

## A Statement of Purpose and Organization of the American Oat Workers (AOW) and the American Oat Workers Conference (AOWC)

**(This version was formally adopted by members of the AOW at the AOWC in Saskatoon, July 24, 2024)**

This statement shall serve to delineate the purpose and organizational structure of the American Oat Workers (AOW) organization and the associated American Oat Workers Conference (AOWC). It was approved by members at the AOWC, Minneapolis, MN on June 22, 1994, amended twice; at the AOWC, Seattle, WA on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 and at the AOWC, Saskatoon, Canada on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

The purpose of the AOW and the AOWC shall be to advance oat improvement and culture in North America and the World by providing a vehicle for:

- The dissemination of information on current research.
- The discussion of regional, continental, and global problems of oat improvement and integration of applicable research.
- Encouraging the exchange and preservation of germplasm.
- Standardization of data recording and terminology.
- Planning regional and continental performance nurseries as appropriate.
- Preliminary announcements of planned cultivar releases.
- Action on other matters that may properly come before the Conference or Committee.

The AOW shall be made up of scientists and other workers actively engaged in the improvement, management, and utilization of oats. These requirements being met, active participation in the AOW through AOWC attendance and other engagement constitutes AOW membership, and all attending members at an AOWC shall have voice and vote in all matters properly brought before the regular business meeting held during each AOWC. The AOWC shall be held at a time, generally every four years, and a location selected by vote of the attending membership at the previous AOWC. The AOW shall have a Committee which shall include an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to call emergency meetings of the Committee as necessary.

### Organization

The AOW shall be under the general leadership of an AOW Committee that includes an Executive as well as official representation from various regions and countries (Table 1). An overview of committees and their membership is provided for clarity (Table 2).

**Table 1.** Composition and representation of the AOW Committee

Region or Agency	Country, and number of representatives			
	USA	Canada	Mexico	South America
North Eastern Region	1	1	-	-
North Central Region	1	-	-	-
Western Region	1	1	-	-

Southern Region	1	-	1	1
Federal Dept. of Agric. Advisor	1	1	-	-
Prairie Oat Growers Representative	1	-	-	-
Industry Representative	1		-	-
Members at Large	3			
Executive members	Chair, Secretary, Past Chair, Chair-Elect, Newsletter Editor			

**Table 2:** Summary of organization of the American Oat Workers (AOW)

AOW members	All attendees at an AOWC business meeting who are actively engaged in the improvement, management, and utilization of oats shall be considered as voting members of the AOW.
AOW Committee	A group with defined regional/institutional membership (see Table 1) who have voting representation on AOW consultations and decisions conducted between AOWC meetings.
AOW Executive Committee	A group within the AOW Committee having a leadership role in the AOW. The Executive includes the Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, Secretary, and Oat Newsletter Editor.
Award Nominating Committee	A committee of three members appointed by the AOW Chair prior to an AOWC to identify award nominees. Nominees are then ranked by the AOW Committee prior to final selection by the Award Committee.
Executive and Site Nominating Committee	A committee of three to four active AOW members identified by the Executive to bring forward nominations for Chair-Elect, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and the site of the next conference.
Newsletter Committee	The Oat Newsletter Editor, the lead of the GrainGenes database team, the newsletter website administrator and a group of two Committee Members tasked with finding two reviewers for each research report submission.
Oat Germplasm Committee	A committee with responsibility to the National Plant Germplasm System of USDA.
Nomenclature Committee	This committee is now appointed by the International Oat Conference. The AOWC will continue to provide guidance and recommendations.

### **Executive Committee**

Members of the Executive Committee shall be the Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, Secretary and the Editor of the Oat Newsletter. Prior to each conference, the Executive Committee shall appoint an Executive and Site Nominating Committee consisting of three to four active AOW members. This committee shall identify a slate of officers for the positions of Chair-elect and Secretary, and will present these nominations for election at the business meeting of the following conference. Nominee(s) may also be identified for the position of Oat Newsletter Editor, particularly if the incumbent plans to retire from the position. The Chair-elect, Secretary, and Newsletter Editor shall be elected by the membership of the conference during the regular business meeting. Although nominees will be brought forward by a

committee, the floor shall be open to additional/replacement nominees identified at the business meeting if they are appropriately justified and seconded. The term of office shall be four years. A newly-elected Secretary or Oat Newsletter Editor will assume the duties of the position immediately following the business meeting during which they were elected. Incumbents in these positions may serve consecutive terms when duly elected. The Chair-Elect will also assume duties immediately following the business meeting, at which point the previous Chair-Elect will assume the position of Chair, and the previous Chair will remain on the Executive as Past-Chair. Thus, the Chair, who hosted the previous conference, will preside over a business meeting at the conference hosted by the Chair Elect. The Chair position should be renewed every four years, since the Chair-Elect is normally associated with the institution that is identified to host the next conference. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to appoint replacements that are vetted by the AOW Committee if any executive positions are vacated between regular conference meetings.

