

## **Mark Chien Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**August 29, 2013**

**Present:** Linda Baird Jansen (*Jansen Vineyard*), Nelson Stewart, Stan Sowinski (*Endless Mountains Vineyard*), Joanne Levensgood (*Manatawny Creek Winery*), Hudson Cattell (*L & H Publications*), Denise Gardner (*Penn State Extension*), David Hoffman (*Paradocx Vineyard*), Mark Chien (*Penn State Extension – Lancaster County*) **Via Polycom:** Jody Timer (*Penn State*),

**Absent:** Nick Mobilia (*Arrowhead Vineyard*), Andy Muza (*Penn State Extension – Erie County*), Bryan Hed (*Penn State*), David Othmer

Meeting convened at 10:14 AM

January 2013 Meeting Minutes were approved at 10:16 AM

### **Old Business**

No Old Business was discussed at this meeting.

### **New Business**

Mark announced that Tim Elkner (Penn State) would like to retire as a part of Mark's Advisory Committee. He asked the committee for suggestions, and Stan reminded the committee that we were looking for 2 representatives: 1 to replace Tim Elkner and 1 to replace Sharon Klay from the southwest region of Pennsylvania. Several suggestions were made: Jamie Thistlewaite from Thistlewaite Vineyards, David Othmer was asked to re-join the committee (as everyone thought he was a continued member of the committee), Brian Dickerson, Randy Graham from Courtyard Vineyards in North East, and Mike Saunders from Penn State University. Mark will follow up with the industry individuals while Denise will follow up with Mike Saunders.

Mark announced that Penn State Extension has emerged into Statewide Extension Teams, and that he and Andy Muza are essentially the only two individuals on the Grape Team. Discussions are underway as to whether or not Andy and Mark should have a joint advisory committee.

Mark has officially been promoted to Senior Extension Agent. The committee congratulated him.

Mark reviewed his 2013 activities, which are detailed and attached to the meeting minutes.

For the cold hybrid program that took place in northeast Pennsylvania, Stan submitted a financial report. The group was awarded \$1250 from the PA Wine Marketing and Research Board

(WMRB) to subsidize John Thull's visit. Expenses went beyond the \$1200, and Mark picked up the remaining expenses with wine grape program funds.

There was a large review on the August 28<sup>th</sup> harvest weather program and discussions ensued regarding having another program with a similar layout. Linda suggested a need to have the program again with a greater focus on getting a list of grape growers' needs to possibly invest (as a state) in a weather-based product tailored towards the PA wine industry. Joanne suggested if funds were needed that Mark could submit a proposal to the WMRB.

Additionally, Mark mentioned the greater interest in frost protection across the state. He is currently working with Larry Kennel on wind fans that are used in Amish chicken operations.

Mark also highlighted the rising number of grape growers in Pennsylvania, and informed the committee that the "Grape Exchange" is up and running on his website under the "Information and Resources" tab.

In the previous committee meeting, discussions about a pesticide purchasing program in Pennsylvania took place (refer to January 10, 2013 meeting minutes). Stan informed the committee that he is starting a pilot program for the northeastern end of the state, and will conduct a search for some competitive pricing. Although Mark is not to lead this initiative, he is hoping Mark will have some input into the program as it progresses.

Jody Timer gave an update on the growing season and grape berry moth populations in the Erie region. The Erie growing season has been similar to the rest of the state: average rainfall with minimal sun exposure. Estimates for a 2 week delay from an average harvest are predicted. A second grape berry moth population seems to have emerged in the region as well.

Mark addressed his knowledge on complaints about him and his program that have been made to the Penn State Extension Administration. He is unaware of who is making the complaints or what the complaints are about. After discussions regarding the situation, Stan agreed to contact Mike Masiuk, who is the EPL for the Extension Horticulture Team, to figure out what the current problems are so that the Advisory Committee can effectively advise Mark. Additionally, he wanted to follow up with Mike to see if we are to proceed forward in regards to inviting those individuals to the next Advisory Meeting in January (per Mike's suggestion to Mark). To date, no one in the Advisory Committee had been contacted by Penn State or Mike Masiuk regarding this situation.

In December, Mark, Andy and Denise will meet to discuss 2014 programs for the wine grape industry of Pennsylvania. Mark asked the committee for future topics that would be of interest to the PA wine grape community.

Dave announced that the Pennsylvania Winery Association (PWA) has extended an Associate Membership for grape growers in Pennsylvania. Mark would like to forward information about

this Associate Membership through its listserv, but is waiting for information from Jennifer Eckinger that he can share. Dave also mentioned the newly created PWA [online] Forum where grape growers and winemakers can interact with one another virtually, and will follow up with Mark and Denise regarding if they should be a part of the Forum as well. Several committee members noted the potential benefit of having the two of them actively utilize the Forum.

The next Advisory Meeting Date was set for January 16, 2014.

Meeting adjourned to lunch at 12:01 PM.

Minutes documented by: Denise Gardner