

National Honey Board Meeting Minutes

PRESIDING: Mindy Ryan Tharp Gehring, Chairperson

LOCATION: Boulder Marriot

DATE: October 26th & 27th, 2023

National Honey Board Members Present: MindyRyan Tharp Gehring, Christopher Olney, Tom Sargeantson, Bjorn Anderson, Dustin Livermore, Dan Winter, Greg Olsen, Joan Gunter, Matt Halbgewachs

National Honey Board Members Absent: Alan Turanski

National Honey Board Alternates Present Jeff Caley, Missy Foott, Sarah Neves, Maren Martin, Arlen Penner, David Coy, Patricia Sundberg, Blake Shook, Darren Cox

National Honey Board Absent: Nancy Seaquist

National Honey Board Staff Present: Margaret Lombard, Kelly Werning, Catherine Barry, Jessica Schindler, Jocelyn Martinez, Melissa Boone-Hall, Andrea Brening, Darren Brown

Present: Sam Mareno (USDA/AMS), Tim Richards (Arizona State University), Robert Ward (Sylint), Serge Jorgensen (Sylint), Keith Seiz (Brightly Creative), Alison Conklin (Brightly Creative), Jonathan Galbreath (Brightly Creative), Don Ladhoff (Fresh Smart Solutions), Jess Buchanan (Porter Novelli), Amy Shipley (Sterling Rice Group), Laurel Muir (Sterling Rice Group), Taylor Laitsch (Sterling Rice Group), Laurie Demeritt (The Hartman Group), Barbara Ashurst (Good Honey), Mike Stump (HoneyTree), Lisa MacMaster (Glorybee Honey), Scott Lubow (Sioux Honey Association)

THURSDAY, October 26th, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The Thursday session of the National Honey Board (NHB) meeting was convened at 8:31 a.m. by Margaret Lombard and Andrea Brening called roll. All the guests then introduced themselves.

ACTION ITEM I: TO SEAT ALTERNATE MISSY FOOTT

Motion by Matt Halbgewachs, seconded by Greg Olsen and carried to approve seating Missy Foott in Alan Turanski's absence.

ACTION ITEM II: TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Dan Winter, seconded by Joan Gunter and carried to approve the consent agenda.

ACTION ITEM III: TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES

Motion by Tom Sargeantson, seconded by Joan Gunter and carried to approve the minutes.

WELCOME & MEETING OVERVIEW

Margaret Lombard, Chief Executive Officer for the NHB, welcomed all the board members, alternates, and guest to the meeting. She shared an overview of some new presenters that will be sharing at the board meeting and some regular NHB experts who could not join this meeting, but will give a full debrief at the spring meeting. A follow up was given on the Sustainability and Industry Communications board subcommittee meetings and what will be shared during the meeting.

A recap of two NHB white papers that have been recently completed one on Country of Origin labeling Best Practices and one on current Laws Governing Products Labeled as Local were announced. And a special thank you was given to the current board members and alternates who will be rotating off at the end of 2023. Wishes for them to keep in touch and consider serving again.

AMS REPORT

Sam Mareno, Marketing Specialist with United States Department of Agriculture introduced herself to the board. Ms. Mareno shared that the new board members for 2024 have not yet been selected by the Secretary of State, but hopefully in the next month.

Ms. Mareno also shared that National Honey Board reappropriations must be done by the board within the next couple of months. The question for the board is does the division of board member positions reflect the financial and geographic representation of the honey industry.

ACTION ITEM IV: TO TABLE REAPPROPRIATIONS DECISION UNTIL OPEN DISCUSSION TOMORROW

Motion by Joan Gunter, seconded by Dustin Livermore to table the Reappropriations until open discussion tomorrow.

Missy Foott It was asked what the breakdown is for assessments? Werning noted that it is about 80% imports and 20% domestic.

FINANCIAL

National Honey Board's CFO, Kelly Werning, began by introducing herself. She then reviewed briefly what will be discussed and noted that the Board will be voting the next morning to approve the budget.

Highlights from the September 2023 balance sheet include cash in bank of almost \$2 million, \$13,000 for prepaid insurance, \$23,000 net property and equipment and \$8,700 other assets, which is NHB's rental deposit for office space. Additionally, NHB carries a Right of Use Asset of \$188,000 on the building lease, for a total of about \$2.2 million in assets. The balance sheet also includes approximately \$6,000 of outstanding current liabilities, which is made up of NHB's FSA & 401K program accruals, and a Lease Liability of \$205,000. These liabilities combined with NHB's net assets of \$2 million total approximately \$2.2 million.

