MINUTES
NATIONAL GRAPE CLEAN PLANT NETWORK MEETING
February 24, 2009 – Hermann, Missouri

The meeting of the National Grape Clean Plant Network (Tier 2 Board) was convened at 8:30 a.m. on February 24, 2009, at the Stone Hill Winery in Hermann, Missouri. The Chair of the Eastern Grape Clean Plant Network (EGCPN), Keith Striegler, made welcoming remarks.

Self-introductions were made. The following people were present at the meeting: Murali Bandla, Tom Bewick, Mark Black, Mike Colvin, Ken Eastwell, Marc Fuchs, Deborah Golino, Jon Held, Carol Holko, David Johnson, Dan Martinez, Tim Martinson, Fatima Osman, Wenping Qiu, Dennis Rak, Erich Rudyj, Keith Striegler, Nancy Sweet, Tedd Wildman.

NCPN General Update
Erich Rudyj, Program Coordinator for the National Clean Plant Network (NCPN), presented an update on various NCPN issues. Rudyj’s full presentation can be accessed on the NCPN website under Grapes CPN, Tier 2 Meeting in Missouri.

The implementation phase of the NCPN is well underway. The Tier 2 and Tier 3 Grape Network governance structures are in place. The charter containing rules and procedures for the Grape Network will be drafted shortly and distributed for review.

a. APHIS Internal Realignment
Rudyj announced that APHIS is undergoing an internal realignment, effective March 15. The NCPN will in the future report to Quarantine Pest Analysis and Support (QPAS – aka “Border Ports”), Accreditation and Certification Division, which is managed by Sam Johnson. Johnson is currently in training to replace Murali Bandla as the APHIS representative on the CWG. Bandla is moving to another position within APHIS but will remain with the NCPN through October, 2009.

b. NCPN General Meeting – March 25-26, 2009
The Tier 1 Governing Body will convene a general NCPN meeting in Washington D.C. on March 25-26, 2009. The purpose of the meeting is to introduce the CWG and Tier 1 members. The members of the CWG are Murali Bandla (APHIS), Tom Bewick (CSREES), and Gail Wisler (ARS). The administrators for the three departments represented in the Core Working Group will sign the NCPN Governance MOU on March 26, 2009.

The Tier 1 Governing Body has been selected as follows: Wayne Dixon (FL), Bill Dickerson (APHIS), Joseph Postman (ARS), Ken Rauscher (MI), Tom Wessels (WA). Erich Rudyj was appointed NCPN Coordinator. The Governing Body is composed of federal and state employees who were chosen to give a national perspective to the NCPN. Their primary task is to make decisions on funding and forward final documents onto the
CWG. The CWG may veto decisions of the Governing Body but must give a reason. The CWG may also provide assistance to the Governing Body in locating additional funding for emergencies.

At the March meeting, Rudyj will preview the Request for Proposals (RFP) for 2009 NCPN funding, as well as the NCPN Business Plan. The business plan is a necessary prerequisite to implementation of the funding provisions of the Farm Bill and is in the final stages of review. The Tier 2 and 3 grape and fruit tree commodity networks will be asked to present status reports and funding proposals for their programs. The citrus commodity will make a 30 minute application for inclusion in the NCPN in 2010.

c. NCPN Governance MOU
The purpose of the NCPN Governance MOU to be signed by the three CWG agencies (ARS, APHIS, CSREES) on March 26, 2009, is to communicate a single NCPN mission. The MOU will contain a list of proposed NCPN activities, such as the development of national guidelines and standards and resource coordination. The NCPN will be a voluntary program, and the federal government will intercede only when required.

d. NCPN Business Plan
The NCPN Business Plan covers five critical activity areas: NCPN Governance and Infrastructure; Program Operations; Research and Methods Development; Extension and Outreach; Quality Control (audits). The Business Plan will show allocation of funds into the five categories. It is estimated that, for 2009, grapes will receive 55% of the funds and tree fruit will receive 45%. Citrus and berries could be brought into the NCPN as early as 2010.

