

**LOUISIANA INDUSTRIAL HEMP PROMOTION AND  
RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD  
NOVEMBER 15, 2022  
9:30 AM**

**Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry Building  
LDAF Veterans Memorial Auditorium  
5825 Florida Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, LA 70806**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Louisiana Representative C. Travis Johnson.

**PLEDGE**

Mr. John Ford led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

AES Attorney Paeton Burkett swore in the board members and assisted the members completing their Oath of Office forms.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Ms. Erica Morse.

The following board members were present: Mr. Blaine Jennings representing LA Farm Bureau Federation, Inc.; Dr. Reeve Legendre representing Louisiana State University Agricultural Center; Dr. Janana Snowden representing Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center; Mr. Timmy Thompson representing the Speaker of the LA House of Representatives; Representative C. Travis Johnson representing the Chairman of the House Committee Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural Development; Dr. James Smith representing the Chairman of the Senate Committee Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural Development; Mr. Arthur Walker representing a consumer of industrial hemp; Mr. Chris Fontenot representing the Louisiana industrial hemp industry; Mr. John Ford representing Louisiana Black Farmers Cannabis and Hemp Association; Mr. Willis Nelson representing Morehouse Parish Black Farmers and Landowners Association; Mr. Matthew Moreau representing the Louisiana Cannabis Association; and Assistant Commissioner Dr. Ansel T. Rankins Sr. serving as an ex-officio designee representing the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. A quorum was declared by Ms. Erica Morse.

Others Present: LDAF Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM; Lester Cannon, Director of LDAF Seed Programs Division; David Johnston, LDAF Seed Programs Coordinator; Brent Cutrer, LDAF Industrial Hemp Program Coordinator; Todd Parker Confidential Assistant to the Commissioner, Tina Ficklin, LDAF Seed Program Specialist; Megan Moore LDAF Public Information Director; LDAF Attorney Staff Paeton Burkett and Amy McInnis; Erica Morse Industrial Hemp Administrative Coordinator.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paeton Burkett stated Dr. Ansel Rankins is serving as an ex-officio board member and Dr. Strain is present to complete the opening statements.

## **OPENING STATEMENTS**

Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM provided an update on the Louisiana industrial hemp industry. He stated we're looking for ways to grow the industrial hemp industry and briefly explained past industrial hemp legislation. Louisiana was the first state in the union to have their hemp plan approved by the federal government. The state's laws must mirror the federal law and farm bills in order to have an approved state hemp plan. There is a decrease in licenses issued and a decrease in acreage planted since 2020 due to difficulty in growing outdoors in Louisiana's climate and licensees acquiring poor quality seeds without documentation of germination reports. Industrial hemp samples are tested at the LDAF Agriculture Chemistry laboratory. Vast majority of hemp grown in Louisiana is indoor grows for floral hemp and about 2% grown for fiber and 2% grown for seed. LDAF also intends to move towards performance-based sampling for consistently low THC varieties to alleviate some of the costs of growing hemp.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Nominations were given for positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary-Treasurer. Dr. Smith motioned to nominate Mr. Walker for Chairman; Mr. Walker requested to rescind his nomination for chairman. Mr. Ford motioned to nominate Representative Johnson as Chairman and Dr. Snowden motioned to second it. The board voted unanimously to accept Representative Johnson as Chairman. Representative Johnson motioned to nominate Mr. Moreau for Vice Chairman and Mr. Fontenot motioned to second it. The board unanimously to accept Mr. Moreau as Vice Chairman. Representative Johnson nominated Dr. Snowden for Secretary-Treasurer and Mr. Ford motioned to second it. The motion passed unanimously to accept Dr. Snowden as Secretary-Treasurer.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

How to establish a competitive market in Louisiana was discussed. There are very few processors in the state of Louisiana; facilities to process industrial hemp within Louisiana are needed. It was suggested to have a legislator contact National Council of State Legislators to see if any states have completed a market analysis for hemp. It was also suggested that the board contact the USDA Economic Research Service and USDA Agriculture Research Service. It was clarified that industrial hemp is intended to grow outdoors on a large scale and processed in large amounts. Hemp intended for consumption should be grown in clean soil as it is a phyto-accumulator and can pull pollutants from the soil. It was suggested that hemp genetics should be researched for outdoor grows in Louisiana; establishing genetics that could sustain against the elements would encourage farmers to grow hemp. More research is needed as well as extension agents to assist farmers are needed.