The Income statement shows total assessments, less assessment refunds, are at \$4.7 million. The mix of those assessments is 79% from imports and 21% domestic. Offsetting assessment revenues are the assessment refunds. At the end of the quarter, NHB had issued \$791K in assessment refunds, 99% of which were organic refunds. Program expenditures are \$5.5 million. Total expenditures are \$6.1 million, leaving NHB an excess of expense over revenue of approximately \$1.3 million. This excess of expense over revenue means NHB is using all the assessment funds received in the current year on programming that promotes the honey industry, in addition to utilizing carryover funds from 2022.

The 2024 budget proposal was reviewed next, with the 2023 amended budget shown for comparison purposes. NHB anticipates much more normal assessments for 2024, with a budgeted net revenue of \$7 million. Werning then highlighted how NHB proposes to use these funds, beginning with a total of \$946K for research programs. \$5.3 million will be allocated to marketing programs, and the remaining \$940K will be administrative.

Matt Halbgewachs asked about why we have very little money coming in from investments. Werning explained that as a commodity board and due to our order, we are not permitted to invest.

COMPLIANCE

Werning began by explaining that it is a requirement of the Order that NHB have a review program for domestic assessment payers. These reviews ensure that the assessments reported to NHB are accurate and supported by purchasing and production information. Domestic payers are on a rotating schedule to receive a review every three to four years. In the Spring, NHB reviews the domestic payer list to determine the year's reviews, and whether the review can be conducted via a virtual method, or if an in-person review is needed. Results of the reviews for 2023 resulted in collection of \$27K of missed assessments.

2023 ADMIN UPDATES

As a result of the cyber review project, there are a couple policy updates and three new policies the Board will need to review and approve. Werning stated that these policies are available on the pre-read materials and briefly covered each.

Werning also briefly covered updates to the NHB portal, highlighting the new functionality and look of the tool. This new version is anticipated to go-live early in 2024.

ECONOMETRIC STUDY

Dr. Tim Richards, Economist with Arizona State University, presented the findings of the econometric evaluation of the stakeholder-level returns to investments in NHB marketing programs between 2018 – 2022. Richards briefly reviewed the rationale for conducting econometric evaluations, the state of the industry as of late 2022, and the data and methods he used to arrive at his conclusions. He divided his findings into two sets of results: The first for the retail market for honey, and the second for the manufacturing market. In the retail market, he found a benefit-to-cost ratio (BCR) of 1.978 in the short run, and 2.310 in the long run, meaning that each dollar invested in the retail honey market returns some \$2.31 in incremental present-value-of-profit to stakeholders. In the manufacturing market, the equivalent estimates are much higher: 9.341 in the short run and 9.732 in the long run. In general, therefore, investments in National Honey Board marketing programs are highly successful.

Jeff Caley asked if we can he can do the comparisons to Peanut butter or Jam regarding elasticity? Richards said that Nielsen Data would help to do that.

Darren Cox asked if we could measure the medicinal market and investigate that?

MARKETING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

NHB STRATEGIC PLAN

Catherine Barry, Vice President of Marketing for the NHB, began by stating that the Strategic Plan has served as the foundation for all of the NHB's marketing programs for the 2023 program year. Last year, this plan was updated to reflect the Board's current objectives. It will continue to serve as the guiding light, helping to direct the teams and ensuring the programs meet the established mission and goals of the Strategic Plan. The top priorities from the Strategic Plan were:

- Driving demand and preference for honey should be the #1 objective
- With increasing honey prices and inflation, showcase the value of honey
- Be proactive and at the forefront of emerging sweetener category
- Initiatives need to tie back to honey consumption and purchase
- Important to protect the purity and reputation of global honey
- Start educating the next generation of honey consumers now
- Provide an avenue to bring the industry together and foster collaboration

STRATEGIC MARKETING PLATFORM

Barry then went on to review the NHB's strategic marketing platform: *Good For Me & Good For The Planet*. It focuses on a balanced approach of educating consumers about the benefits and nutritional properties of honey, while also educating about the importance of honey bees and their impact on the global food supply through pollination.

SUSTAINABILITY

When looking for opportunities to demonstrate the value of honey, the NHB launched the ***Celebrating Beekeeping*** video series. This video series continues to be an incredible way for the NHB to share the positive story of honey and showcase the craft of beekeeping and honey production. This allows the NHB to educate consumers on what they can do to help support honey bees, while also supporting communities and beekeepers around the world. The Celebrating Beekeeping storytelling has evolved over the last few years and it's important to look back at the evolution of the different stories that have been captured so far.