The Business Plan will be discussed and ratified by the stakeholders in March and is a necessary prerequisite to the release of 2008-2009 NCPN funds. Any comments on the draft plan should be forwarded to Erich Rudyj by March 25.

Ultimately, the NCPN money will be released to APHIS administratively to hold in trust for the three agencies. The release of the money was delayed by legal proscription on the use of Commodity Credit Corporation funds for administrative purposes; the issue was corrected in the recent stimulus bill, allowing expenditure of NCPN funds for the full spectrum of activities. The NCPN funds are expected to be released to APHIS in March or April, 2009.

e. Request for Proposals for 2009 Funding
The grape and fruit tree commodity groups will preview funding requests for the Tier 1 Governing Body at the meeting in March. The Tier 1 members are interested in whether each proposal has merit individually and collectively, whether the proposals are duplicative and whether the proposals from each commodity show a sharing of resources.

The ultimate funding mechanism will be a cooperative agreement between APHIS and the individual institution receiving the funds. Any multi-year agreement will be subject to annual review based on audit of the individual program.
There will be a call for proposals for 2009 NCPN funds. Erich Rudyj will preview the RFP at the March Tier 1 meeting. Proposals will be entertained at the national (Tier 2) level, and integration of proposals across the regions is required.

The NCPN will fund program operations, including staffing, materials, diagnostics, therapy, foundation establishment, information/communications, and administration needed to produce and deliver clean plant material to nurseries and growers.

The NCPN program will not fund new construction. It was the intent of Congress that, to the extent practicable, existing facilities (or cooperator developed facilities) shall be the primary focus. If a compelling need for new construction appears, it will be necessary to go back to Congress to seek specific authorization for that item. Expenditures for facility improvements, rentals and supplies (e.g., screens for a screenhouse) will be allowed using NCPN funds.

The money should begin to flow between May and September.

f. Available funding
The primary NCPN (section 10202 Farm Bill) funds are available to strengthen existing clean plant programs, build new programs only to solidify the network, and to establish and maintain foundation (usually G1) blocks. NCPN Farm Bill funding (section 10202) may not be spent on harmonization of state certification programs or audit and quality control under those programs.

Additional funding sources from the Farm Bill may be available for support of G2 and G3 blocks and for nurseries in the state certification programs. Those additional sources include: the Specialty Crop Research Initiative ($230 million for 2009-2012), Specialty Crop Block grants - section 10109 ($224 million for 2009-2012), and Pest and Disease Management – section 10201(d) (NCPN amount to be determined).

The Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) requires 100% non-federal matching funds. CSREES has recently issued an RFP for the 2009 funds. “Specialty crop” is defined in the Farm Bill.

The Specialty Crop Block grant program will be administered through the Agricultural Marketing Service and is managed by Trista Edzay. $45 million are available for 2009. Each state would receive at least $100,000 plus additional money based on a formula (see the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004). Those eligible to apply for these funds include state departments of agriculture, who must issue their own RFPs and review proposals prior to receiving the federal block grant funds. The Farm Bill provisions allow for multi-state proposals. These block grant funds may not be used as matching funds for the SCRI. Tom Bewick (CSREES) volunteered to help the state departments of agriculture develop proposal review procedures and coordinate proposals.
Murali Bandla reported on the Pest and Disease Management (section 10201(d)) funds. No amount has been determined yet for this money, which may be received by state certification programs and be used for purposes of safeguarding nursery production, e.g., best management practices, nursery audits, etc. This will be a sustainable source of funds for some years.

**Election of Chair, Vice-Chair for Grape Tier 2 Board**

Ken Eastwell described the rules agreed upon by the Fruit Tree Tier 2 Board regarding the Chair and Vice-Chair. Both were elected from within the Fruit Tree Tier 2 Board and are allowed to vote on matters before the Board. The term for both positions was set at 2 years. There was no limit put on the number of terms that the same individual could serve as Chair or Vice-Chair. One of the duties of the Chair is to spearhead the funding proposal for the commodity network and act as spokesperson before the Tier 1 Governing Body. Subcommittees were appointed to provide input on important issues. Eastwell stated that the Chair is both an advocate for the commodity and a technical expert in the commodity.

