



PPIC Executive Board meeting, Tuesday, Jan 26th, 2021, 8:30 am to 10:00 am CST, Zoom meeting Minutes

In attendance: Pam Ismail – UMN

Karthik Pandalaneni – UMN

Greg Cuomo – UMN

Sergiy Smetana – German Institute of Food Technology

Laurice Pouvreau – Wageningen University and Research

Christina Connelly – Canadian Consulate

Julie Simonson – Schwan's

Denis Chereau – IMPROVE

Jason Robinson – AURI

1. Introductions

- a. Laurice Pouvreau- Protein Scientist, Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands (WUR, replacing Stacy Pyett).
- b. Sergiy Smetana – Head of Food Data Group, German Institute of Food Technologists
- c. Christina Connelly – Trade Commissioner, Canadian Consulate General in Minneapolis, Food and Agricultural Trade between Upper Midwest and Canada
- d. Julie Simonson – Lead Technology Development at Schwan's Company.
- e. Denis Chereau – Managing Director of IMPROVE, France. Recently IMPROVE partnered with two other R&D platforms to expand their capabilities into oil seed processing, sustainable chemistry, and biotechnology.
- f. Jason Robinson – R&D Leader, AURI. AURI is a largely state funded non-profit corporation that focusses on long-term economic benefit to Minnesota through enhancing and improving utilization of Minnesota's agricultural products.
- g. Greg Cuomo – Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Programs, College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS), University of Minnesota.

2. Quick re-cap of previous Executive Board meeting (minutes in *Appendix 1, pg 4 of agenda*)

3. Technical committee meeting minutes, FYI (*Appendix 2, pg 11 of agenda*)

4. General Updates

a. Announcing new members

- i. Total of 24 members as of meeting date

- ii. Johnsonville (1 year trial membership at Associate level), Meati Foods (Associate Member), CoverCress (Associate Member), Scoular (1 year trial membership at Associate level), and Neom (Associate Member). Coca-Cola upgraded to Partner level.
- iii. 13 new members gained since quarantine in March 2020.
- b. **Two additional members signing the agreements:**
 - i. Bluegrass Ingredients at Partner level, SunOpta at one-year trial membership at Associate level.
 - ii. By end of January 2021 PPIC will have 26 members
- c. **Updates on efforts to recruit new members; in conversation with several parties including:**
 - i. Givaudan: Held conversation in July, 2020 and in Sep 2020. Primary focus is understanding flavor-protein interactions. George Krintiras and team will follow up after internal discussions.
 - ii. Bayer: had a couple of conversations, in Nov and in Dec 2020, with Dan Ruzicka, PhD, Innovation Sourcing Lead – Biotech and Breeding, will get back to us in January 2021 after new budget.
 - iii. Griffith Foods: Interested in trial Associate level membership. Held conversation with Leticia Chuy, Principal Scientist in January 2021. Will get back to PPIC after internal discussion with executive team.
 - iv. Avena Foods: Held conversation with Matt Lentsh, Director of Sales and Business Development in December 2020. Will get back to PPIC after internal discussions.
 - v. Ferrero Group: Held conversation with David Del Pozo, Sr. Director Open Innovation in November 2020. Actively following up and discussions on NDA are currently going on.
 - vi. Natures Fynd: Held conversations through Baljit Ghotra, interested in Associate level membership. Will get back to PPIC soon.
 - vii. Comments:
 - Christina: Great variety of members and Kudos! Status of the conversation with Merit Functional Foods.
 - Pam: Haven't heard back to schedule a meeting.
 - Christina: Will check back on that.
 - Pam: Actively following up with Givaudan, waiting to hear back in January.
 - Julie: I haven't heard anything as well.
 - Laurice: George is on parental leave
 - Pam: Will follow up with Givaudan and Bayer.
 - Jason: Great work and amazed with the progress. Any progress with equipment suppliers, Coperion K-Tron and Buhler?
 - Pam: We had several conversations with Buhler but at this point they are not interested in membership.
 - Greg: "I am having some high level conversations with Buhler and will bring up PPIC."
 - Denise: Status on Roquette?
 - Pam: Had several conversations but they didn't follow up.
 - viii. Will continue to follow up with all the companies suggested by Executive Board and with everyone we already had conversations with.
 - ix. All conversations are outlined and accessible through "Exec Board Shared Resources Document" in Google Drive, which will be shared with all new members in addition to current members
- d. **Update on funded (\$250,000) GFI project:** Title: "Characterizing and Texturizing Proteins from Pulses to Form Fibers with Textures that Mimic Chicken"
 - i. Three interdisciplinary researchers from PPIC cohort (Zata Vickers, Job Ubbink, and Pam Ismail)

