



To: Wheat Marketing Center Board of Directors
From: Janice Cooper
Date: October 9, 2020
Subject: Managing Director's Report

Business as Usual?

The Wheat Marketing Center is operating as close to normal as possible in these unusual times. The crop quality testing and reporting project is going full steam ahead with all staff working to meet the USW and PNW publishing deadlines. Also more or less normal, in a runup to the fall board meeting, we are busy with scheduling committee meetings and assembling documents for the board books. The hybrid style meeting – with some participants at the table and others on Zoom – will be a new challenge.

Audit Report

We are pleased to report another “clean” audit, with no recommendations for improving internal or management controls. Special protocols were observed during the three month stay-at-home order when administrative functions were conducted largely from home offices. Special thanks to Brent Haugen and John Akre for bi-monthly check signing.

Financial Health

The combination of strong financial support from the wheat commissions, increased lab and special project activity, and the receipt of a PPP loan puts WMC on a solid financial footing. The loan forgiveness application will be submitted as soon as the bank opens the online window.

Albers Mill Building

The board will receive an update from the WMC Title Holding Co. board chair during the meeting so let me mention a few related items.

- Capital improvements – The fire/safety system was replaced and seems to be operating appropriately. When an alarm goes off, the accordion door in the Innovation Lab closes to protect the pilot lines. Also complete is the river boardwalk decking replacements. The south pier repair is moving forward with engineering and permitting, with actual construction likely to take place next summer.
- Leasing and management – I have weekly conference calls with BNC CEO Marc Fazio and former CEO Diane McMahon to discuss leasing and building issues. Occupancy is at about 70% and our broker has arranged multiple tours for open suites. The main attractions seem to be location, parking availability and reasonable lease rates.

Hallway Displays

In a classic lemons-into-lemonade story, the theft of the hallway tablets in January prompted Brent to find an excellent alternative using low cost devices that can pull material from our website and play videos. Especially with the wealth of new videos available during recent

months, the displays are filled with content. We look forward to the opportunity for more visitors to see them.

Staffing

- WMC is fully staffed with six full-time people, one part time lab technician and the CQ intern. Visiting Scholar Yu-Ching Huang returned to Taiwan in August. During the spring and early summer, staff wrote weekly reports to document their activity, especially while working from home.
- We continue to work on succession and contingency planning, including documenting and cross training on specific tasks.

Business Development

As anticipated, the major impact of COVID-19 on WMC programs was related to the inability of visitors to travel. USW cancelled the five technical courses planned for Asian customers in the summer and the date for resuming onsite training is unknown.

- WMC Lab Services / Proprietary projects: As you will hear from both Jayne and Bon, our book of business related to proprietary research, testing and product development grew significantly in the past six months. We expect to be busy well into next year with the projects currently booked.
- Special Projects: Public projects, including research for state breeding programs and collaboration with the Food Innovation Center fall within this category. In a recent virtual meeting, WMC and FIC staff discussed new projects of mutual interest. And the research team is collaborating with K-State on the chlorination alternatives study requested by Asian and Latin customers. The project is funded by the PNW commissions.
- USW Programs: USW continues to develop remote delivery options for technical training and customer updates. WMC has participated in several programs to date and anticipates additional involvement, including in the remote CQ seminars.

State Wheat Commission Outreach

- Staying in touch with state administrators by phone and email
- Workshops for ID, NE and MT still under discussion
- OK Workshop on the calendar for next year

Stakeholder Education / Outreach

- Attended USW Summer Board Meeting remotely; will do the same with the Fall meeting and committees
- Active in Export Council of Oregon (US Department of Commerce board)
- Recently reappointed to Grain Inspection Advisory Committee (USDA/FGIS)

Upcoming Meetings / Travel – Nothing confirmed at this time