Erich Rudyj suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair for the Grape Network Tier 2 Board be selected one from the Tier 3 Western CPN and one from the Tier 3 Eastern CPN. There was consensus among the group on that suggestion.

Keith Striegler moved that the Grape CPN (Tier 2) adopt the same rules as the Fruit Tree CPN (Tier 2) on the following issues: the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected from within the Tier 2 Board; both positions shall have a vote on the Tier 2 Board; each position shall have a two-year term; there shall be no term limits; the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be one from each Tier 3 Board; advisory work shall be done on the Tier 2 by subcommittees. Deborah Golino moved to support the motion, and Marc Fuchs seconded the motion. Striegler’s motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Tedd Wildman nominated Deborah Golino for Chair of the Tier 2 Board; Jon Held seconded the nomination. Tedd Wildman nominated Keith Striegler for Vice-Chair of the Tier 2 Board; Deborah Golino seconded the nomination. Both nominees were elected by unanimous vote.

**Grape CPN Charter**

Ken Eastwell and Erich Rudyj collaborated on drafting the charter for the Fruit Tree CPN (FTCPN). The FTCPN has only one (national) level with no regional divisions. The Chair (Eastwell) drafted the initial document and thereafter circulated it among the Board members for comment. Modifications were made after meetings, conference calls and many e-mails among the Fruit Tree Tier 2 Board. The document was presented for comment to attendees at the Tier 2 Board meeting in Denver. Rudyj indicated that it is important to put a statement of purpose in the document to enunciate the function of the commodity program.

Deborah Golino proposed that the Grape Network model its charter after the Fruit Tree Network approach. Mike Colvin seconded the motion. The motion was passed.
Nancy Sweet was directed to prepare an initial draft of the Grape Network charter for Board operations using the Fruit Tree Network charter as guidance where possible. The draft will then be circulated to the CWG and Grape Network Board members for comment. Deborah Golino will coordinate comments and modifications with the goal of having a first draft reviewed within 30 days.

Ken Eastwell commented that the Fruit Tree Network is in the process of preparing a parallel document related to the budget and structure of the Fruit Tree Network. Stakeholder input has been solicited. The charter for Board operations was relatively simple, so no formal stakeholder input was solicited.

**Procedure for Evaluating Grape Network Proposals**
Deborah Golino commented that FPS (California) and NWGFS (Idaho, Oregon, Washington) have a ten-year history of working together on clean plant issues related to grapevines. The funding proposals from the Western Grape CPN should coalesce quite well.

Keith Striegler stated the situation in the Eastern Grape CPN is more complicated. He suggested first that the group refer to the proposals as concept papers or “pre-proposals” at this point in the process. There has to date been no formal solicitation within the Eastern Network for funding proposals. Next, Striegler suggested that the funding categories from Erich Rudyj’s presentation be used to organize and coordinate the unified Tier 2 proposal, ie., research; extension and outreach, operations; governance and infrastructure; quality control (audits). The Eastern foundation block (G1) issue would be placed under operations.

Erich Rudyj clarified that the Tier 1 Governing Body is prepared to enter 10 or more separate cooperative agreements once the 2009 funding allocation has been made. There will be a single master agreement for trees and grapes if a single institution receives funding for both commodities. He explained that 2009 funds may be reserved for a specific purpose until next year, if that is the will of the group.

Striegler commented that he needs to convey the message to the members of the Eastern Grape CPN to ready proposals for funding within the immediate future. He mentioned that a conference call was conducted the previous day among members of the Eastern Network interested in the Eastern foundation block. The topics discussed were whether the Eastern (which includes Central) United States needs its own foundation block, whether there is an appropriate location for such a block and which institution has the technical skills to manage a G1 block.

**Foundation Block in the Eastern Grape Clean Plant Network**
Because this issue is one of intense interest to the NCPN Eastern Network members, I will report the discussion verbatim without trying to summarize or streamline the comments.
Erich Rudyj stated that NCPN funds may be used for foundation block plantings (usually G1) but not for what is traditionally thought of as G2 blocks, nursery mother blocks or increase blocks. There are many additional sources of federal funds available for non-foundation block plantings. Rudyj stated that the CWG and Tier 1 body are neutral on the issue of a foundation block in the Eastern Grape CPN.

