**MINUTES**

**LOUISIANA CRAWFISH PROMOTION & RESEARCH BOARD**

**August 9th, 2018**

**USGS NATIONAL WETLANDS RESEARCH CENTER**

**700 CAJUNDOME BLVD.**

**LAFAYETTE, LA**

**Call to Order:**

David Savoy called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

**Roll Call:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT** **MEMBERS ABSENT**

David Savoy Ralph Babin

Robert Buller Wayne Romig

Wylie Jewell Chandra Scarber

Jody Meche

Bill Pizzolato

Greg Faulk

Kip Lastraps

**Declaration of a Quorum:**

A quorum was declared with 7 members present and 3 members absent.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes from the February 28th, 2018 Board meeting were read.

**MOTION BY**: Jody Meche seconded by Bill Pizzolato to approve the minutes from the February 28th, 2018 Board meeting. Motion Carried.

**Collections & Financial Report:**

David Savoy called on Ron Harrell to present the collections and financial reports. He reported to the Board the current condition of accounts.

**MOTION BY:** Jody Meche seconded by Kip Lastraps to accept the financial report as presented. Motion Carried.

**Promotion & Research:**

Dr. Joshua Vaughan, University of Lafayette, sent in his presentation on the status of the automated crawfish peeling machine project. Currently, two students, one undergraduate researcher and one graduate student were hired to begin work on the project this fall semester. To date, several thousand images of crawfish have been gathered, and the machine-learning pipeline to train the vision system has been developed. The hardware for the vision component of the system has been selected. In the next several months, additional images will be collected and the machine vision system refined. In addition, the initial subsystem designs, for both the mechanical and controls systems, will be developed.

Next, Dr. Hawke and Dr. Green, LSU AgCenter, gave a presentation to the Board regarding white spot syndrome. Recently, a number of reports and outbreaks have been confirmed. Estimates of the total impacted area during the 2016-2017 range between 10,000 and 30,000 acres. When a pond “breaks” with WSSV, most harvestable crawfish die over a short period of time and harvests decline abruptly. They do not know how widespread or serious the problem is and will not be able to make an estimate until a comprehensive survey of crawfish ponds is conducted and more producers know wat to look for and how to report the disease. The exact source is unknown. There are many unanswered questions and the LSU AgCenter and the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine would like to conduct a coordinated research effort to determine factors, carriers, treatments, patterns and the geographic extent of WSSV in Louisiana.

Donald Dartez and Rodney Hess reported to the Board the results of the social media marketing efforts. Rodney provided the Board with an overview on the reach of the number of people on the Board’s website and Facebook page and the number of times our content was seen. He stated that the visits and engagement numbers have increased. He showed some of the posts and recipes that have been doing well on the Board’s Facebook page. They are specifically targeting the specific areas that the billboards were in. Through the purchase of the Facebook ads they believe that it has built up the audience as well as increased visibility and awareness of Louisiana crawfish. Facebook Top Cities: 1. Atlanta 2. Denver 3. Houston 4. Oklahoma City 5. Corpus Christi. Website Top Cities: 1. Dallas 2. Houston 3. New Orleans 4. Atlanta 5. Baton Rouge.

Next the Board reviewed Holly Clegg’s presentation on her promotional efforts since the last Board meeting. All of her Louisiana crawfish posts continue to do well. Louisiana crawfish content extends beyond the south. California and New York are top states for site visits with respect to crawfish content. Consumers searching for crawfish recipes are served Holly Clegg’s recipes as top options. Her content continues to be a referrer to the Board’s website. YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media also contribute to her efforts to promote Louisiana crawfish. “Eat Fit” is an Ochsner phone app that Holly has submitted Louisiana crawfish recipes to. Holly’s crawfish recipes were listed on Louisiana.gov, she had a Louisiana Broadcast interview regarding crawfish being healthy, and she has also submitted Louisiana crawfish recipes to The Advocate and a Memphis newspaper.

Jennifer Marsh with Louisiana Radio Network spoke to the Board about the Voice of Louisiana Agriculture Radio Network project. This will be a specially prepared report given by Don Molino to Louisiana crawfish farmers and consumers every week with the latest Louisiana information on everything from research to markets to news impacting the crawfish industry. The reports will begin airing in September and continue in October and November. She wanted to speak to the Board to find out the important issues of the industry. They would conduct interviews after the meeting.

The Louisiana Department of Ag & Forestry will be taking applications for another grant program for promotion of Louisiana products. The application is due on October 30th, 2018. The grant will cover up to $30,000.00. The Board agreed that at the next meeting they will decide what project they would like to submit for the grant program.

**Board Business:**

The Board discussed trying to meet on Tuesdays from now on in order to resolve the issue of meeting attendance.

The Board next discussed the crawfish season.

**No public comment**

The date for the next Board meeting will be Tuesday, October 9th, 2018 at 1:00 P.M. at the USGS National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette.

**MOTION BY:** Kip Lastraps and seconded by Wylie Jewell to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried.