

**Minutes of S-294 Business Meeting**  
**Pueblo A/B Rooms, Wyndham Hotel**  
**Palm Springs, CA**  
**Saturday, April 28, 2007**

**Project: S-294 Postharvest Quality and Safety in Fresh-cut Vegetables and Fruits**

**Offices (2006-2007)**

Chair: Peter Toivonen  
 Vice-chair: Aubrey Mendonca  
 Secretary: Xuetong Fan

**List of Attendees**

Name	Institution	email
John Beaulieu	USDA, ARS, SRRC	beaulieu@srcc.ars.usda.gov
Anne Plotto	USDA, ARS, CSPL	plotto@citrus.usda.gov
Dianne Barrett	UC Davis	dmbarrett@ucdavis.edu
Giancarlo Colelli	University of Foggia, Italy	g.colelli@unifg.it
Jeff Brecht	University of Florida	jkbrecht@ufl.edu
Xuetong Fan	USDA, ARS, ERRC	xuetong.fan@ars.usda.gov
Randy Beaudry	Michigan State University	beaudry@msu.edu
Susan Butris	Sunkist Taylor LLC	sbutris@sunkistgrowers.com
Bob Elliott	Sunkist Growers, Inc	belliot@sunkistgrowers.com
Aubrey Mendonca	Iowa State University	amendon@iastate.edu
Art Davis	Sholl Group/Green Giant Fresh	adavis@sholl.com
Jinhe Bai	Oregon State University	jinhe.bai@oregonstate.edu
Barry Eisenberg	River Ranch/UFGA	beisenberg@rrff.com
Peter Toivonen	AAFC-Canada	toivonenp@agr.gc.ca
Reuben Moore	Mississippi State University	reubenm@mafes.msstate.edu
Valerie Hannig	The Oppenheimer Group	valha@oppy.com
David Gombas	United Fresh Produce Assoc	dgombas@unitedfresh.org
Jim Gorny	United Fresh	jgorny@pacbell.net
Mikal Saltveit	UC Davis	mesaltveit@ucdavis.edu
Bill Hurst	University of Georgia	bhurst@uga.edu
Ozgur Koc	Earthbound Farm	okoc@ebfarm.com
Jorge Fonseca	U. of Arizona	jfonseca@ag.arizona.edu
Roberto Avena	USDA, ARS, WRRRC	ravena@pw.usda.gov
Alan M. Lefcourt	USDA, ARS, Beltsville	alan.lefcourt@ars.usda.gov
Moon S. Kim	USDA, ARS, Beltsville	moon.kim@ars.usda.gov
Marita Cantwell	UC Davis	micantwell@ucdavis.edu
Yaguang Luo	ARS	yaguang.luo@ars.usda.gov
Amy Green	FDA/CFSAN	amy.green@fda.hhs.gov

Peter Toivonen called the meeting to order at 12:40 pm, and asked attendees for a brief introduction. All attendees introduced him/herself.

Peter asked for approval of the 2007 meeting agenda. The agenda was unanimously approved.

Peter asked for suggestions of date for next year's S-294 meeting. Because the schedule for the FreshTech meeting has not been finalized yet, S-294 meeting time can not be decided. Peter said the next S-294 leadership will decide the time and duration (half or whole day) for next year S-294 meeting.

Peter asked for comments on the minutes of April 2006 meeting in Baltimore, MD. Aubrey Mendonca said the minutes were posted on the S-294 UC Davis website. Peter requested an approval of the minutes. John Beaulieu was the first to call the motion and Bill Hurst was second. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

#### **Report of administrative adviser, Reuben Moore**

Reuben praised S-294 group for the productivity. He said S-294 is the most productive among all groups in the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors' projects. He welcomed industry representatives attending the meeting and was happy to see several people from the produce industry in the room. He said there are 76 members for the S-294 project, one of the largest ones. He raised concerns about the uncertainty of Hatch fund and budget for agricultural research. He anticipated an increase in the number of regional projects involving multiple institutions. He visited Dr. Gail Buchanan, Undersecretary of USDA, a few weeks ago. There are many uncertainties about '07 budget. The elimination of earmarked funds is a concern. Budget cut affects Universities and USDA. There is uncertainty about '08 budget.

