

**AMERICAN PECAN COUNCIL**

**MARKETING COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY  
MARCH 21, 2019  
9:30 a.m. Central Time**

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**A. ROLL CALL**

The conference call/meeting of the Marketing Committee roll call was made at 9:30 a.m.

The following **Committee members** were in attendance:

Bruce CARIS (CHAIRMAN)  
Mike ADAMS (ex officio)  
Angie ELLIS  
Molly WILLIS  
Louie SALOPEK  
Jeff WORN  
Jennifer IVEY  
Sonja ROEDER  
Les DAVIET

**STAFF:**

Alex OTT  
Jeff SMUTNY  
Emma GARNER  
Julianna KECK  
Deborah BARNETT

**OVERSIGHT:**

Abby CAMPOS

**GUEST:**

Mark HENDRIXON  
Catherine CLARK  
Blair KREBS  
Matthew BAILY  
Sarah YAFFE  
Allison McMILLON  
Guy JOHNSON

**B. ESTABLISH QUORUM**

Having received a sufficient number of committee members a quorum was established.

## II. MARKETING PROGRAMS

### A. RECAP OF 2018 Marketing Program Activities

Sarah YAFFE with Web Shandwick provided an overview of the results from the first six months of the year. Ms. YAFFE discussed the results of the PECAN A THON promotion and how it increased traffic to the APC website with 89% of those that visited the site intended to purchase pecans with 95% of those individuals willing to use pecans outside of just pie.

The promotion received 11,000,000 pledges to use pecans in more than one dish over the holiday season. Jeff WORN commented on how he would like to see a survey initiated while on the APC website that asks if viewers intend to purchase pecans. Angie ELLIS instructed Weber Shandwick to provide hard numbers when citing percentage increases over previous campaigns. Jeff SMUTNY stated that such a survey could be implemented but more importantly there is a need to gather data at the retail level during a time in which a major pecan promotion is being delivered.

### B. Proposal for 2018-2019 Program next six months

Ms. YAFFE proceeded to present the proposed marketing activities for the second half of the fiscal year. She discussed the Super Weeks promotion which relied heavily on a bag a week theme by providing meal planning recipes for every day of the week. The campaign is created to establish increased usage. The meals within the planning menus were devised by an analytical search across the web to identify what recipes XY Moms are looking for on the web. Mr. WORN asked Weber Shandwick to really focus on U.S. product and to aim a marketing campaign at the retail level to encourage excitement about American Pecans. Bruce CARIS asked about direct involvement with various associations and buyers at the retail level. APC staff answered that there has been a lot of in store promotion, but it is expensive. Mr. SMUTNY also added that marketing orders are reaching out to the food service and restaurant industry and promoting menu items that include the commodity name. California Walnuts are having traction with California Walnuts listed as an ingredient instead of just walnuts as an ingredient.

## MOTION 1-21-19 #1

**MOVED** by Louie SALOPEK, DULY SECONDED BY Sonja Roeder and unanimously carried **THAT** the Committee approve a recommendation to the Council to utilize Weber Shandwick as proposed at a cost not to exceed \$1.3 million dollars for a period beginning April 1, 2019 and ending September 30, 2019

C. Aspire IQ and social media proposal

Mr. SMUTNY and Julianna KECK presented a proposal to utilize an online Influencer Platform to create content on various social channels representing APC. Ms. KECK mentioned the functionality of the platform and the ability to contract with influencers and have them create content, post to social media sites, conduct recipe development, create videos and promote pecans. Mr. SMUTNY discussed the cost saving by being able to contract directly with influencers versus utilizing an outside agency to conduct the contracting for us. Mr. SALOPEK asked if the APC team was working directly with Weber Shandwick on this project. Mr. SMUTNY answered that although Weber Shandwick was informed of this transition, they are not specifically assisting with us on this project as it is going to allow APC staff to take this work and move it in house. Mathew BAILEY asked if the content created through the platform would be available to all of industry. Mr. SMUTNY answered that due to licensing agreements, content would remain internal to the APC unless it was stipulated for use outside of APC purview through the influencer RFP. Ms. Ellis asked if the \$135,000 requested for the project is just for use of the platform or does it actually allow APC to build content through the influencers on the platform, as well. Mr. SMUTNY explained that it was for both and that the platform monthly subscription fee is approximately \$3600 per month and the rest would be utilized for influencer content.