- **2019:** Showcased the craft nature of honey production & bee health challenges
- **2020:** Highlighted how beekeeping helps support communities & the environment
- **2021 & 2022:** Featured the impact of pollination on the global food supply
- **2023:** Spotlight on beekeeping and honey production around the world (Vietnam)

Barry shared that Celebrating Beekeeping advertising campaign performance would be shared later in the day during the broader sustainability update.

GOODNESS SEEKERS

The NHB continues to develop programs geared toward educating and influencing their target audience - the Goodness Seeker. Goodness Seekers currently represent about 19% of the US adult population at around 49 million people. Goodness seekers are female skewing, with a significant portion of them falling into the millennial age group. They are college educated and are very food involved. These consumers often read labels, but are looking to balance health, flavor and sustainability.

HIVE OF PARTNERS

The NHB has established relationships with several agencies to help execute strategy-based programs in each of the NHB's key focus areas: consumer, retail, foodservice, and F&B manufacturing. Barry went on to explain what each of our marketing agency partners focus on and specialize in:

- **Sterling-Rice Group (SRG):** Strategy & Brand Management, Nutrition Professionals Outreach and Foodservice Marketing & Media Relations
- **Porter Novelli:** Consumer Media Relations, Influencer Management, Nutrition Research, Reputation Management and Industry Communication
- **Brightly Creative:** F&B Ingredient Marketing, Technical Research and Industry Summit
- **The Hartman Group:** Consumer Research & Insights and Strategic Consulting
- **FreshSmartSolutions:** Retail & Shopper Marketing Promotions

Sarah Neves asked about guidelines on how we can share some of this information besides just on social media, platforms.

Blake Shook asked if we are seeing any trends about what the consumers are watching and performing well. Barry noted that all of them seem to be popular and perform well, but in a shorter format.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Laurie Demeritt, The Hartman Group, presented key findings from the recent Honey Attitudes and Usage study along with highlights from Hartman Group's new report on Sustainability. Insights included:

- There are key dayparts and uses that honey might leverage to boost consumption, especially uses that would be daily/habitual. These uses include honey in the

morning for optimal health; honey in the evening for indulgence; honey at dinner as a social connector; honey as a proactive wellness tool; and honey as a medicinal application.

- In the context of rapid food inflation, value and price are perceived areas of weakness for honey compared to other sweeteners. Value is best conveyed by reinforcing honey's strengths on quality, naturalness, relevancy and experience, supporting the higher prices that shoppers continue to expect to pay.
- Convenience today is being redefined by consumers to mean not just easy, quick and accessible, but empowering, engaging and flexible. With regard to honey, the key elements of convenience to focus on are format, packaging, usage and disposal.
- There is a growing consumer demand for companies to not only set ambitious sustainability objectives but also to clearly articulate the strategies and actions they are taking to achieve them.
- Awareness of the decline in the insect/pollinator production is growing. Those who understand honey production and honey bees have a positive perception of how production impact the bees.
- To reinforce the preference for natural honey, against synthetics, use emotional storytelling to position honey as "bee positive". Be prepared to defend against potential attacks from synthetic boosters via claimed pesticide contamination (which is a hot button issue for consumers across the food and beverage landscape)

Andy Sargeantson asked about the marketing spend regarding promoting honey with pharma, cosmetics, and health for medicinal purposes. Barry stated it is something we are always keeping an eye on, but it can be a tough market to break into.

Jeff Caley asked about addressing the impact of pollination on consumer checkbooks, not just from an elimination of such products.

CONSUMER PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE

Jess Buchanan, Porter Novelli, walked through updated trends in consumer insights and media behavior followed by consumer PR program results thus far into the year. Current trends include a continued focus on holistic wellness, relatable influencers, creative use of short-form video and continued enthusiasm around in-person events.

Buchanan then discussed how the collective team used influencer and chef Carla Hall, social media content and events, including a NHB Test Kitchen Event, to drive consumer interest in honey this year. She went on to highlight the Honey Saves Hives program overall and the big media push around National Honey Month. The results through various channels were showcased, including two national TV segments on TODAY and Good Morning America, strategically secured by the Porter Novelli team to promote the educational platform.