USDA has proposed to consolidate ARS and CSREES into a single agency, named Research, Education and Extension Service (REES). A Chief Scientist would be in charge of the REES. REE would become "office of Science". The USDA also proposed in the Farm Bill a \$50 million for bio-energy research Initiative, \$100 million Specialty Crop research Initiative and \$10 million for organic research. Reuben suggested that S-294 scientists may apply for the Specialty Crop research fund when available.

Reuben also said that it seems that there are objections to CREATIVE21 from those who did not participate in the voting process. CREATIVE21 calls for re-organization of USDA.

Reuben wanted to make sure that we are working on each objective of the project and asked whether we need to make any change on the objectives. He would like to be notified about significant impacts. Documenting impact is important, and should appear on the annual report.

#### **Remarks from David Gombas, Vice President of UFPA**

David asked for thoughts and opinions about the meeting. There are 1200 members after IFPA combined with United Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Association. David reminded attendees that scientists should continue to work in the area of produce quality, even though produce safety is important. David said he is happy with the quality of the science symposium and food irradiation symposium. He would like to see more people attend the two symposiums. About 1500 people are at the meeting, but only about 300 people attended the 4 technical sessions held simultaneously. There are lots of people in the food safety summit session.

Bill Hurst asked the reason for running so many sessions simultaneously.

Diane Barrett wanted to know the number of technical people attending the meeting.

David said he did not know but the FreshTech meeting was primarily for technical people.

John said that the topics in the food safety summit research insight forum were too diluted, needed more focus.

David asked about opinions about the poster section and research pavilion.

Alan Lefcourt proposed to change the location and orientation of posters to attract more people.

Mikal Saltveit suggested setting up the posters in the lunch area.

John believed that having the ARS booth was a big success, giving industry people a place to go for information, so that we did not have to look for people. Jeff said he spent the whole time manning the booth, no time to participate in other sessions. There is a challenge to find enough people to man the booth.

Yaguang Luo suggested an S-294 booth for next year's FreshTech meeting. Diane agreed. Alan suggested that a message board (or similar mechanisms) should be established so that those with specific requirements about technical problems can meet with scientists with expertise and solutions.

The posters are too close to each other, need more room between the posters for people to see the posters.

David said we had 19 posters presented this year. The quality of posters is very good. The judges had a difficult time making the decision on the best poster. This year's winner of best poster goes to Yaguang. David reflected a comment from one judge saying that one of the posters was not well prepared. He reminded scientists to spend time and effort in preparing the poster, and not just to get the free access pass to the meeting.

Jeff and Xuotong asked about availability of presentations and poster abstracts on website. David said the presentation should be on the website (either on FreshTech or United Fresh) within a month or so. David said next year's FreshTech meeting will be in Las Vegas, May 5-7 (Mon-Wed), which will be run concurrently with the Marketplace meeting.

John was concerned with the visibility of S-294 at the Las Vegas meeting when the two meetings are combined. David said there would be two separate shows at the same time, should not affect the visibility of S-294.

John suggested the Food Safety and Technology Council meeting not be held on Sunday.

Peter asked for nominations of new secretary. John nominated Ann Plotto to be next secretary. Peter asked for more nominations. There was no more nomination. Mikal motioned to approve Anne as the new secretary. Anne was unanimously confirmed as new S-294 secretary.

Peter reminded people to send their Station reports to him so that he can compile S-294 annual report. Also, he reminded everyone to update his or her profile on the UC Davis websites.

Jeff said that Randy, Jeff and Liz submitted a NRI proposal on enzyme and volatile of melons.

### **Oral Reports from S-294 Participants**

The following participants presented reports on research at their representative institutions for the 2006-2007 reporting period.

Anne Plotto reported on quality and flavor research at USDA, ARS Citrus & Subtropical Products Lab.

John Beaulieu reported on antimicrobial activities of CPC and ASC on cantaloupes at USDA, ARS, SRRC.

Diane Barrett reported her work on analysis of texture and measurement of tissue integrity at UC Davis.

Jeff Brecht reported on quality and postharvest physiology research at Univ. Florida.

Xuetong Fan reported work on quality and microbiology work at USDA, ARS, ERRC.

