | ➤ John Dueck |
| ➤ Anastasia Kubinec (observer) | ➤ Cam Laxdal |