Deborah Golino presented an overview of the G (Generation) scheme for classification of grapevine material within a certification program. The G scheme classification originated with the NAPPO/Canadian regulatory programs, with which California and the model NCPN regulations are trying to harmonize. However, the structure of the Canadian program does not correspond exactly to the certification programs like those in California and other states.

In the California and Washington certification systems, the ultimate goal is producing certified plants for planting, for either growers or individuals. Every time grapevine material is moved from one location to another, the classification drops a G level. Material can be moved about within the same location if the same isolation and testing requirements are met for the entire location. The institution that maintains the original foundation block performs specific tests (e.g., indexing) in order to qualify the material as G1 foundation stock. If the material is then moved to another location that does not perform those same tests on that plant material (because the original testing has already been done), the new location should be designated as a G2 block. There is much testing done at a G1 center that is not repeated or done at a G2 center. G1 and G2 designations do not confer a preferential status on the plant material but indicate the relationship of plant material to the original tested foundation block material.

Murali Bandla and Tom Bewick commented that the NCPN program should focus on the definition of a “foundation block” and not use the G scheme language for purposes of this discussion. Carol Holko commented that the NCPN should set the rules for what it wishes to require of a foundation block and not dwell on the label at this time.

Deborah Golino stated that, for purposes of the NCPN, “foundation material” could be maintained at either G1 centers (as in the case of FPS) or public G2 centers (as in the case of NWGFS, who receives most of its grapevine material from FPS). She stated that NCPN foundation material should be qualified only in public sector centers (e.g., under university management) and that G2 material from private nurseries should not qualify as “foundation stock” under NCPN rules.

Tedd Wildman asked what criteria will be used to draw such a line. Golino replied that the NCPN has four years within which to define standard operating procedures for all of the categories of plant material within the certification programs. Those procedures should be harmonized across the United States. The scientists will need some time to discuss and agree on the appropriate procedures for each level of plant material. At the end of the four years, the NCPN should have in place standard operating procedures for each program for the commodity groups.
Erich Rudyj, who was leading the discussion, raised the issue of how the Tier 2 Board wanted to handle the question of whether or not to establish a foundation block in the Eastern (Central) United States. He advised that the Tier 3 (Eastern) and Tier 2 Boards should be presented with clearer “pros” and “cons” prior to making a decision. One option would be to quickly convene the Eastern Tier 3 group for a needs assessment discussion, with the primary focus on national need for grape nurserymen and growers.

Marc Fuchs commented that Cornell does not have a foundation (G1) block at this time; they instead have a clonal repository collection. The prior foundation block in New York vanished in the 1990’s due to industry lack of interest. Cornell never actually maintained that block but worked with a nursery to do so.

Deborah Golino indicated that we do not need to make a final decision on the Eastern foundation block by the time of the 2009 RFP. There would be time for a needs assessment (in order to evaluate the needs of the Eastern nurserymen) in 2009, and the issue of if/where to establish a foundation block could be deferred to 2010.

Murali Bandla stated that the Tier 2 Board needs to decide on an action plan relative to the Eastern foundation block issue.

Dennis Rak spoke as a representative of the Eastern region nurserymen. He stated that a strong desire has been expressed for a “foundation” block (whether it be called G1 or G2) in the Eastern United States. The primary issues of concern relate to the core varieties used in the Eastern region and the Agrobacterium pathogen. Rak felt that the primary need from the industry (nursery) perspective is a business plan from the NCPN on how material will be moved from an Eastern foundation block out to industry users. The Eastern region has several matters to address: appropriate location for the foundation block, freezing (winter kill), location of a site that can accommodate a diverse variety of grapevine material. He suggested that a study be done to analyze the needs of the nursery industry in terms of obtaining desired plant material.

Tedd Wildman commented that the situation in the Pacific Northwest approximates conditions in the Eastern Network, i.e., colder varieties thrive and Agrobacterium is a concern. He believes that the triangulation of facilities is appealing in that it could serve the needs of both regions without duplication.