- ii. Two grad students started in Fall 2020.
- iii. Functional properties of protein isolates from chickpea and pea will be evaluated followed by evaluation of texturization potential to mimic chicken.
- iv. Good progress so far in terms of collecting data. Overview posters were presented in Virtual Research Spotlight Meeting, Nov, 2020. Will share reports when available.
- e. **Update on FFAR proposal submitted to Plant Protein Enhancement Project:** “Legumes of the future: Developing methodologies and germplasm to enhance the functionality and nutritional quality of pea protein”
 - i. Five interdisciplinary researchers
 - ii. Funds requested: \$1,167,797
 - iii. Approved funding: \$800,000
 - iv. Start date: Jan 2021
 - v. Graduate student and a post-doc will be starting soon on this project. Breeding and Genetics team are also putting together their personnel.
 - vi. Reports on this project will also be shared when available.
 - vii. Comments:
 - Julie: Congratulations and it is good news!
- f. **Submitted USDA CAP letter of intent** (up to **\$10,000,000** cross institutions proposal) in Collaboration with the Protein Highway, with participation from Forever Green Initiative and AURI: “*Sustainable protein from crops- securing the supply*”.
 - i. Comments:
 - Christina: Brought to our attention by USDA officer. Letter of Intent was submitted in early Jan. Grant opportunity also requires education and extension in addition to research.
 - Pam: Will hear back if invited for full proposal by end of January 2021.
 - Christina/Pam: Submitted letter and all the researchers we collaborated with is presented in *Appendix 3, pg. 17 of Agenda*.
 - Julie: Excited and looking forward to discussing how we can help with resources.
 - Pam: We will be seeking letters of support
 - Greg: We can discuss organizational/writing support CFANS can provide since it is a big effort!
- g. **Updates on currently funded PPIC projects:**
 - i. Two projects from RFP 1 were delayed due to COVID. Q3, Q4, and Q5 reports for the two initial funded projects were shared with Technical Committee. Both projects received a no-cost extension.
 - 1. *Impact of Cold Plasma Treatment on Pea Protein Structural and Functional Characteristics*; end date- March 31st,2021
 - 2. *An Interdisciplinary Strategy for Improving Hemp Protein as a Food Ingredient through Plant Breeding and Processing*; end date – Sep 30th,2021.
 - ii. Start date of three projects approved for funding in June 2020 (RFP 2) was pushed to Sep 2020.
 - 1. Projects (Summarized on our website)
 - a. *Flavor Reactions with Plant Proteins*
 - b. *Enhancing Pennycress Oilseeds as a New Protein Source by Improving Flavor and Protein Extractability*
 - c. *Impact of Pea Storage Protein Fractions and Their Ratio on Functionality and Nutritional Quality*
 - 2. Deadline for Q1 reports of these projects was extended to March 1st, 2021.
 - iii. Comments:
 - Julie: Will there be any publications?

Pam: All these project results will be published once the project ends; two publications to come from Cold plasma project.

Planning on applying for a USDA grant as well using Cold Plasma project data.

For Hemp project: Getting protein isolate with no off-flavor, nice color, purity, and yield.

Looking at structure function relationship is in progress.

All these projects were presented in Virtual Research Spotlight Meeting.

h. Updates on Research Spotlight meeting (Nov 17, 2020)

- a. Great turn out, 275 attendees from 95 different companies, organizations and institutions.
- b. Moving forward we will end the registration a week earlier to allow time to distribute final meeting agenda to all attendees.
- c. Virtual setup helped with good attendance.
- d. Post meeting evaluation: Over 90% very satisfied or satisfied with the overall program, content, and presentations. Comments were shared in an appendix to the agenda.
- e. Some difficulties during break out sessions.
- f. Another comment is to break it down to a couple of days.
- g. Comments:

Jason: recommends spreading it out to few days for better engagement

Julie: supports two half days approach. Make sure to keep interesting topics for second day.

Denise: Having it as a one-day event was difficult for European audience.

Jason: Hybrid approach would really help

Pam: Some of the attendees commented to keep the zoom option. We will consider that option for future events.

Laurice: Universities might have restrictions to travelling if held in-person this year.

Julie: agrees with Laurice, we can think about hybrid options when planning for this year.

Denise: Virtual events are good with presentations, but networking is difficult

Laurice: Agree with Denise.

Pam: will plan accordingly

Julie: Is university investing in any technologies to enable more one on one breakout sessions? Something like making appointments through the system to do one on one networking.

Greg: I don't know! If there is a technology, you are interested in, we can look into it.

Pam: Following up with Meredith would be helpful

Greg: That is a great place to start.

Julie: Companies are going to limit travel for 2021. Keep that in mind when planning events for 2021.

5. Overview of funds from membership dollars and allocation of research dollars.

- a. Grand total membership dollar amount is \$1,489,200 since the PPIC inaugural in Nov 2018, accounting for three years memberships, \$502,400 per one fiscal year. Funds available for research in 2021-2022 after overhead (15%), admin cost (15%), and instrumentation (7%) cost, is \$316,680 (63%).

Pam: Will work on expense report for the last two years.