**MOTION 1-21-19 #2**

MOVED by Louie SALOPEK, DULY SECONDED BY Leslie DAVIET and unanimously carried **THAT** the Committee approve a recommendation to the Council to fund the Aspire IQ platform and the internal influencer program as proposed at a cost not to exceed \$135,000 dollars for a period beginning April 1, 2019 and ending September 30, 2019 of which \$19,494 will go to the subscription service to pay for the Aspire IQ platform the remaining \$115,506 will be used to engage with influencers found within the Aspire IQ platform

**III. MARKETING RESEARCH**

A. Nutrition Research

Dr. Guy Johnson reviewed opportunities for pecan research. He presented the findings of interviews conducted with 5 scientific

researchers. Researchers suggested focusing on the following key areas for pecans: cardiovascular disease, satiety and weight management, cognition, the microbiome, and diabetes. The committee members showed unanimous appreciation for Dr. Johnson's efforts and are motivated to begin conducting the research. Dr. JOHNSON recommended the committee conduct an RFP process to review various research proposals and fund the selected proposals.

### **MOTION 1-21-19 #3**

MOVED by Jeff WORN, DULY SECONDED BY Angie ELLIS and unanimously **THAT** the Committee approve a recommendation to the Council to conduct various Requests for Proposals as identified in the research recommendations presented by Dr. Guy Johnson with the total of all projects combined not to exceed \$250,000.

#### **B. Shelf Life Study**

Mr. CARIS updated the committee on the ongoing efforts by the National Pecan Shellers Association (NPSA) and their research on pecan shelf life. The first half of the study is complete. The second half of the study will be completed with the 2019/2020 crop.

#### **C. Chef Summit**

Mr. CARIS updated the committee on the recent Chef Summit hosted by NPSA in Atlanta, GA. This event was sponsored by the APC at a cost of \$75,000. NPSA was hosting another Chef Summit in San Antonio, TX later in the month. Overall the Atlanta event was well received. NPSA was looking to continue the relationship with APC and hoping for continued support for the 2019/2020 year.

#### **D. Other Promotional Activities**

Mr. SMUTNY updated the committee on a proposal from Comcast Cable. The proposal included approximately 10 markets at a cost of \$2 million dollars. The proposal included running commercials in the various markets and then measuring the effectiveness of the campaign by utilizing retail data. Committee response to the proposal was mixed with members thinking we need to continue to advertise through digital channels and not tv stations. The Committee asked APC staff to continue to negotiate and research the Comcast proposal and other opportunities.

### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chairman Caris adjourned the meeting at 11:59 pm CDT. (MOTION 3-20-19 #4)**

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**Jeff Smutny**  
**Director of Marketing and Regulatory Affairs**

## **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS FOR MARCH 21, 2019**

### **MOTION 1-21-19 #1**

**MOVED** by Louie SALOPEK, DULY SECONDED BY Sonja Roeder and unanimously carried **THAT** the Committee approve a recommendation to the Council to utilize Weber Shandwick as proposed at a cost not to exceed \$1.3 million dollars for a period beginning April 1, 2019 and ending September 30, 2019

### **MOTION 1-21-19 #2**

**MOVED** by Louie SALOPEK, DULY SECONDED BY Leslie DAVIET and unanimously carried **THAT** the Committee approve a recommendation to the Council to fund the Aspire IQ platform and the internal influencer program as proposed at a cost not to exceed \$135,000 dollars for a period beginning April 1, 2019 and ending September 30, 2019 of which \$19,494 will go to the subscription service to pay for the Aspire IQ platform the remaining \$115,506 will be used to engage with influencers found within the Aspire IQ platform

### **MOTION 1-21-19 #3**

**MOVED** by Jeff WORN, DULY SECONDED BY Angie ELLIS and unanimously **THAT** the Committee approve a recommendation to the Council to conduct various Requests for Proposals as identified in the research recommendations presented by Dr. Guy Johnson with the total of all projects combined not to exceed \$250,000.

### **MOTION 1-21-19 #4**

**Chairman Caris adjourned the meeting**