Marc Fuchs stated that the NCPN provides an opportunity for change in the Eastern region and strongly believes that a G1/G2 block is needed in the East.

Tom Bewick said that there are two reasons to have a G1/G2 block in the Eastern United States: (1) it is practical to have redundancy in case of failure; (2) it is politically appealing as each state has two Senators.

Dan Martinez commented that the Tier 2 Board needs to hear a united voice from the Eastern Network representatives on the Eastern foundation block issue. John Held and
Wenping Qiu agreed that the redundancy argument favors an Eastern foundation block, especially in light of winter freeze problems.

Dennis Rak stated that there is now general consensus among the Eastern representatives that an Eastern foundation block is appropriate. He urged that a needs/capability assessment be conducted followed by submission of a proposal for the foundation block next year.

Murali Bandla indicated that the NCPN has seen no concrete proposal from the Eastern Network for the previous eight months. He is uncertain where the expertise is located to manage the foundation block. Virginia Tech has now withdrawn its prior proposal. Missouri never proceeded with one of its own. Pennsylvania has declined to submit a proposal. He was uncertain where Maryland stood relative to its proposal. Bandla suggested that an agricultural economist do an assessment of an Eastern foundation block and create a business plan for implementation.

Dennis Rak commented that what is lacking is a nexus between the idea of a foundation block and the needs of the industry in the Eastern United States. He believes that a capability assessment is required. Keith Striegler concurred with the idea of a needs/capability assessment in 2009; if the result is positive, then the Eastern Network should proceed with a proposal for a foundation block in 2010.

Deborah Golino stated that FPS would welcome an Eastern foundation and would be willing to help establish one. She felt that, if FPS were to partner with such a foundation, she would want to work with an institution with expertise and knowledge in handling the issues inherent with such block. Managing a foundation block includes public relations and customer service work in relation to complaints, as well as exposure to possible lawsuits.

Marc Fuchs explained that, after the Eastern CPN meeting in Geneva New York in October, industry leaders in the East asked why Cornell was sitting idle relative to the proposal for an Eastern foundation block. Fuchs approached his Dean, resulting in the change of heart by Cornell regarding the foundation block proposal. The previous decision not to submit a proposal was focused on a possible block in upstate New York at Geneva. Subsequent discussions with scientists resulted in the idea of a foundation block on Long Island, where there are 70 acres of farmland some of which are used by Cornell for varietal trials and pest management plantings.

Dennis Rak commented that, despite the offer by Cornell, the Eastern Network should provide the opportunity to others to submit proposals. Deborah Golino and Keith Striegler suggested that the Eastern Network should bypass the feasibility assessment and proceed forthwith with solicitation of proposals, from Cornell, Virginia Tech and Maryland. The USDA expects a unified proposal from the National Grape Network in response to the Tier 1 RFP, to be issued in March or April. The Tier 3 Eastern Network will have to solicit proposals for the foundation block and choose one prior to the response by the Grape Network as a whole to the Tier 1 RFP. Dennis Rak supported the
idea of directly soliciting proposals at this time but suggested a simultaneous needs assessment on the issue of the magnitude of such a block and the number of varieties to be planted there.

Keith Striegler was concerned about the timing of the feasibility study and the inability to complete it prior to requesting NCPN money for the Eastern foundation block. Tom Bewick indicated that the NCPN money is “no year money” and that a certain amount of money could be set aside and held until any feasibility study or business model is complete. Deborah Golino suggested that money could be set aside this year for an East Coast foundation block in anticipation of a decision to be made later. It is too late to get the plant material in the ground this year anyway.

Keith Striegler indicated that he would initiate an RFP for the Eastern foundation block as well as a proposal for a capabilities assessment. He stated that Virginia Tech and Maryland remain interested in submitting a proposal. Missouri and Texas are not suitable locations for such a block. Ruth Welliver has indicated that Pennsylvania has withdrawn its interest in the foundation block.