Other consumer PR programs were discussed including an ongoing partnership with RD Samar Kullab on earned media, social media content and participation in a recent Nutrition News Update event. Buchanan then shared the success from additional outreach to RDs and partnerships with Retail RD networks to help disseminate nutrition research updates and results and keep honey top of mind among consumers.

CYBER SECURITY UPDATE

Serge Jorgensen, CTO with Sylint, LLC, a globally recognized leader in cyber security and digital data forensics, provides security services, including forensics, incident response, and managed security services for a wide range of government agencies and private organizations across numerous industries and specialties in the U.S. and E.U. The firm is accredited by the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) for incident response involving sensitive government systems and is one of only 12 companies authorized by the Payment Card Industry (PCI) for forensic investigations on behalf of Visa, MasterCard, American Express and associated acquiring banks. From ransomware and cyber extortion to email-based fraud and employee misconduct, Sylint's team understands the unique challenges facing our clients.

Sylint will present to the Board on the current state of cyber from a global perspective, the current threat landscape at the National Honey Board, and specific steps that the Board and Sylint have taken to address those threats. Sylint is working with the Boards to implement the NIST Cybersecurity Framework. Sylint will highlight the progress that the Board has made in maturing its cyber security posture with the implementation of endpoint detection and response software, scanning internal and external networks regularly, remediating weaknesses in web servers and database systems, correcting issues with user accounts and passwords, and creating several security policies to address gaps in maturity including an information security policies, an incident response plan, and a vulnerability and patch management policy. Sylint will also discuss the next steps the Board and Sylint will take to continue to improve the maturity of the security posture of the Board. These steps include application security testing, data controls and alerts, and monitoring the progress of NIST alignment, among others.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Jocelyn Martinez, Digital Communications Specialist for the NHB, went over the various social media platforms the NHB uses in its digital communications, touching on YOY growth. She covered the size of each platform's audience and where they each rank in driving traffic to honey.com and spoke to other channels/accounts the NHB has secured but does not have an active presence (TikTok, Lemon8 & Threads).

The NHB saw a shift in top performing content skewing towards more honey benefits content. Other trends in content based on channel, include:

- Instagram – reposting and tagging other accounts helps boost impressions
- IG Stories – use of interactive sticker boost engagement
- Twitter / X – tagging Chef Carla Hall expands NHB message reach
- LinkedIn – great channel for sharing news articles about industry

The new Hive Side Chats series on the Honey4Pros channels allows the team to dive deeper into various topics important to the audience.

The results from the in-house arm of the Honey Saves Hive campaign during National Honey Month were touched on. In addition, the partners involved in the program were reviewed, as well as the tools and tactics used to reach over 2.4.MM users with over 2.5 MM impressions generating more than 3.9 k engagements.

Martinez wrapped up with the topics currently trending in social media forecasts for 2024. Topics included video, user-generated content (UGC), artificial intelligence (AI), social SEO, social media for customer service, and social media shopping.

INDUSTRY COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Jess Buchanan, Porter Novelli, shared the latest updates for the 2023 Industry Communications program with the group. The objectives for the program were reviewed, which are to engage with industry members on a deeper level to provide more resources, be the source of credible information, and unify members. In addition, the ways in which these objectives came to life during the 2023 program were outlined.

Buchanan went on to recap the industry communications workshop and the current sweetener landscape, and how the approach to 2023 programming has shifted and been optimized. The group was then walked through how the NHB worked to empower the honey industry through four key areas: timely resources, expanding our reach, key opportunities to come together and driving best practices.

Other industry tactics that were showcased included new member onboarding toolkit, new communications assets, the industry newsletter, and the crisis readiness plan. Buchanan then teased the NielsonIQ Byzz research tool and Hive Sessions, which were detailed further in other sessions.

Additionally, Buchanan highlighted key industry sponsorships with the APHA and ABF and share how the NHB reached global audiences at Apimonia in Santiago, Chile.

Finally, the Honey Industry Summit was mentioned, as well as the industry roundtable key takeaways, which aim to foster collaboration and learnings for the industry.

MindyRyan Gerhing mentioned that board members can be advocates at their state meetings, so help share the information and the work that the NHB does to support the industry. The NHB is also happy to provide information and tools to share.

RETAIL PROGRAM UPDATE

Don Ladhoff, FreshSmartSolutions, provided a snapshot of some of latest developments in the retail channel. Inflation is moderating but value is still the #1 priority for shoppers, which is behind the growth of segments including warehouse clubs and value grocery. In addition, mergers and acquisitions will be reshaping the retail channel throughout 2024 and beyond.

