

Fellow Agrologists

Guelph Branch meeting was held at Guelph Turf Grass Institute on January 25th, 2010. Guelph Branch executives were in attendance.

There were two points on the agenda.

- A. Bruce Hobin, OIA President answering of questions forwarded to him by Guelph Branch members.
- B. Signing of MOU by Guelph Branch President.

- A. Questions and answers were as follow.

Q1. Mississauga and Guelph reps are away; how can the board do its job if not here? Why no rules?

A. Governance structure of OIA in the By-laws do not dictate Board members on a branch basis; Board remains in touch via email/internet/teleconference calls; quorum is the key element; not all Board meetings face to face; can still contact Terry or Bruce if you have a question.

Q2. No communication on achieving OIA priorities from Board, no strategic plan communicated or any progress; change to the Act job 1; provide progress report on each of the 5 strategic priorities

A. Legislative change has dsgged the Board down. No provincial desire or enthusiasm to change the Act. This is frustrating. There is a board committee but the work of the committee is on hold until membership numbers increase that would enhance our clout. Hoped that the new national council of Agrology Institutes will help us.

Q3. Money OIA applied for?

A. Professional fees is the source that most professional associations function from and do not rely on any other funding. Right now we do have professional fees plus MCI funds.

Q4. What happened to the Ottawa Branch and who no Ottawa rep on Board and why so many of the board in Guelph area?

A. By-laws dictate the election of board members. If you want to change the by-laws it must be done through a by-law change.

Q5. Board confidentiality, staff don't answer questions, seems like the past is repeating; need for accountability again as it was only short lived.

A. Sad to hear of member disillusionment. Parts of board meetings are confidential. No intent for the board to be secret. Acknowledged that board members should attend branch meetings but there is an obligation for branch members to attend branch meetings to find out what is going on.

Q6. re public representatives on the board?

A. Relates to current board structure in the bylaws. In Saskatchewan the Act defined the role of the public person and outlined how they are appointed. The public in this sense serves as a watch dog. The 3 current public representatives on the OIA board are doing an excellent job.

Q7. re joining Board committees?

A. Opportunities to join all board committees. Acknowledge that the current board did not do the job intended.

Q8. Why is Board refusing to be transparent and not post meeting minutes; why so secret and not transparent as required?

A. There is no policy to make the minutes public. When at the SIA members had to travel to the office to see the minutes; they were not posted. \As president no problem posting the minutes but will put the issue on the February board agenda for a board decision.

Q9. MCI funding end?

A. Mar 31/10; staff will reapply

Q10. re why MCI project funding went from 3 years to 1 year?

A. Board raised questions which led MCI to change the funding period. 2 budgets have been prepared for the AGM, one with MCI and one based on revenue from professional fees. If the grant is not continued the board will decide if Pat remains and is paid through surplus funds

Q11. re who the board has met with or lobbying efforts re change to our Act ie Ont Federation of Agriculture?

A. no meetings held

Q12. re why pay membership when employer not care?

A. Acts don't change overnight, no efforts to go beyond OMAFRA to get support for legislative change; will contact new Ag minister and seek support from other provincial agrolgy institutes; will need more OIA members to be taken seriously

Comments from those present: chicken/egg situation as will never get support for legislative change without lobbying; Foresters paid lobbyist and we may need a war chest

Q13. re no support from industry until engage industry so need OIA Board reform?

A. By-laws need to change if this is desired

Q14 what is the marketing plan?

A. We have banners for the branches, we had a booth at the South Western Ag show, we were at the outdoor farm show and board members and staff have been active.

Q15 re what done to increase value?

A. Achieved labour mobility across Canada in agrolgy; belief that people should want to protect public interest versus being forced to join; need your help to promote your membership ie put PAg on your business cards

Q16. re efforts to build links to sector employers to build support for legislative change?\

A. The board has righted the ship after the past few years and it is acknowledged that we can not ignore sector employers in building support; the board has reconnected with the OAC students as the future generation of practitioners

Comments from those present: perhaps provide membership fee discount for mentors; connect to AALP as program participants know nothing about the OIA; target primary producers and their associations and develop a detailed marketing plan; create “associate” category for those without the education to qualify for P.Ag or T.Ag but have sector experience.

Q 17 re being paid to article?

A. not in MCI contract

Q 18 re why continue membership when I work in the animal fed industry and no one sees value?

A. covered in answer to #15

Q 19 re why no coop placements like in Manitoba’s international program?

A 2 different programs

B. Signing of MOU was delayed as there were not enough members present.
The meeting adjourned at 9.00 pm.

Adalat Khan P.Ag.
Secretary Guelph Branch