### **The AOW Committee**

Although all attendees at an AOWC business meeting shall be considered as AOW members, the AOW shall have an official standing Committee with representative membership from the Americas (see Table 1). This Committee shall have a voice in AOW business conducted between conferences (e.g., voting for awards) and in any consultations or decisions that must be conducted outside of the conference business meeting. Membership from the categories in Table 1 should be designated by appropriate agencies or regional groups. The Chair/Secretary will put out a call to members prior to the AOWC to identify if they are continuing or are being replaced. Where members cannot be contacted, the Chair/Secretary will try to identify replacements through appropriate channels. A slate of nominees will then be approved by the Executive Committee prior to an AOWC Business Meeting; however, the floor shall remain open to discussion or revision of this list prior to approval at the business meeting. Replacements shall assume their roles immediately following appointment/reappointment. Where a representative from the AOW Committee cannot attend an official conference, they should designate an alternate delegate to speak for their respective group.

### **Standing Committees and other functions of the AOW**

#### **Committee on Nomenclature and Cataloguing of Oat Genes (\*now with the IOC\*)**

At the 2014 AOWC meeting, the responsibility to elect this Nomenclature Committee was passed to the International Oat Conference. However, the AOW is encouraged to nominate members to this committee, and to encourage its operation. This should include the use of the Oat Newsletter to publish updated lists, guidelines, policies, and/or the use of GrainGenes to curate new literature and incorporate nomenclature into a relational database. The Nomenclature Committee should continue to assign symbols and catalog new genes governing characters in oats. The Nomenclature Committee should also revise and update the original publication on the subject, which was entitled "A Standardized System of Nomenclature for Genes Governing Characters of Oats".

### **Oat Germplasm Committee**

The Oat Germplasm Committee provides "sound information and authoritative recommendations" to the National Plant Germplasm System of the USDA regarding acquisition, conservation, and use of germplasm. The Committee may also provide recommendations regarding oat germplasm to Plant Genetic Resources of Canada, operated by AAFC. This Committee will meet directly following the AOWC business meeting to review the status of oat germplasm. The Committee will make a report for publication in the Oat Newsletter.

### **Oat Newsletter and Editorial Board**

The AOW shall sponsor an Oat Newsletter to be published for the purpose of disseminating information on current oat research and research needs. As adopted at the 2014 AOWC meeting, the Oat Newsletter is now an international electronic publication with a continuous schedule of publication, hosted by GrainGenes, and with a web address at "OatNews.org". The new OatNews site has subsections including traditional "research reports" with scientific objectivity, electronic archives of all previous Oat Newsletters, an informal community news section, archives from AOWC business meetings, other AOWC reports including membership, and abstracts from AOWC presentations. The publication of full reports will be encouraged following each conference, and speakers will be given the opportunity to provide electronic copies of their presentations for inclusion in the newsletter. Other oat-related meetings such as the International Oat Conference may be given their own sub-sections and encouraged to use them accordingly.

The AOW will seek to appoint a committee that includes at least two members tasked with finding two reviewers for each research report submission that constitutes original work not published in some form elsewhere. In addition, the lead of the GrainGenes database team and the newsletter website administrator (both representing USDA-ARS) shall be made permanent members of the committee for so long as the newsletter is hosted on the GrainGenes site.

Committee members should be renewed at each AOWC business meeting, but this is open to input from other organizations such as the International Oat Conference at the discretion of the Editor and Chair.

Citation of the research reports will be permitted based on guidelines published on the site, which shall include the statement "*Please contact the corresponding author before citing or linking to any article in the online newsletter. Newsletter reports are often preliminary works, and the author may be able to provide more up-to-date references.*"

### **Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement Award, and Nominating Committee**

The AOW shall confer the "Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement Award" upon persons in recognition of their outstanding research contributions and/or meritorious service toward making oats a successful agricultural species. No restriction shall be placed upon who may receive the award. However, as a general guide, the award should be presented to persons who have been active members

of the AOW and have devoted a significant portion of their professional career and a significant number of years working with oats through research, extension, or other professional activities.

Recipients for this award shall be nominated by an Award Nominating Committee consisting of three AOW members appointed by the AOW Chair. At least two of those members should have served on the AOW Committee. Their term of office shall be from date of appointment until the end of the following AOWC meeting. This committee will identify a list of persons (typically 10 to 15) whom they consider to be eligible for a distinguished service award. The list will then be ranked by members of the AOW Committee through electronic voting. Based on the results of this voting, the Awards Committee will identify the top (typically 1 to 4) outstanding nominees as recipients to be honored at the following conference.

The Distinguished Service Award(s) shall be conferred at a regular AOWC meeting. Manifestation of the award shall be denoted by the presentation of a suitable plaque or certificate to the recipient. A brief one-page statement about the recipient and a photograph of the recipient shall be available to conference delegates, and shall be published in the Oat Newsletter following the presentation.