The NHB Retail Programs in 2023 evolved from promoting honey purchases by primarily utilizing retailer-specific advertising vehicles (as we've done during the past several years) to a three-pronged approach implementing advertising, retail promotions and a focused program to validate the impact of Honey Saves Hives messaging in driving incremental honey purchases. The great majority of this activity was centered around the month of September in celebration of National Honey Month.

The NHB continued to communicate reasons to purchase honey through advertising running in magazines published by retailers including Stop & Shop, Giant Food, The Giant Company, Hannaford, Weis Markets, Schnucks, Price Chopper, Brookshire Grocery and Rouses Market. These eye-catching, full-color print ads attracted shoppers' attention while increasing purchase intent for honey.

As the Honey Saves Hives initiative entered its fourth year, the NHB fielded a program that partnered with a select number of retailers to implement Honey Saves Hives messaging in-store and out-of-store during September 2023 and measure the resulting impact on driving incremental sales of honey. The NHB worked closely with Jewel-Osco, United Supermarkets, Dierbergs, Rouses Markets, Price Chopper/Market 32, Schnucks and Lowes Foods to place the HSH message on signs and in-store advertising elements in addition to showcasing the HSH story through digital ads, email blasts and in retailers' social media channels. Nielsen sales data for the month of September showed that all seven of the participating retailers achieved double-digit growth in dollar sales versus the year-ago period, led by Jewel-Osco with a 29.5% dollar sales increase. In addition, the NHB also supported Brookshire Grocery, Tops Markets, Weis Markets, Food Lion and Southeastern Grocers (Winn-Dixie) to promote honey during National Honey Month with feature ads and displays.

Lastly, the NHB invested in an exciting new resource for the retail channel with a one-year subscription to Byzzzer. Byzzzer is a self-service dashboard enabling broad access to Nielsen sales data and reporting on over 70 food retailers operating 35,479 U.S. store locations spanning the Grocery, Mass, Club, Dollar, Drug, eCommerce, Military and Convenience segments. This new information source will be utilized to provide industry members with ongoing sales trends in the honey category as well as peanut butter, nut butter, jellies & jams, sugar and alternative sweeteners. We will also be leveraging this powerful information to facilitate category business reviews with key retail operators during the 2024 fiscal year, sharing trends and shopper insights along with making recommendations for opportunities to increase their honey sales.

Blake Shook asked Why is branded honey not growing like private, like other food items. Ladhoff said he thought that it was due to honey being a much smaller purchased item.

It was asked if there is there a way to measure retail program promotions, to know which performs best i.e., instore audio, flyers, email blasts etc. Ladhoff said there really isn't a quantitative way to measure that.

SUSTAINABILITY & CELEBRATING BEEKEEPING INITIATIVE

Laurel Muir, Sterling-Rice Group, shared the latest updates for the Sustainability Program with meeting attendees. It was reiterated that there is an opportunity to continue to build out the proactive and reactive messaging and tactical approach for the honey industry to ensure continued success.

Muir walked the group through what was discovered through the review of existing sustainability research, as well as the results of a threat mapping exercise. Muir then reviewed what came to the forefront as the 3 areas of focus for the sustainability research initiative: Economic, Bee Health & Pollination. Next steps include continuing discussions with potential research partners and universities, as well as narrowing down which type of study would be most beneficial/worthwhile investment for the industry.

Finally, Muir discussed the success of the ongoing Celebrating Beekeeping campaign, which is currently running on YouTube and Meta and is targeted at consumers (Goodness Seekers). The Celebrating Beekeeping stories help to share the honey bee lifecycle and provide transparency into the honey collection process across the globe. The latest video in the Celebrating Beekeeping series showcases beekeepers in the country of Vietnam.

Darren Cox suggested that we differentiate between native and honey bees when talking about sustainability, as there is no evidence yet that honey bees aren't native to the US. Use of the term of managed bees and non-managed bees seems more appropriate.

Looking for new spotlights for under leveraged areas. MindyRyan Gehring suggested how honey makes you feel when you enjoy it, from a personal perspective filled with passion.

The meeting was recessed at 3:56.

FRIDAY, October 27TH, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 9:00

OPEN SESSION DISCUSSION

NHB STORE GIVEAWAYS

After discussion by the board as to whether the quantities of free materials should be increased. It was decided to increase order numbers for any requests from schools. And continue with outreach to beekeeping associations to share what resources are available for the industry.