Randy Beaudry reported work on 1-MCP absorption and gas permeability model at Michigan State Univ.

Aubrey Mendonca reported work on microbial detection and combination of irradiation and sanitizers at Iowa State Univ.

Jinhe Bai reported work on package and ethanol vapor at Oregon State Univ.

Peter Toivenen reported work on 1-MCP releasing, and ATP at Agric. Agric.-Food Canada.

Mikal Saltveit reported work on reduction of lettuce browning at UC Davis.

Marita Cantwell reported work on vitamin C and reduction of sunchoke browning at UC Davis.

Bill Hurst reported work on pathogen ecology and reduction at Univ. Georgia.

Jorge Fonseca reported work on pre-harvest factors and quality at Univ. Arizona.

Roberto Avena-Bustillos reported work on antibrowning coating at USDA, ARS, WRRRC.

Moon Kim reported work on imaging technology at USDA, ARS, BARC

Yaguang Luo reported worked on sanitizers and hot water at USDA, ARS, BARC.

Following David's suggestion, Peter asked the remaining industry representatives to make brief remarks.

Art Davis of Green Giant Fresh said he used to work with Bacon industry, and there were much more collaborations between industry and academics. Industry provided research funds. He thought that fresh produce industry was more loosely constructed. He

encouraged scientist to meet with people and listen to the needs of industry people, and find a person who needs solutions. Produce industry was more diversified, but produce industry can learn from meat industry.

Jeff suggested that United Fresh establishes an advisory committee for the S-294 group so that the need of industry could be heard by S-294 scientists.

David said there were 4-5 S-294 members on the Technology Council who should report back to S-294 scientists.

Peter said the apple research group meeting held for last 3-4 years provided a platform to get research priorities on apples.

Barry Eisenberg, co-chair of the UFPA Technology Council said the industry had written research proprieties. One of the areas is food safety. There are regional process facilities throughout the country. He said that Western Grower maintains a list of experts. He also said many practices in the industry have no scientific justification. Many need back-up from scientific data. He said a large number (~70) of people on the Technology Council can not achieve anything. A smaller work group consisting of 3-5 people is desired. The industry as a whole should figure out how to raise funds for research. He said that individual companies have funded research. For example, Fresh Express established a \$2.5 millions research fund. If the industry works together, much more funding will be raised for research. Research should focus on technologies that can be commercially applied. The industry needs to establish a mechanism to raise money and ask other members to support. Each research institution has own expertise. We can learn from the alliance between McDonald and Disney which benefits each party.

John asked David about the Research Center established at UC Davis using the funds from Industry and PMA. David had no comment.

Reuben thanked the presence of Industry representatives, and encouraged them to join the meeting next year. He also asked industry to support research.

Bill said that National Cattleman's Beef Association has a mechanism to raise money by taking \$1/ cattle for research. Xuotong said that the Washington State Apple Commission also raises research money (\$0.25 per box of apples).

Art Davis said Dole is tacking on food safety surcharges, charging \$0.20 more each carton beginning April 29, 2007. However, for UFPA, it is hard to collect even 2 cents. California Department of Agriculture charged \$0.02 /carton for inspection. He reminded the consequence of spinach outbreaks: 25% of loss in spinach consumption. UFPA needs a change so that research funds can be raised.

Anne asked about the difference between PMA and UFPA. David said that PMA is for marketing/retailers while UFPS is for processors. David said the industry is very surprised by the overhead charged by University. There are also many activities scheduled to lobby congress to support produce industry.

John suggested that S-294 scientists wear a uniform or hat to identity themselves.

At 4:30: Aubrey took over from Peter (who needs to catch a plane) to chair the session.

Ozgur Koc of Earthbound Farms said he has been working with Earthbound for 7 months. Before that, he worked with Crunch Pak. Crunch Pak funded a research project to Gerald Sapers about de-contamination of antibrowning solutions.

Jeff said someone needs to take a lead to put ideas together to apply for funds.

Yaguang said the idea of raising money for research has come out before and has support from Jim and David, but never went through. Barry said we should know whether there are research funds available very soon.

There is not enough time to discuss activities and plans coordination efforts, grand proposals.

Aubrey adjourned the meeting at 5pm.