



Manitoba Flax Growers Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Minutes

Thursday, February 16th, 2017 @ 10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (CST)

Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre

AGM Room – Wellington A

1808 Wellington Avenue, Winnipeg, MB.

Attendees:

Eric Fridfinnson, *Chair*
Cam Laxdal, *Vice-Chair*
Chris Raffard, *Communications Chair*
Hugh Drake, *Finance Chair*
John Dueck
Nick Matheson

Regrets:

Anastasia Kubinec, *Observer*

Present:

Monika Haley, MFGA (*recording*)

Members: 12

Guests: 18

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m.

1. Welcome/Chairman's Report – Eric Fridfinnson, Chair

The Chair welcomed members and guests to the MFGA Annual General Meeting. He reported that flax continues to be a small crop. MFGA works hard to make it an attractive choice. There is a strong Chinese market and a new interest from the EU as MRL difficulties have caused access issues from Russia and Kazakhstan.

MFGA continues to work with the Flax Council of Canada and the Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission to move flax through a long term agronomy plan. Breeding, Minor Use, Seed Management and other production improvements are underway. With limited resources, these improvement move slowly but they do move forward. There is concern about the future of the pathology program in Morden as Dr. Khalid Rashid will retire in the near future. His program has two fusarium projects and has been in 60 years of operation. This program is essential for a successful Canadian flax crop.

The size of the Canadian flax crop has declined over the years and those acres go to other crops like soy. This is not a bad news story as farmers do get a good return. Improving flax production technology is necessary.

Is the present MFGA organization the best way to operate in the future? 100,000 acres a year in Manitoba is difficult. MFGA is considering a number of potential alternatives to better serve flax producers.

The Chair introduced two guests from the Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission, Ms. Nancy Johns and Mr. Jordan

The Chair introduced the MFGA Board of Directors and he thanked two retiring Directors, John Dueck and David Rourke. They both will be missed at the boardroom table. It has been great to work with them over the years.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Laxdal/Raffard that the agenda be adopted as distributed.

Carried

3. Approval of minutes of last AGM – February 11th, 2016 (see attached)

MOTION: Dueck/Matheson that the minutes of the February 2016 Annual Meeting of Members be adopted as distributed.

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Carried

4. “Notice to Reader” Financial Statement Year Ending July 31st, 2016 – Hugh Drake

Mr. Drake presented the Financial Statement to the Members.

MOTION: Drake/Laxdal that it be resolved that the Financial Statements Year Ending July 31st, 2016 be adopted as distributed.

Carried

5. Appointment of Accountants – Hugh Drake

MOTION: Hugh Drake/Chris that Pricewaterhouse Coopers be appointed Accountants for the Manitoba Flax Growers Association for the 2016/2017 fiscal year.

Carried

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

MOTION: Dueck/Drake that it be resolved that all acts, contracts, and payments, made, done, and taken by the directors and officers of the Association holding office from time to time since the last meeting of Members as previously reported or are as set out or referred to in the Financial Statements of the Association, be and are hereby approved, ratified, sanctioned and confirmed.

Carried

7. Resolution to reduce the MFGA Board size by one

The Chair informed the Members, at the February 2nd Board meeting, discussed and recommended to reduce the Board from seven to six. From a financial point of view it would reduce costs as flax acres have decreased over the years.

MOTION: Laxdal/Matheson that it be resolved to reduce the MFGA Board size by one for a total of seven including one observer.

8. Nominating Committee Report – John Dueck, Chair, Nominating Committee

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Mr. Dueck presented the following name for a three year term:

Garry Froese

Garry is married to Barbara of 34 years and has farmed for 33 of those years. They have two boys, Dane and Reid. Dane farms with Garry and also works as an agronomist with the Morden Coop Ag. Reid is a full time music student at the University of Manitoba.

Garry operates a grain and oilseed farm between Winkler and Roland. They grow corn, canola, flax, soy, wheat and oats. They have a plot or two of seed trials on their farm along with their own trials. They try to operate with the best management practices available and are always looking to improve yield.

Garry hopes that he can be an asset to the Manitoba Flax Growers Association.

Mr. Dueck called for nominations from the floor three times. There being none, nominations were closed and Garry Froese was appointed to the MFGA Board.

Mr. Froese stated that he is looking forward to contributing at the MFGA Board table.

9. Other business

The Chair informed the Members of the status of the following:

- *Director's Liability Insurance:* *Annual Premium* *paid in full*
(Expiry Date is January 8th, 2018)

The Chair informed the Members that the reorganization of the Board will take place at the next regular Board meeting. He asked for Members to send in any concerns as the MFGA looks at some reorganizing within the Association.

Nancy Johns, Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission (SFDC)

Ms. Johns is a producer near Watrouse, SK. SFDC has worked with Mr. Fridfinnson and MFGA and that will continue in the future. Saskatchewan is also dealing with fewer acres. Agronomy

research continues including nitrogen in flax and lodging. New agronomy research is underway looking at different fungicides. Variety development with flax and breeding programs under suspension does give some concern. The Crop Development Centre (CDC) continues with the breeding program and SFDC is looking at farm management with straw to see if there is a solution. SFDC participated in a conference in Mexico and continues to work in the health aspect of flax as well. SFDC has sponsored Dr. Grant Pierce of the St. Boniface Research Hospital where work continues on heart health.

The Chair thanked Ms. Johns for the update.

Mr. Harder pointed out that there was a time when everybody grew flax. Even with some of the newer chemicals, farmers have trouble getting over 30 bushels an acre. He asked about the status of the current breeding program.

The Chair reported that the breeding program in Morden has closed and the only breeding program in place is at the CDC in Saskatoon, SK.

Mr. Harder noted that canola would have never been developed if it wasn't for the University of Manitoba starting the development of canola. Chemical companies have an interest in flax so it would be an option to get those companies to conduct more research on flax. Rotation is going to be a real problem and most farmers are not comfortable planting large acres of flax.

The Chair agreed that more research is vital for flax. The Minor Use program could be a game-changer and it's not through yet. MFGA's responsibility in Manitoba is to find a way to work with and support the CDC's flax breeding program. It has to continue as it's the only one in Canada and varieties need to be developed best suited for our geography. Financial support for the CDC is critical.

Dr. Khalid indicated that AAFC is looking at mixed crop research with flax as a rotation crop option. Flax is not affected by most of the disease that affects other crops. It fits well in a crop rotation system in terms of disease.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Chris Raffard to adjourn @ 11: 20 a.m.

Carried