Erich Rudyj summarized the discussion and decisions related to the Eastern foundation block. A needs/capabilities assessment will be requested in the amount of $25,000. The Grape Network will request a $250,000 set aside of 2009 NCPN funds for purposes of establishment of a foundation block in the Eastern region. The Eastern Network will encourage Cornell, Maryland and Virginia Tech to develop proposals. Wenping Qui mentioned that Missouri has some clean grapevines that have been created with the support of the industry in the Eastern/Central region.

Murali Bandla indicated that if the Tier 1 Governing Body agrees to set aside the $250,000 for the foundation block, it will be the responsibility of the Grape Network Tier 2 Board to select the appropriate location for the block after evaluating the proposals.

**Individual Pre-Proposals for Grape Network Funding**

*a. Northwest Grape Foundation Service*

Ken Eastwell presented a pre-proposal request for funds from the Northwest Grape Foundation Service in Washington. *Eastwell’s presentation may be viewed on the NCPN website under Grapes CPN, Tier 2 Meeting in Missouri.* The members of the Core Working Group present at the meeting advised, relative to the request for new greenhouses and screenhouses, that the NCPN can fund the supplies but not the actual construction of the permanent structures. Bandla suggested that perhaps the industry in the Pacific Northwest could fund construction of the structures and the NWGFS could rent back from them. Tedd Wildman indicated that the industry in the Pacific Northwest has always been very supportive of the NWGFS.

*b. Foundation Plant Services*

Deborah Golino presented a pre-proposal request for funds from Foundation Plant Services at UC Davis, California. *Golino’s presentation may be viewed on the NCPN*
website under Grapes CPN, Tier 2 Meeting in Missouri. She indicated that FPS has removed from its proposal the request for funds for a building addition that was presented at the Tier 3 Meeting in Davis in December, 2009. The NCPN will not fund new construction. Tom Bewick stated that service contracts in connection with new equipment may be funded.

The group discussed the propriety of the NCPN funding work related to identification of grape plant material through DNA analysis. Murali Bandla does not support expenditure of NCPN funds for DNA identification work on foundation plant material. He explained that other commodities would then be required to adopt the same standard of DNA identification if funding were allowed for grapes.

Tom Bewick indicated that NCPN funding for DNA analysis is a gray area. He agrees that it is essential work but suggests that funding from another source such as the block grant program would be more appropriate. Bewick stated that DNA analysis is not the type of phytosanitary issue contemplated by the NCPN.

FPS asked for four-year funding for a trailer rental within which to house additional staff. The CWG representatives indicated that funding will have to be requested each year, rather than front loading all four years in 2009.

c. Missouri State University

Wenping Qiu presented a pre-proposal for request for funds by Missouri State University. Qiu’s presentation may be viewed on the NCPN website under Grapes CPN, Tier 2 Meeting in Missouri. Qiu asked for funding to support research on viruses that affect grapevines in the Mid-West and for expenses related to tissue culture. Keith Striegler mentioned that Missouri State University has an import license and is authorized to import and test foreign grape plant material, as well as to provide and test G2 plant material within the region.

d. Unified Proposal for Extension & Outreach

Keith Striegler presented a unified proposal (Cornell, Missouri, UCD Davis) for extension and outreach for the Grape Network. A paper describing the draft proposal is posted on the NCPN website under Grapes CPN, Tier 2 Meeting in Missouri. The proposal utilizes existing facilities and programs. It contains four key elements aimed at growers and nurseries: (1) publications directed at vineyard and nursery operators; (2) development and maintenance of a website that provides instantly available information; (3) direct outreach to nurseries; and (4) presentations to grape producers and nursery operators at industry meetings across the United States (“travelling roadshow”). Matching funds are expected from industry and the other partners.

The pre-proposal is somewhat sketchy relative to the Pacific Northwest as Mercy Olmstead is no longer at Washington State University. The intent was to obtain input from colleagues as the program develops.
Tim Martinson (Cornell) explained the nursery education component of the proposal. It was mentioned that attempting to teach nursery techniques to industry members is somewhat sensitive and risky. Martinson indicated that the intent was to educate growers as to what standards growers should appropriately demand of nurseries in terms of “clean” plant material and not to propose nursery practices.

Murali Bandla asked whether someone from the South is included in the pre-proposal.

