



**RESEARCH, EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2024
Time: 12pm
Place: Lodi Winegrape Commission, 2545 West Turner Road, Lodi, CA 95242

1. The **meeting was called to order** at 12:10pm by Committee Chairman Dawson Lewis.
2. Those in **attendance** are indicated below. A **quorum** was established.

First Name	Last Name	Attended
Scott	Armolea	
Amy	Blagg	X
Kyle	Brown	
Kevin	den Hartog	X
Mike	Klouda	X
Joe	Larranaga	X
Dawson	Lewis	X
Art	Prudhel	
Keith	Striegler	X
Justin	Tanner	
Joe	Valente	X
Larry	Whitted	X

Staff present: Dr. Stephanie Bolton and Stuart Spencer.

Guests present: Cameron Heitz (Kautz Farms), Andrew Watts (Watts Vineyards), Dr. Karen Block (UC Davis V&E) and Stanton Lange (Demo Vineyard Manager).

3. **Consideration of previous minutes.** Valente/den Hartog made a motion to approve the January 30, 2024 meeting minutes. The motion was carried on a vote of Committee members present. No “no” votes. No abstentions.

4. **Public comment:** none.

5. **Grower education programs.**

- **Review of recent initiatives and growing season**

- Committee members discussed the current grape/wine market.
- Roundtable review of recent meetings, including Lodi Grape Day, the Lodi Winegrape Commission Annual Meeting, the Ant & Mealybug Research Field Day, Lodi Farm Safety Day, the Wine Market Council Annual Meeting, Clarksburg Grape Day, CAWG Advocacy Day, UC Women in Wine Field Trip to Lodi, the Regional Associations meeting, and LDGGA’s Ag Burning Update Meeting.

- **Ideas for future initiatives**

- Committee members were invited to the Commission’s April 2 IPM meeting and the July 10 Rootstock Focus Group meeting where Committee member Dr. Keith Striegler will present decades of rootstock trial research.
- Other upcoming meetings of interest include: UC IPM meeting (4/1), Lockeford Cover Crop Field Day (4/3), LDGGA Economic Forum (4/4), and a Farm Labor Conference in Davis (4/5).
- The Committee was invited to the Fresno State Ag One Fundraiser at Mettler on April 25.
- The topic for the May 7 IPM meeting will be Pierce’s Disease and Mark Allan was suggested to speak about bees for the June 4 IPM meeting. The Committee also brainstormed a robotics meeting for the summer.
- Ideas for future meetings: “A Journey Into Vine Health” (2024 series), crop rotation, climate change, rootstocks and drought tolerance, vineyard establishment workshop, beneficial insects, Axel Borg (UC V&E Librarian), grower/winemaker relationships, the grape market, field-in technology, ground squirrels (PERC), a microscope series, and permanent/full ground cover.

6. Grower communications.

- Grower e-Newsletter emails are sent up to a few times per month as needed, with an extensive calendar at the bottom.
- The lodigrowers.com website is updated frequently with educational events (under the Education heading, Local Opportunities page) and viticulture blogs are posted every Monday morning.
- On March 18, the Commission published a blog post by Stuart Spencer called “Imported Foreign Bulk Wine: The Dirty Secret No One in California Wine is Talking About” which has gotten a lot of views.

7. Winegrape research in Crush District 11. Research projects and focus group updates:

- Scientists continue to contact the Lodi Winegrape Commission to collaborate on research projects in the areas of soil, water, sustainability, pests and diseases, rodent control, climate change, and more.
- The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) awarded \$428,111 to the Lodi Winegrape Commission, for a project titled “Canine detection of invasive vine mealybugs and leafroll virus in California vineyards.” Stephanie Bolton serves as the principal investigator. The project team includes Dr. Neil McRoberts (University of California Davis), Lisa Finke (Canine Detection Services), Dr. Maher Al Rwahnih (Foundation Plant Services) and five canines all named after grape varieties.
- The Rootstock Research Focus Group meets on the second Thursday of the month at the Velvet Grill. Growers can contact Dr. Stephanie Bolton to participate in on-farm small rootstock trials.
- The Commission is working with an accounting firm to finalize a Return on Investment worksheet for growers.
- There is a need for a simple way to determine a “goldilocks deficit irrigation” amount of water to apply, especially before/during heat waves.
- The Commission conducted a blind virus ring test for the five commercial virus testing laboratories and found three of the five labs to be sufficiently accurate.
- We learned by asking that the CDFA is testing only 0.03% of the certified nursery increase block vines for leafroll 3 virus, as shown below. That amount of testing is grossly inadequate. Also from the CDFA: “The testing protocol was developed by UCD, we test 348 vines per Increase or Secondary Increase Block, regardless of the size of the block.” Dr. Stephanie Bolton will lead a proposal project with Marc Fuchs, growers, nurseries, labs, FPS, and others to develop a better strategy for our industry.

Vines Tested	Total Vines	% Tested
3,068	10,324,963	0.0297

8. Weather Network services. No updates.

9. The FY2023-2024 Budget was reviewed.

10. **Reports from other Committees.**

- Stuart Spencer updated the Committee on marketing activities and the Business Improvement District project.

11. **Public comment on items not appearing on the agenda (2 min limit):** Dr. Karen Block reported that UC Davis has a new V&E Department Chair, Ben Montpetit, that they hope the Oakville UCCE Specialist in Viticulture position gets slated for funding soon, and that there are a few upcoming virtual educational opportunities for growers coming up, along with an in-person field day at the Oakville Station on 6/5.

12. **Items for future agendas:** FY2024-2025 Draft Budget Review.

13. The **next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at noon.**

14. The **meeting was adjourned** at 1:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephanie L. Bolton, PhD
Research & Education Director
Lodi Winegrape Commission