

# MINI-CASSIA DIRECT SEED & COVER CROP PROJECT

## COMMITTEE MEETING

### MINUTES

Date: **April 5, 2023 @ 9:00 am**

Location: McGregor Building  
85 East Baseline, Rupert, ID

Committee Members: Richard Kunau (Direct Seed Chairman and West Cassia Chairman)  
Mark Webb (East Cassia Supervisor)  
Dusty Wilkins (Minidoka Chairman)  
Ken Woodworth (East Cassia Supervisor)  
Brent Stoker (West Cassia Supervisor)  
Luke Stevenson (Minidoka Supervisor)

Others: Rob Cottle (East Cassia Chairman)  
Sharon Hardy (Minidoka Admin)  
Doreen McMurray (Cassia I&E Specialist)  
Matt Banks (Territory Rep for Great Plains Ag)  
Ken Lebsack (Magic Valley Equipment)

Meeting called to order by Chairman Richard Kunau at 9:02 am with introductions and breakfast burritos & drinks. There was no agenda for this meeting to keep it informal and informational. Richard gave an overview of the Direct Seed and Cover Crop Project including our current activities and project goals. Matt Banks (Territory Rep for Great Plains Ag) discussed what a straight vertical tillage tool is (no soil moved sideways) vs. a hybrid tillage tool (with a little sideways movement of the soil).

Our purpose for acquiring the tool would be to help growers reduce fuel costs by reducing the number of passes required to prepare a field for planting, and to manage residue from cover crops as it prepares a seed bed "all-in-one-pass".

It was stated that this tool would target cash crop growers. We would need a chopper reel instead of the rolling spike harrows (finger rods) to better manage and cut through residue and/or potato vines. The Terra-Max tillage tool would fit our purposes best allowing growers to adjust from true - straight tillage to a slight turn of the soil, as growers desire. Full hydraulic adjustments were recommended. An acre counter could easily be added to the tool. One concern was noted that fields with truck traffic will still need to be ripped before using the Terra Max. A Turbo Seeder was discussed but it was decided that the seeder would not be part of the equipment at this time.

It was discussed that a 20-foot Terra Max tool would be most useful and would have at least 4 remotes. This size of equipment would require a 200+ horsepower tractor to transport. Equipment could be available as early as June.

Clinic Training would be required for growers before they rent and use the new equipment. Matt Banks and his team would be heavily involved in these "in the field" trainings; possibly twice a year (spring and fall). The equipment reps were excused and they will prepare and send over a price quote.

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The Direct Seed Committee looked over the minutes from the previous meeting held on March 2, 2023. **Mark Webb made the motion to accept the minutes and Brent Stoker seconded the motion. Motion passed.** Committee members that are check signers are: Richard Kunau, Ken Woodworth, Dusty Wilkins, and Luke Stevenson. All have re-signed with the bank except Richard and he will do it today.

The Direct Seed Committee continued discussion on the feasibility of the possible new tillage tool. Ken Woodworth and Mark Webb both stated that they do not use any tillage tools on their farms at all. Rob Cottle noted that farmers from Elba & Almo areas probably would not transport the tillage tool that far and therefore may not get any use from that area. Dusty Wilkins mentioned that he had already spoken to several farmers in the Minidoka area that would be very interested in giving the tool a try. Brent Stoker discussed the concerns that rocks cause with the double roller baskets.

The rental contract fee would be possibly \$75 per day and \$20 per acre. The contract would also need to state that the tool could only be used in currently farmed fields to reduce rock damage.

The committee wondered how much interest there would really be in our area. Admin will re-write a detailed survey with information specific to the Terra Max tillage tool and send it out to all past soil health attendees and newsletter emails that are available. Supervisors will discuss concerns and interests in their monthly board meetings as well as ask others to see what interest level they detect. Admin will look into possible cost sharing, partnerships, and grant opportunities that might fit our project that could assist with Direct Seed funds and District contributions.

Next Meeting will be held on June 8<sup>th</sup> before the Awards Banquet. Mark Webb motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dusty Wilkins seconded.

*Minutes submitted by: Doreen McMurray (East & West Cassia I & E Specialist) & Sharon Hardy (Minidoka Admin).*