Tom Bewick asked how the pre-proposal is coordinated with the national Viticulture & Enology Extension Workshop and stated that some of the pre-proposal ideas could be accomplished through the national group. He stated that some of the 2008 SCRI proposals were submitted purportedly under industry auspices but the members of industry knew nothing about them. He was concerned that the proposal mesh with existing efforts.

Mark Black advised that the sponsors of the pre-proposal make advance connections locally prior to going into Southern states such as Florida, Georgia and Texas. His concern was how the team would be received in states not represented in the pre-proposal. Striegler indicated that the intent was to receive input from colleagues on these activities and not to operate in a vacuum. He stated that most conferences look for speakers in advance, and the group would contact the organizers ahead of time. Tim Martinson cited the example of the Winery Water Workshop in New York, where the New York sponsors worked with the experts in California to tailor the program to local needs.

Tom Bewick indicated that the first year of the pre-proposal allocates the majority of the budget to salaries in three states. He stated that it is important in the justification section of the proposal to demonstrate how it will benefit the entire national network. Deborah Golino indicated that the knowledgeable people (scientists) in the three centers sponsoring the proposal will compile information for extension representatives all over the country. The intention is to benefit the entire country by distribution of information useful to all.

Bewick suggested that the proposal indicate how it would access and coordinate with other existing national networks and regions and how it would use the existing extension structure. The SCRI has a huge extension component. He suggested that the sponsors propose convening the team of experts to put together material on a regional basis.

Murali Bandla stated that the extension and outreach pre-proposal is a good start but is not all-inclusive. He suggested that resources might be optimized by combining proposals from the Grape Network and the Fruit Tree Network into a single extension and outreach proposal. Bewick commented that it makes the investment in a virologist more optimal. Deborah Golino replied that, although the virology principles might be the same for grapes and fruit trees, the considerations for producing “clean plant” material might differ for the nurseries and growers in the two commodities. For purposes of extension and outreach, it is important to retain an expert who is familiar with the particular commodity.
Bandla and Bewick expressed a preference for a cross-proposal for grapes, fruit trees and citrus, reasoning that the message is the same (start with clean plant material) when outreach is made to the growers of all commodities. Erich Rudyj reminded that 15% of the funds ($3 million) is tentatively assigned to outreach for all NCPN commodities under the Business Plan.

Keith Striegler summarized that the proposal sponsors would consider and evaluate the pre-proposal for feasibility and practicality of including both grapes and fruit trees, with the idea of making use of existing organizations, and maintaining the concept of targeting grower education to demand clean plant material. Tim Martinson stated that the proposal would work most efficiently if the extension representatives were linked to the scientists doing the certification of the plant material. Deborah Golino mentioned the WERA 1020 group (a network of virologists). She indicated that the proposal sponsors would take activities slowly and consult with commodity and virology experts related to papers and presentations in the outreach efforts. Keith Striegler stated that it is important to circulate information and to educate growers relative to maintenance of clean plant material prior to purchase of the material.

Tom Bewick explained that Congress has provided funding for only a limited number of years. The goals are to reach out to growers to create a demand for clean plant material and to assist the nurseries with providing the material to the growers. The ultimate goal is to make the NCPN system self-sustaining.

Dennis Rak commented that the movement to get a clean plant program going has been ongoing for the past 15 years but there has been no acceptable clean plant source for hybrids. Many people were aware that there was a problem but had no readily available clean material. He thinks the case studies proposed by the unified proposal would be illustrative.

The Tier 2 Board discussed the issue of how to proceed with reference to the pre-proposals presented at the meeting. Murali Bandla indicated that the institutions that received APHIS funding in 2008 could expect a continuation of at least that same level of funding for 2009. The four proposals presented at the meeting will be consolidated into one document for the Tier 1 meeting, with emphasis on networking and shared resources. There should be no further proposals from any other institutions in the Western CPN. The Eastern Tier 3 Grape CPN Board should resolve solicitation of proposals for the Eastern foundation block. A decision was made that the Tier 2 Board would ask for $50,000 for a feasibility study by an agricultural economist (scope of need; location; how G1 block would relate to industry; marginal cost of doing business for Eastern foundation block) and $250,000 for an Eastern foundation block set aside.

