

## Minutes of the American Oat Workers' Conference Business Meeting

July 24, 2024 – Saskatoon, Canada

The meeting was called to order by the Chair Elect Aaron Beattie at 10:26 am. Twenty-eight individuals were present in the room and three were present online (Kathy Esvelt Klos (Chair), Charlene Wight (Editor of the Oat Newsletter), and Craig Carlson).

1. Review of the minutes from the last meeting of the AOWC, held June 21, 2018, in Seattle, USA. No comment was made. A motion was made by Paul Richter to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Shahryar Kianian. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Additional agenda items. Jean-Luc Jannink proposed a motion to show appreciation to the organizing committee. Aaron Beattie proposed a motion to recognize community members who passed away since the last AOWC. Aaron also proposed to discuss the reports from the standing committees prior to the Review of the AOW statement. Jean-Luc Jannink made a motion to approve the new agenda; Bill May seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.
3. Reports from the standing committees. Charlene Wight proceeded with reporting on the Oat Newsletter (report attached). Charlene made a motion for the newsletter site administrator (currently Steve Michel) and the head of the GrainGenes team (currently Taner Sen) to be made permanent members of the editorial committee and for the committee to include an additional two members to assist the newsletter editor. Shana Mathieson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. There were no other reports.
4. Review and revisions to “Statement of purpose and organization of the American Oat Worker (AOW) and the American Oat Worker Conference (AOWC)” document. Charlene Wight made a motion to update the Statement of purpose as follow:

“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.*”

Paul Richter seconded the motion. Motion passed.

5. Confirmation of existing AOW Executive and AOW Committee membership and nomination of new members.

- Eric DeBlieck was nominated as Industry representative.
- Shawna Mathieson was nominated as POGA representative.
- Oswald Crasta was nominated as USDA-ARS representative.
- Juan Arbelaez was nominated as North Central USA representative.
- Xiaofei Zhang was nominated as Western USA representative.
- Marcelo Pacheco was nominated as South America representative.
- William (Bill) May was nominated as Chair of the Awards committee.
- Harold Bockelman stepped down from co-chair of the Oat Germplasm standing committee to serve as an Ad-Hoc member.
- Oswald Crasta was nominated as a member of the Oat Germplasm standing committee.
- Belayneh Yimer was nominated as a member of the Oat Germplasm standing committee.

A motion was made by Shahryar Kianian to elect the members that were nominated. The motion was seconded by Eric DeBlieck. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Nominations and site Selection of next AOWC host. Aaron reported that Ali Babar from the University of Florida and Craig Carlson from the USDA-ARS in Fargo kindly offered to host the next AOWC in 2028. Discussion suggested that Fargo may result in higher attendance from the community due to the timing of the meeting. A vote was conducted. Fargo was elected as the location of the next AOWC with Craig Carlson as the host. As a result, Craig Carlson will serve as Chair Elect on the Executive Committee.

7. USDA-ARS Oat Grand Challenge. Oswald Crasta from the USDA-ARS provided an overview of the USDA-ARS Oat Grand Challenge Program. Oswald Crasta shared his vision for the USDA-ARS to work in a “synergistic collaborative way” with the other members of the oat committee to increase output. He indicated that the USDA-ARS would like to engage with various partners including industry, growers, and university partners to get feedback.

8. Recognition of sponsors and volunteers. Aaron recognized the sponsors of the 2024 AOWC. The sponsors included Grain Millers, General Mills, Crop Development Center, MGM Seed & Grain, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, SeCan, Bay State Milling, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Alliance Seed, Prairie Oat Growers Association, Quaker, and Saskatchewan Seed Growers’ Association. The sponsors provided ¾ of the fundings for the conference. Aaron Beattie also recognized all the volunteers who helped with the organization of the conference.

9. Resolution of gratitude to the 2024 AOWC Organizers.

Whereas AOWC attendees received timely and relevant preparatory communications about the meeting, whereas we have felt welcomed and pampered at lovely venues in Saskatoon, whereas the meeting agenda has been chock-a-block with stimulating talks from veteran

and new scientists alike, whereas the Kernen Crop Research Farm Tour was flawlessly organized and pulled off without a hitch, and Whereas the Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement award trophy was beautiful, be it resolved that attendees thank organizers of the 2024 American Oat Workers Conference in Saskatoon, Canada, and Aaron Beattie in particular. We are grateful for the dedication, thoughtfulness and effort spent in service of a wonderful experience for all attendees.

Motion moved by Jean-Luc Jannink, seconded by Shahryar Kianian. Resolution passed unanimously.

## 5. Memoriams.

**Howard Rines** passed away on May 23, 2024. Howard grew up on his family farm. He received his Bachelor and Master of Science degrees from Purdue University and a PhD in Genetics from Yale University. After 5 years as a Botany Professor at the University of Georgia, he and his family moved and settled in Shoreview in 1976, where he enjoyed a long and productive career as a Research Agronomist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service at the University of Minnesota St. Paul campus, where he also served as an Adjunct Professor. Focusing on oat genetics with an emphasis on cellular and molecular approaches to oat improvement, his research was foundational for the future of oat and crop genetics.

**Ronald L. Phillips** passed away on August 25, 2023. He earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Purdue University and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, completing his postdoctoral training at Cornell University. In 1967, he joined the faculty of the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics at the University of Minnesota and was there 42 years, retiring at age 70 as a Regents Professor, first McKnight Presidential Chair in Genomics, and Director of the Center for Microbial and Plant Genomics. He published over 150 research papers, 70 chapters, 350 abstracts, and 6 edited books. Research areas included the molecular genetics of crop species, cell and tissue culture, gene mapping, and genomics. He made significant improvements in protein quality, seed shattering resistance, and other important traits. He is on the "Wall of Discovery" at the University of Minnesota for the "first regeneration of complete corn plants from cells", a groundbreaking discovery that led to the development of genetically engineered crops.

**Vern Burrows** passed away November 8, 2020. Vern graduated from the University of Manitoba (BSA and MSc) and the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California (PhD, 1958). Vern had a 40-year career as a research scientist at Ottawa's Experimental Farm, breeding 27 oat varieties (notably AC Gehl) and publishing 100 research papers including four book chapters. He was known for running around his oat

plots in Ottawa and California's Imperial Valley with his field notes, Tilley hat, and sunscreen. He celebrated innovation of any kind, would promote the merits of oats to anyone who would listen, and was a lunchtime mainstay of the old Carling Building's "eclectic table".

**Marty Carson** died May 9th, 2019. Marty attended Eastern Illinois University as an undergraduate. He did his graduate studies (M.S. and Ph.D) in Plant Pathology at the University of Illinois. Marty was a faculty member at South Dakota State University for eight years and then joined the USDA-ARS Plant Science Unit in Raleigh, NC, in 1989. With the USDA-ARS in Raleigh, Marty became well known for his work on maize diseases and in maize germplasm improvement. In 2002, Marty accepted the Research Leader position at the USDA-ARS Cereal Disease Laboratory in Minnesota. In St. Paul, he identified sources of durable resistance in cultivated oat to the crown rust fungus, *Puccinia coronata*. He used these oat selections to develop a number of recombinant inbred line populations that are still being studied today. He also characterized populations of *Puccinia coronata* in the USA for virulence to crown rust resistance genes and for molecular genetic polymorphism.

**Herb Ohm** passed away on April 29, 2021. He was awarded a B.S. degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Minnesota in 1967, an M.S. degree in Plant Breeding from North Dakota State University in 1969, and a Ph.D. in Plant Genetics and Breeding from Purdue University in 1972. After 41 years as a professor and advisor in the Purdue Agronomy Department, Dr. Herb Ohm retired in December 2014. As a world-renowned plant breeder and geneticist, Herb was part of many recognized research opportunities with a focus on small grains. During his time at Purdue, he advised and mentored 62 graduate students. Herb was instrumental in building relationships with many international small grains research programs, which helped grow the diversity of the Purdue agronomy department. In 2004, he was named a distinguished professor of agronomy and, from 2009-2010, served as interim department head of the Department of Agronomy.

**Darrell Wesenberg** died on July 30, 2018. Darrell was the former Research Leader and Location Coordinator of the Small Grains and Potato Germplasm Research Unit in Aberdeen, Idaho. He retired from ARS in 2001 after 33 years of service. A native of Wisconsin, he received his higher education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, including his Ph.D. in Agronomy in 1968. That year, he began work as a plant breeder with ARS in Aberdeen. Darrell developed many barley and oat cultivars that greatly benefited growers and industry nationwide. Notable was the release of the barley cultivar 'Klages', which spurred the growth of the malting industry in the western states. In 1986, he became Research Leader at the Aberdeen Unit and oversaw the design and

construction of the National Small Grains Germplasm Research Facility. His pioneering work with the collection expanded the evaluation of barley and oat germplasm to include screening for emerging disease problems and assessment of important grain quality characteristics.

The meeting was adjourned by Aaron Beattie at 11:13 am.

Reported by:

Mélanie Caffé, AOW Secretary and Aaron Beattie, AOW Chair.