

TexasPecanBoard

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Texas Pecan Board (TPB) Meeting Minutes

Sunday, July 20, 2025 1:30 P.M. CST

Embassy Suites Denton Convention Center Hotel

3100 Town Center Trail Denton, TX 76201

TPB Members Present: Jake Montz, Troy Swift, Dennis Hardman, Zachary Swick, Mark Friesenhahn, Lalo Medina, Winston Millican

Guests: TPGA Staff/TPB Contractors: Blair Krebs; Texas Department of Agriculture: Patrick Dudley by phone; Texas A&M AgriLife: Kyle Slusher, Jonathan Consford, Larry Stein; James Livergood, Chris Simmons, Will Cullers, Doug Krebs, Keith Berdoll.

Texas Pecan Board (TPB) President Jake Montz called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M. CST. He called the board roll call, establishing a quorum, and asked guests to introduce themselves.

Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) representative Patrick Dudley swore in the newly elected Texas Pecan Board member, Winston Millican, who filled a vacant position. Blair Krebs noted all new or re-elected board members had completed their public information and open meeting trainings and the certificates sent to TDA.

The next agenda item was to take nominations for the vacant board member seat. Joesph Massey notified Blair Krebs that he was resigning from the board on June 10, 2025. Therefore, his vacant seat would need to be filled. Zachary Swick and Dennis Hardman were placed in a working group to find board member nominations by the September board meeting.

The board members reviewed the meeting minutes from the March 18, 2025 meeting in College Station. Mark Friesenhahn made the motion to approve the minutes. Dennis Hardman seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the meeting minutes were approved.

Patrick Dudley from the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) then gave an update over the phone from the department about its work, including information on the penalty matrix for pecan weevil and bulk shipment compliance agreements. Dudley noted the penalty matrix has been completed and the bulk shipment compliance agreement has been signed by Texas and signed by the New Mexico Agriculture Commissioner Witte, so it is now official. There will soon be a copy on the TDA website that can be shared out to the industry.

Blair Krebs with the Texas Pecan Growers Association (TPGA) and contractor for TPB gave an update on the activities and finances for the organization. She informed the group about administrative, grant, and infrastructure work the team had been handling, including an update on marketing projects, innovation efforts, and international marketing with grant funding. Krebs particularly highlighted how the work in innovation and creation of other revenue streams has developed. The work started with a grant from TDA to TPGA. Krebs had been keeping the American Pecan Promotion Board (APPB) updated on their activities and now APPB and TPB are co-partners on NIFA innovation grants that will be open to develop pecan innovation products. The funding is half from NIFA and half from APPB and only check-offs can be partners so TPB is the co-partner.

The financials were also presented to the board. Blair Krebs noted they are still trying to get funding moved to a higher earning investment account, but because TPB is a state organization, we are still waiting on documentation to open the account. She also noted they are still waiting on ARS so they can transfer \$75,000 to them for weevil research. TPB also received some past due assessments from previous years, but anticipate request for refunds will be coming. Zachary Swick made the motion to approve the presented financials and Troy Swift seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the financials were approved.

The next agenda item was a discussion on defining activities priorities and focus for the organization. There was extensive discussion on the possible focus on activities given the limited funding the Texas Pecan Board has available. Blair Krebs discussed a possible breakdown between marketing, research, and compliance/regulatory and Mark Friesenhahn read out the mission for TPB highlighting the goals of the organization. Many spoke about the need for marketing of Texas pecans, considering the current market conditions, and others spoke on the importance of research, highlighting needs like stink bug research. The group decided to do a further break down at the September board meeting.

Texas Pecan Board grant work was then discussed. TPB did not get the Specialty Crop Block Grant through TDA for Texas Pecan Branding. There was a heavy pecan field for the applications and many did not get funded, but Tarleton State University's application for *Value-Added Innovation for Texas Pecan Growers* was approved and will continue our innovation work with them. The Innovation grant from TPGA has ended but innovation work continues through other funding and partnerships, including Tarleton, AgriLife, New Mexico State University, and the American Pecan Promotion Board. Work also continues on the ACES grant focused international promotion of Texas pecans into India.

The discussion moved to the Texas Pecan Board compliance, audit expectations, and procedures with Patrick Dudley and Jake Montz giving an update. They spoke about possibly piggybacking on audits from the American Pecan Council and American Pecan Promotion Board and will reach out to them about the possibility.

The protocol for reported or know compliance was reviewed. Blair Krebs noted that the protocol is working when the known noncompliance is reported. She highlighted the importance of growers reporting to the staff if they paid into a handler and they question or know the handler did not pay into TPB.

The group got an update on the suspected pecan weevil finding in El Paso County and the work being done to monitor and abate the situation. Texas AgriLife specialists Kyle Slusher and Jonathan Consford are developing the protocol and working with producers in El Paso County on the program. Both gave a short update during the meeting on their work, including their work to set and submit the protocol to TDA, including inspection of cleaning plants. Once they have the Texas protocol set, they will then begin working further with New Mexico on the protocol.

The board then moved to the discussion on additional counties to monitor if pecan weevil is present, like the actions taken in Pecos County. Previous monitoring activities had removed Pecos from the pecan weevil quarantine in Texas, but New Mexico has not agreed and wants inspections of cleaning plants. Texas AgriLife Entomologist Kyle Slusher noted that at least three years of monitoring and other steps were needed. Slusher has been working with New Mexico Department of Agriculture entomologist Tiffany Johnson to establish the proper protocol for removing a county out of the

quarantine that New Mexico will approve, though county removal may not be recognized by New Mexico and will have to switch to certification for farms not counties. Monitoring and trapping work in Reeves County that was funded by TPB will start soon this summer. Both Slusher and Consford will work on the effort with the Reeves county agent and track the data. There was also discussion on how to establish protocol for weevil free certification for farms as opposed to counties and if research could prove weevil is not established in certain counties in Texas.

The discussion moved to research being done on pecan weevil by the USDA-ARS team of entomologists and funded by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and Texas Pecan Board. Blair Krebs noted that because of the disruption at USDA, she had been waiting for the agreement and ability to transfer the money for some time. Luckily, just this week Krebs heard from the ARS team, signed the agreement to move it forward, and are waiting for instructions on money transfer. ARS entomologist Lindsey Perkin will be the lead on the project.

The topic stayed on entomology and continued research on weevil and other pests. Troy Swift continued to note the need for stink bug research. A working group of Swift, Slusher, and Consford was created to look into possible research and grants with the idea it can be worked on at the state level and then branch to national work.

The next TPB board meeting date was previously set and will be on Tuesday, September 16th at 1:00 P.M. CST in Stephenville with the TPGA board meeting the next day.

With no further agenda items or business, Zachary Swick made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Dennis Hardman seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the meeting was adjourned about 3:19 P.M. CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Blair Krebs