A recommendation was made as to the extension and outreach presentation made by Keith Striegler. The NCPN should focus on outreach for all commodities and in all regions. It would be preferable to include both grapes and fruit trees in the unified extension/outreach proposal, with a focus on publications and websites. Nursery support
and increase block issues and state certification programs should be funded from other sources. The primary object of the NCPN outreach should be educating the growers.

Deborah Golino and Keith Striegler will advertise to institutions interested in grape extension, outreach and research that they have 15 days to submit proposals for extension, outreach and research. The proposals should be no longer than one page. The research proposals must be strictly related to the NCPN mission and connected to improvement and delivery of foundation level (G1) grapevine plantings, i.e., issues such as tissue culture, disease therapy, pathogen detection. In the Business Plan, the research item is allocated at 10% ($500,000 for the overall NCPN Network, including $300,000 for grapes).

Erich Rudyj indicated that the Tier 1 RFP will eventually contain a definite format which must be followed to answer the RFP. However, for purposes of the March 25-26 Tier 1 meeting, the description of the unified Grape Network proposal need not be too detailed as to numbers. Rudyj stated that a firm draft of the Tier 1 RFP should be available by the time of the March meeting. The RFP should be published in April, with a due date for responses of 60 days. The response to the RFP should be done by each institution separately.

**Report on Progress of Model Grape Regulations**

Nancy Sweet read a status report prepared by Ruth Welliver on the project to write model grape regulations for the NCPN. A copy of Welliver’s report can be accessed on the NCPN website under Grapes CPN, Tier 2 meeting in Missouri.

It was agreed that the Committee should be directed to complete a reviewed draft as follows by August 1, 2009: (1) the Welliver committee should complete its internal review of the Bob Martin draft and prepare a next draft; and (2) the next draft should be circulated to the Tier 2 Board members for comment. After August 1, the reviewed draft should be circulated to the NCPN stakeholders and members for review. Murali Bandla indicated that he could provide funding to convene a national meeting later this year to discuss the model certification regulations.

A long discussion ensued on the ultimate pathogen-testing standards that should be required as a prerequisite to NCPN certification. One view was that all states and regions should be required to test at the highest level for all pathogens in order to receive an NCPN tag. The state of Washington reports that it has a foundation collection free of all pathogens of concern, including Rupesris stem pitting and *Agrobacterium*. This group argued that the NCPN standard should be the highest standard possible and that the NCPN program is voluntary, so that those who do not wish to do so do not have to participate.

A second group asserted that the discussions to date have anticipated a minimum national standard of the most dangerous of the common pathogens agreed upon by all regions of the country, leaving discretion within each region to require stricter standards for that region. For example, *Agrobacterium* is not as serious a problem in California as it is in...
the Pacific Northwest and the Eastern region of the United States. It was noted that this latter approach is the one that has been used in discussions in prior NCPN meetings when the issue of pathogen testing was raised. The stricter standard could result in decertification of thousands of acres of grapes if not phased in over a lengthy period of time. Dan Martinez indicated that it is unrealistic to think that the highest standard can be achieved in four years; rather, it may take 10 to 15 years for widespread acceptance of the highest standard. Deborah Golino mentioned that nurseries are frequently already reluctant to participate in clean plant programs because they feel that plant pathologists have set the standard too high.

Mark Black stated that it appears that a consensus exists that a minimum national standard be agreed upon across regions and that the states be allowed to set a higher standard for themselves if they wish to do so.

The concept of starting to move toward the higher standard by requiring a stricter standard for only the foundation blocks (G1) was proposed and agreed upon. Deborah Golino agreed that the Grape Network should move toward a higher standard for the NCPN by first imposing that standard only on foundation plantings.

**Other Business**
Murali Bandla offered to host a conference call through the USDA facilities regarding further development of the Grape Network pre-proposals. Tammy Kolt, Erich Rudyj’s assistant for NCPN coordination, has arranged for a teleconferencing number with 30 lines through the USDA.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Sweet
Foundation Plant Services