- b. Objective: Determine how many short-term vs. long-term projects to fund. Fund 2-3 or more projects in 2021, continue with short-term? Long-term? How much per project?
- c. Wait to identify new research priorities or use the ones already established
- d. Comments:

Pam: We had the discussion on funding short-term vs long-term projects with technical committee and would like to hear your input!

Sergiy: Hybrid way- where second part of the project will be funded depending on the results from first part.

Pam: Two-year project will be put together, but second year will be funded after review; is a good idea!

Denise: I prefer one-year project, if the results look good then funding can be prolonged.

Pam: That is in line with our discussion with technical Committee. Please refer to minutes for the complete discussion.

In brief, we planned for the tech committee to revise our research priorities and decide which of the objectives can be accomplished in a short-term project or a long-term project. Any comments?

Christina: How does this affect researchers?

Pam: Gary brought that up and suggested hiring a grad student for one year would be difficult.

Jason: likes the approach suggested by Sergiy. Seeing results from phase I before issuing funds to phase II is a good way.

Denise: To attract students- assign students two short-term projects to investigate two areas.

Pam: I like that option and very productive.

Denise: Good for students as well.

Greg: All initial proposals are one year but can be extended to second year upon results.

Julie: Agrees with everything that was said. If it is going to be more than one year, show us the phased approach so we can consider for second year depending on the results.

Pam: What if the project is not worth funding after taking a grad student.

Greg: In situation like this maybe having a discussion with Job about giving them TA or asking department for funding.

Pam: We will look into all these ideas.

6. Discuss other tasks (25 min)

Objectives: Discuss

- a. When to hold research planning meeting and short course: both to be held in conjunction as a three-day event in Summer 2021

Comments:

Pam: Want this to be in person. Since it requires some round table discussions. So, we are considering Tech Comm to revise current research priorities until we are able to hold an in-person meeting

Jason: Maybe the title of the meeting is confusing.

Pam: Technical Comm. can contribute until we are safe to conduct in-person.

Julie: Since technical comm is representing paying companies, it is a good approach for now.

Julie: Industry feedback and Research planning meeting?

Christina/Julie: Industry Focus and Research Planning Meeting.

Pam: Plan is to hold 3-day event; 1st and 2nd day- Short course; 3rd day- Research planning. I want to hold short course until we can do in-person. Any suggestion?

Sergiy: What is the purpose of short course

Pam: Protein Basics; mixture of lectures, touring labs and pilot plant, demos, and hands-on. Mostly advertised for companies and people with beginner level science background.

In future, we plan to expand on the topics, but after discussing with tech comm we decided to offer it again.

Julie: Short course may have to wait until 2022. Is there an option in 2021 to offer 2 hr course on one of the topics? Just the lecture part? More like Protein 101!

Jason: I am thinking the same. Maybe some of the lectures can be recorded followed by 1hr Q&A. This way you can share the link.

Pam: I do have material for that, and I can maybe diversify by having someone else talk on flavor and other topics.

Jason: this can potential be a future library.

Greg: This is a good idea. University technology can help you with videos, editing, and giving suggestions to keep audience engaged etc.

Pam: Does Meredith know who to contact?

Greg: Yes, she would know. Tim is the person who knows about this and I can mention it when I see him.

Julie: I like this idea too!

b. Welcome packages:

- i. It is worth \$8,000 at no additional cost to the company.
- ii. It could include a customized project or a literature review.

c. How to facilitate interactions among current members to initiate collaborative projects

Comments:

Pam: This is an initiative I plan to implement. To match ingredient companies with CPG companies. This is one of the missions of PPIC to establish collaboration between the companies to work on a project together.

Julie: That is awesome! It can be hard but making that network connections between companies would be very good.

Jason: That is very good, but it can be lot of work.

Pam: Yes, and that brings the to next topic of discussion “New Hires”

d. New hires:

Pam: Looking for someone to fill Asst. Director position. Putting on-hold for now. Considering some part-time help. Any suggestions?

Greg: Identify someone to get the work done in the meantime until you find someone for Asst. Director.

Pam: will share the job description so you can recommend if you know someone.

Jason: Are you looking for someone in St Paul?

Pam: Yes, I am looking for someone to be in St. Paul.

Post-Meeting Action Items

- Karthik to share Executive Board minutes and “Executive Board Shared Resources Document” with all; Executive Board can add new company conversations and potential contacts to this sheet
- Obtain Final reports on one of the two PPIC funded projects (due March 31st, 2021)
- Obtain Q1 reports on the three newly funded PPIC projects (due March 1st, 2021)
- With the technical committee help, review current research priorities, add other priorities if needed, add suggestions on short or long-term projects.
- Identify a better approach to fund long-term projects.
- Look into a better approach to record lectures followed by Q&A for a virtual Short course event; look into new technologies/ways to conduct Short course.
- Initiate collaboration between members on research projects.
- Prepare Spring RFP

- Christina will follow up with Merit functional foods about PPIC membership
- Referrals for Assistant Director role.