

June 2022

MCFA

Minor Crop Farmer Alliance

# Member Minute

## MCFA HOLDS 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

## Meet MCFA's 2022 Officers

Minor Crop Farmer Alliance (MCFA) members convened virtually for the group's Annual Meeting on Feb. 25. More than 25 members, guests and counsel participated in the call.

**Members elected the following officers** to preside over MCFA business for the next year:

- Jim Cranney, California Citrus Quality Council, *chair*
- Dave Epstein, Northwest Horticultural Council, *vice-chair*
- Caroline Stringer, California Fresh Fruit Association, *secretary*
- Mike Wenkel, National Potato Council, *treasurer*

Cranney thanked International Fresh Produce Association's Robert Guenther for his longtime service as MCFA's past treasurer.

Robert Guenther presented a preliminary 2021 year-end financial report. Participants discussed opportunities to follow up on unpaid 2021 dues, and solicit new memberships.

MCFA Legal Counsel Ed Ruckert previewed a [2022 Work Plan](#), which continues work on priorities of previous years; the work plan was later finalized after members had the opportunity to comment on it. MCFA's 2022 priorities are:

- informing ESA implementation;
- clarifying the role of epidemiological studies in human health pesticide risk assessments;
- encouraging use of real-world monitoring data in conducting drinking water assessments;
- evaluating the impact of pesticide exposure on pollinators;
- globally harmonizing pesticide registration requirements including setting Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs);
- increasing funding for IR-4 and USDA's Office of Pest Management Policy;
- informing discussions regarding potential regulation of use of antibiotics and other antimicrobial products in horticulture; and
- supporting industry participation in and continued fielding of grower pesticide-use surveys to inform agencies' decision making.

MCFA Communications Counsel Julia Stewart summarized 2021 activities, including media coverage generated, and previewed a 2022 strategy to increase MCFA content in trade media to reach members.

Members can access the meeting minutes [here](#). END

### MEMBER CALL TO ACTION

## **MCFA needs you, now!**

- **Pay your 2022 dues today.** Download our invoice [here](#).
- **Better yet, increase your contribution.** And suggest new members to MCFA leadership.
- **Share this update.** Show your members and colleagues that MCFA's work is vital, and that our dues are a good investment.
- **To learn more,** visit us [online](#). END

## MCFA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETS

## Technical Committee welcomes OPMP's Nesci, EPA's Dr. Freedhoff; approves 2022 Work Plan

MCFA's Technical Committee convened by teleconference on Feb. 24, drawing large attendance and several notable guests. The committee is co-chaired by Mike Aerts of Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, and Gabriele Ludwig of Almond Board of California.

Aerts welcomed new **USDA Office of Pest Management Policy Director** [Kimberly Nesci](#). Nesci told committee members she wants to: enhance OPMP's coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Pesticide Programs; play an

active role in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Interagency Working Group; and build relationships inside her agency and with external stakeholders. She fielded questions on a range of topics, from transparency in EPA decision-making to where pesticides fit in USDA climate change initiatives.

Also joining the call was new **EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Assistant Administrator** [Michal Freedhoff, Ph.D.](#) She reported that ESA implementation is a major focus of her

activities, noting that her agency is at a crossroads regarding how to manage ESA issues to be better positioned to help avoid litigating ESA in the courts. She said EPA would be announcing its ESA work plan in several weeks. Dr. Freedhoff also responded to a range of questions, including whether the agency plans to continue to use epidemiological studies to make decisions about pesticide safety, and whether her office is open to using real-world water monitoring data in its decision making. She confirmed EPA's recent decision to revoke tolerances for chlorpyrifos, effectively banning its use, was an unusual case and not indicative of a new future approach by the agency.

**EPA Deputy Director of Office of Pesticide Programs** [Michael Goodis](#) reported his office continues to address ESA implementation, considering policy options to reduce the impact of court decisions on that process. He noted EPA is evaluating its methodology for

conducting ESA reviews. He reported it is unlikely that his agency will meet the Oct. 1 deadline to complete all pesticide registration reviews, which will likely make the agency vulnerable to more lawsuits. He also commented on the need to consider how best to utilize use and usage data in ESA analysis.

**IR-4 Project Executive Director** [Jerry Baron](#) reported on progress of ongoing residue trials. Impacted by reduced funding, he reported IR-4 is integrating initiatives to evaluate residues from both conventional and biopesticides.

**MCFA Legal Counsel Ed Ruckert** reported on the status of revocation of chlorpyrifos tolerances, noting legal challenges by several ag commodity organizations. He also reported that EPA's upcoming Proposed Interim Decision (PID) on rodenticides could have far-reaching impacts for both agricultural and urban communities. **END**

### [MCFA COMMENTS](#)

## **MCFA goes on record on malathion BiOp, fungicides**

On May 2, MCFA [provided comments to](#) the Environmental Protection Agency, in response to that agency's request for public comments on National Marine Fisheries Service's Endangered Species Act-mandated revised draft Biological Opinion (aka BiOp) for malathion, diazinon and chlorpyrifos. MCFA's comments focused on specialty crop use of malathion.

"MCFA is very concerned about the quality of the subject draft BiOp, particularly the information underpinning its conclusions and the process that has been used in its development," we wrote. We echoed comments submitted by the applicant FMC Corporation, and by CropLife America, calling out particular highlights of those comments.

"MCFA strongly encourages NMFS to review the best available information, consult with its fellow Service as well as EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to

appropriately revise its BiOp before it is finalized," we told EPA. We recognized that NMFS is pressured by a court-imposed deadline, and encouraged NMFS to request the time necessary to "produce a BiOp based on the best available information."

In March MCFA [wrote](#) EPA, requesting that the public comment period be extended to respond to the agency's Feb. 3 Proposed Interim Decisions for four fungicides of importance to the specialty crop community: ferbam, thiram, ziram and iprodione. MCFA noted we need additional time to collect more recent data and real-world examples, to better inform EPA's decision-making process.

MCFA comments are developed through the alliance's Technical Committee, which is composed of and led by industry volunteers. **END**

#### **About Minor Crop Farmer Alliance**

*MCFA advocates for use of sound science in government minor-use pesticide policies, so that growers have access to safe, effective, affordable crop protection tools. Founded in 1991, we are funded and led by fruit, vegetable, nut, ornamental plant and other specialty crop producer organizations from across the United States. To learn more, visit us [online](#).*