

AOWC 2024 Business meeting – Oat Newsletter report

(Presented over MS Teams by Charlene Wight, Oat Newsletter Editor, July 24, 2024)

- A lot has happened with the newsletter over the past six years, including:
 - Adding pages for the Germplasm Committee (AOWC), the Nomenclature Committee (IOC), and pathology generally,
 - Using the “Community” section to pass along information gleaned from Twitter (now ‘X’), currently in the form of a “Weekly Web Harvest”,
 - Adding a section for children, and
 - Helping Oat Global with coordinating and hosting the “Speaking of Oats...” (“SOO...”) webinar series, which was established by Jim Bradeen in 2020 to help keep the community connected.

- In August, 2022, there was survey done regarding “SOO...” and the newsletter. The results were mostly positive, and were published in the newsletter (https://oatnews.org/oatnews_pdfs/2020cmt/oat%20community%20survey%209.26.22_a_nonymous.pdf).

- The main list of email subscribers currently has 478 people on it, the OatMail list has 132 people on it (73 of whom do not subscribe to the email notifications), and the ‘X’ account has 2415 followers. A lot of people did drop off of Twitter when it became ‘X’, and there has been a bit of a shift in tone on that platform, but it’s still a good source of information.

- Continuing challenges (from my point of view):
 - We still don’t have a working discussion forum, and more people could be taking advantage of the OatMail system. I would also like people to be able to leave comments on the ‘blog’ posts.
 - We need more input from the community, especially in the form of research reports.
 - It would be nice to have more people do “Speaking of Oats...” webinars – participation has slowed considerably since the end of the pandemic.
 - A lot more could be done with the newsletter site. I can’t do it all, but we also can’t have just anyone be given access, so ideas for how to manage that are welcome.

- At this point, I’d like to thank everyone who is currently on the committee (Gerard Lazo, Catherine Howarth, Jean-Luc Jannink, Shea Miller (especially Shea!), Marcelo Pacheco, Nick Tinker, Zongwen Zhang, and Pamela Zwer), as well as Steve Michel and Taner Sen from the GrainGenes database team at the USDA-ARS.

- I think the committee should be restructured at this point, since most of the members have moved on, and we receive too few original research reports for assessment, which is one reason why we had increased the size of the committee to create an Editorial Board.
- *(The restructuring was discussed during the presentation of the report.)*
- I would like to make a formal motion to have the newsletter site administrator (currently Steve Michel) and the head of the GrainGenes team (currently Taner Sen) be made permanent members of the committee, since they oversee many of the everyday workings of the site. The other committee members' roles should also be adjusted. This requires updating the AOW Statement of Purpose.
 - Original:
 - The AOW will seek to appoint an Editorial Board that is both internationally representative, as well as being representative of different subject areas. The Editorial Board should be renewed at each AOWC business meeting, but is open to input from other organizations such as the International Oat Conference at the discretion of the Editor and Chair. Two members of the Editorial Board shall be called on by the Editor to review each research report that is submitted to the newsletter. 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.”*
 - Proposed (with changes noted):
 - The AOW will seek to appoint ~~an Editorial Board that is both internationally representative, as well as being representative of different subject areas~~ 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 ~~The Editorial Board~~ 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. ~~Two members of the Editorial Board shall be called on by the Editor to review each research report that is submitted to the newsletter.~~

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.*”

- *(Questions from the floor were entertained, and the motion was passed during the portion of the meeting dedicated to revising the Statement of Purpose.)*
- It was asked whether anyone at the meeting in person was interested in serving on the committee. Others expressing interest (in earlier discussions over email) were Steffen Beuch (Nordsaat, Germany), Jennifer Mitchell Fetch (AAFC, retired), Nick Tinker (AAFC retired), and perhaps Shea Miller (AAFC, retired). Further discussions of who will formally serve on the committee will be held soon.