

**Apple Marketing Order (AMO) Advisory Board  
Conference Call Minutes  
Final Budget Determination Meeting  
NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets  
Albany, NY**

**June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**In Attendance**

**Advisory Board Members:** Ward Dobbins (Chairman), Rod Dressel, Kaari Stannard, Gary Orbaker, Emily Verbridge, Bill Abdo

**AGM Staff:** Bill Shattuck, Emily Cook, Jacqueline Boyer, Kelly Young

**Absent**

Advisory Board Members: Randall Pratt

Meeting called to order by Chairman W. Dobbins at 2:06 PM

**Board Member Reports**

Board members reported on their individual operation and NY apple production at large.

Overall consensus from the Board is that a freeze event in May 2023 impacted apple production significantly. While the damage experienced is sporadic and dependent on geographical location and duration of freeze, preliminary statewide estimates for crop loss are in the 25% - 30% range at this point. Fruit that was beginning to blossom due to early season high temperatures was damaged by extended periods of below-freezing temperatures. Wayne County and the Mid-Hudson Valley seemed to be hit the hardest, with some growing operations losing 50% of their crop and up due to the freeze (some even had close to total loss). This has been accounted for in Apple Marketing Order assessment projections for the year ahead.

**W. Dobbins:** May freeze caused significant crop loss. Expecting 75% of last year's harvested crop (25% anticipated drop year-to-year). Expecting lower pack-out. Other than freeze, minimal adverse weather at this point in the season (minimal hail, could use a bit more rain, proper irrigation is essential). Beyond freeze event, expecting a fair season.

**R. Dressel:** Bloom began in March due to higher temps early in the season, although 4 frost events since. Expecting half of last year's crop/ harvest (50% anticipated drop in production year-to-year). Crop insurance "not much help", as it does not nearly cover all losses incurred. Snap Dragon apples hit hard by freeze, Empires are extremely light. Hudson Valley in general hit very hard by the freeze, especially U-Pick operations, many of which are having to close down for the entire season. Would be surprised if 50% of prior year crop is sustained. The extent of fruit russeting is yet to be seen. While there is no

shortage of people looking for agricultural employment, strict labor requirements and reduced crop have reduced the need for workers.

**G. Orbaker:** Wayne County likely to experience 35% apple crop loss due to May freeze. Galas haven't flushed out yet. Lot of fruit russeting seen at this point. In speaking with Farm Fresh First growers, labor is being eliminated significantly due to restrictive H2A migrant/ temp worker and labor regulations.

**E. Verbridge:** Echoes Gary's sentiments about Wayne County (35% anticipated crop loss, not much more to report). Beyond freeze/ crop loss, nothing else to report on growing conditions this season.

**K. Stannard:** Empire Fruit Growers are reporting that certain varieties very damaged by May freeze, others not as much. Growers should be on the lookout next year for how the crop insurance tables will be impacted. Overall good Gala production so far, but Snap Dragons took a large hit by the freeze event.

**B. Abdo:** Agrees with other Board member reports on Western NY.

### **Administrator Reports**

Division staff presented on current AMO account status, prior year collections, and historical budget info. Based on Board/ industry reports of the May freeze event, it is anticipated that the May freeze event will likely translate to an approx. 25% reduction in AMO assessments collected in the upcoming 2023-24 cycle. Financial documents were presented to the group with this in mind as a budget prior to approving the budget.

The 6-year average for AMO collections is \$1,969,945.

Point-in time collections this past year (7/1/22 – 6/23/23) came to \$2,037,884.51, with additional collections expected through the end of the current cycle (6/30/23). This is currently 7% higher collections than this time last year.

The AMO account balance is anticipated to be around \$423,000 by 7/1/23, with all payments having been made to NYAA on their 2022-23 contract. This is well higher than the amount anticipated at the end of last cycle (\$276,551 by 7/1/22).

### **Funding Determination**

Based on grower reports, the Board's outlook on the season ahead, historical collections and current AMO account status the Board motioned and unanimously agreed to fund NYAA at \$1,552,519.50, plus 5% anticipated administrative fees of

### **Board Motions**

1). The 2022-23 Budget was passed by the Board, funding NYAA at a total budget amount of \$1,552,519.50 with 5% administrative fees of \$77,626.

(R. Dressel motioned, K. Stannard seconded, all were in favor, the motion carried)

2). The carryover of current-year funds into the 2023-24 budget year was approved (K. Stannard motioned, R. Dressel seconded, all were in favor, the motion carried)

3). The current AMO assessment rates were approved for the 2023-24 cycle, as follows:

\$.08/bushel for apples sold direct to consumers

\$.16/bushel for apples sold for fresh use other than to consumers

\$.08/cwt. for apples which were processed.

(W. Dobbins motioned, K. Stannard seconded, all were in favor, the motion carried)