

Directors Meeting Update - October 2024

Update for Members:

We had our latest Directors meeting on October 3, 2024.

First, let me say that we are praying for the industry's farms and families to be protected and safe.

Fast Developing Industry makes your head spin 🌀 - We discussed that as we work to develop the wood markets, mechanical harvesting, and have worked to sort out the proper understanding of this year's shoots harvest, that the pace of identifying areas that are new and may affect how farmers operate is coming at a fast pace. We can't help but conclude that we don't have all the answers but we have a good partner with UF-IFAS as well as a dedicated Board of Directors, and are making progress, one step at a time.

For instance, we have come to know that the worldwide bamboo virus, Bamboo Mosaic Virus or BaMV, has infected much of the commercial bamboo farms in Florida. As the known symptom is reduced vigor and with our observations of healthy farms, it is difficult to know the real impact of the virus and if it is meaningful. Meanwhile, UF-IFAS is working on treatments and finding them already available.

In addition, we have found that there may be cultivars of Asper that create larger plants and crops. This isn't to say that we don't like the Asper cultivar that we have, actually we love it, but this could be an interesting possibility for the future.

Harvest / Packinghouse - Most of the farmers that participated in the current year harvest are working with an attorney to send a letter to OMH indicating a breach of contract. This letter will go out shortly and gives OMH the option of curing the breach by paying the cull amounts to farmers within 30 days.

Annual Meeting - Peter Chaires is leading our planning for the Annual Meeting and he provided an update on the Agenda, Speakers, Sponsors and Communication plan. We will have two areas of focus at the meeting: Research / Key Project and Wood Markets, 3 speakers on each focus. Ambar will have weekly+ communications to encourage attendance by our members. We are very happy to have a great number of Sponsors for the event.

For you Members, the idea behind the Key Project is to help us understand our real Production to better estimate our profitability as Bamboo Farmers.

You will certainly want to have the latest from this season's work. In addition, we are preparing a 5-year projection of available wood harvest to show our wood market prospects the seriousness of our growing industry. And finally we will help you see with the Wood Markets speakers that there is a world of buyers of our bamboo wood! And finally, we will hold an important Election of 5 Directors. Please register and we will see you there - December 2nd! Please register here: [2024 Annual Meeting Registration Form](#)

Research Update - Key Project - September data is coming in. Plants are still shooting but seeing some transition to aborting. I am reluctant to forecast the totals for the season as the true totals are much more valuable. Our 5-Year Forecast of wood supply will involve Don Rockwood, Dr. Davie, a modeler and myself. We are working to complete this before the Annual Meeting.

Harvest Strategies - we are finding that there is available documentation on harvesting strategies for shoots and wood producing farms. This is something that we will study over the next year or so. In addition, Michael Rogers has taken on the project of developing mechanical harvesting for our wood harvest - currently he is working to appraise the project (engineers meet Kevin Barley on 11/1 to see Mixon and Pioneer). The Team is applying for funding for a retired UF engineer, with a cost of \$65k.

Market Development - Mr. Barley reported that the key markets with near term interest in our crops include Biochar, Bioplastics, Construction materials and Textiles.

Next Meeting - set for November 7th at 11am at CREC UF-IFAS Lake Alfred.