DOTD has a research facility for compounds used on highways; since a large amount hemp can be used for hempcrete, DOTD could also be a potential route to use industrial hemp.

Louisiana needs to start developing plant-based plastics that can eventually breakdown.

Unapproved outdoor grows also have the potential of releasing pollen that could potentially pollute and harm healthy grows.

A question was brought up about the difficulty of bringing new varieties into the state of Louisiana. The nation's hemp industry intends to move towards certified hemp seed. Certified seed is seed that has been rigorously tested for genetic purity and quality as well as having stable characteristics. Since there is a lack of certified hemp seed, Louisiana has not been enforcing the requirement certified seed. Mr. Jennings stated that bringing in varieties is fairly easy with the proper documentation of Certificate of Analysis (THC test), germination report, and purity report. LDAF Seed Lab can also test hemp seeds that lack germination and purity tests. LDAF emphasized that growers should obtain seed from reliable sources.

Ms. Megan Moore, Director of Communications, stated that if there is any information that the board would like to share with the public, that it goes through LDAF so it could be shared with LDAF's established audience on social media platforms and LDAF's Market Bulletin paper.

Attorney Paeton Burkett reviewed the expectations and requirements for the board. Mrs. Burkett also explained how to avoid a rolling quorum to comply with civil law. Attorney Amy McInnis further explained that any texts or emails about board business could be subject to public records. Board members are required to complete a one-hour Code of Ethics training every year and complete a Sexual Harassment Acknowledgement form. Civil Law trainings that cover public records and open meetings law for state board and commission board members are available through the Louisiana Attorney General's office monthly.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Brian Bolyer licensed industrial hemp seed producer and owner/founder of Okhish Mound Farms provided information on his perspective on outdoor fiber grows. He teamed up with the National Hemp Growers Co-Op in Mississippi. He is the seed coordinator for their seed trials focusing on fiber and grain. They found viable seed could be grown during the wintertime. Their partner company in Texas is teaming up with Texas A&M to calculate the carbon credits. They signed a MOU with Troy University for the development of bioplastics to support the automotive industry. They are also working with Domma Distribution to end one-time use plastic packaging for specific uses. In New Orleans they will soon start working to bring in hemp wool as a substitute for fiberglass insulation. They also recently signed a contract with a builder in New Orleans to provide enough hemp biomass to produce 10 homes as a test project for low-income housing. Homeland Hempcrete in North Dakota is working on this project along with the university to obtain numbers on energy consumption. The homes would be about 1200-1800 square foot. About 4.5 tons of biomass are needed per unit. They were able to grow about 2 tons per acre and are looking to increase their yield to 4.5 tons per acre. He said if they can grow 4.5 tons per acre, one home could be built with the hemp ready for harvest after 90 days. Mr. Bolyer was asked what equipment was used to harvest his fiber hemp crop. No special equipment was purchased; Mr. Bolyer stated it's treated like hay-cut it, allow it to ret, and bale it like hay. Fifty pounds of hemp seed per acre of was planted, which was about 22,000-25,000 seeds per pound.

He reiterated that there is no processing in Louisiana and products are brought out of state for processing which greatly increases the end-product costs. He mentioned that a lot of hemp seed companies have poor paperwork. He thanked LDAF Seed Program for working with licensees to overcome the challenges that pervade the hemp industry.

Mr. Frank Johnson the Chief Creative Officer of Courtesy Groves. Courtesy Groves educates the public on cannabis awareness and that this plant could change Louisiana's reputation and economic growth. He provided words of encouragement and his expectations for the board members. He requested that our farmers need extension agents to educate on the hemp plant.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 9:30am is the tentative date for the next meeting. The board is required to meet at least twice a year or additional meetings can be held at the call of the board's chair.

### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Dr. Legendre motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Moreau moved to second it. The board voted unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40am.