REAPPORTION

The board decided to keep division of the board members as is with three First Handlers, three Importers, three Producers and one Marketing Cooperative member.

ACTION ITEM V: REAPPORTIONMENT OF NATIONAL HONEY BOARD

Motion by Joan Gunter, seconded by Bjorn Anderson to leave board membership as follows with three First Handlers, three Importers, three Producers and one Marketing Cooperative member and carried to approve.

NUTRITIONAL PROFESSIONALS OUTREACH

Taylor Laitsch, Sterling-Rice Group, reviewed the latest updates for the 2023 HCP program, focused on reaching dietitians and nutritionists. Laitsch reminded attendees that the main objectives of the program are to 1) position honey as the preferred choice when it comes to sweeteners 2) keep honey top-of-mind when making recommendations to clients.

Laitsch reviewed how the NHB has implemented a new content strategy, the “3 R”s for this audience: leverage new research, resources and recipes. She also shared placements that were brand new for 2023, including placements during the month of May,

(Mediterranean Diet month), where Med Diet research was leveraged through several media executions and was the topic for a sponsored webinar. The Med Diet creative resulted in the best results for the HCP program ever - a fantastic investment of research funds.

Sarah Neves asked if we could make a link on honey.com for the med diet links for the webinars etc. such as the dietitian webinars.

Greg Olsen asked about the German popularity of the younger generation fasting, intermittent fasting and its impact on the breakfast menu usage of honey.

IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS UPDATE

Jessica Schindler, Marketing Manager for the NHB, gave the board an update on the in-house events that were executed in 2023.

The Today's Dietician Spring Symposium is a long-awaited event that has been years in the making. Not only did the NHB exhibit during the expo portion of the event, but the NHB also sponsored a bee garden tour excursion for a hand-selected group of attendees. The 2-hour tour offered an intimate educational perspective into a beehive, followed by a honey varietal tasting and ending with a mead flight tasting.

The NHB went on to exhibit at the largest event organized in-house in the fall, the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics Food Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE). FNCE is a 3-day event that saw over 7K attendees this year, which is beginning to resemble the attendance of the pre-covid times. The health and nutrition professionals who attend are looking for research and information to help them educate their clients about make informed decisions about their diet and health choices. This is an excellent opportunity to get honey in front of attendees with the most recent honey nutrition research and benefits of using honey. Schindler went on to explain that it is a terrific opportunity to show attendees what sets honey apart from other sweeteners and take them on a journey through the many unique honey varietals that bees make.

In the sixth year of the EPCOT® International Flower and Garden Festival collaboration, the NHB sponsored the Honey Bee-stro marketplace, which provided an opportunity to educate guests about honey, honey bees and pollination. This Festival is a 4-month event that sees millions of guests throughout its duration in the EPCOT® park. The Honey Bee-stro has been a guest favorite over the years and had the longest lines for opening day of the Festival. This year the marketplace offered new food selections, new education boards throughout the marketplace and a bigger presence of honey bee antennas being handed out to park goers at strategic times throughout the Festival, corresponding with Earth Day and World Bee Day.

The Tastemaker's Conference took place in early-March in Chicago for a group of food bloggers and content creators. The NHB sponsored the event's breakfast spread on both days of the conference, making honey the preferred ingredient throughout the menu, including items like a Honey Hot Cake Bar and Sweet and Spicy Chicken and Waffles. Along with being the exclusive breakfast sponsor, staff worked an expo booth for two days to speak directly to attendees about honey, honey bees, pollination and the overall impact honey bees have on the global food system.

Schindler discussed how the NHB has been working on new collateral pieces, including three new decals, a new educational brochure and two new postcards debuted at Apimondia and FNCE. Along with the new collateral pieces and decals, new promos items have also been created this year to generate buzz about honey and how important honey bees are to our planet.

Dan Winter asked if the Today's Dietician Bee Garden tour could be done more frequently?

Greg Olsen suggested we consider creating bumper stickers, with a promotion if they sent a pic, we send a reward gift.

ACTION ITEM VI: TO APPROVE THE 2024 FINANCIALS

Motion by Tom Sargeantson, seconded by Dan Winter to accept the 2024 financial and passed to approve.

ACTION ITEM VII: TO ACCEPT CHANGES TO THE POLICIES

Motion by Joan Gunter, seconded by Chris Olney to accept the changes to the policies and passed to approve.

INGREDIENT MARKETING UPDATE

Keith Seiz, Brightly Creative, provided a State of the Industry Report. It's been an interesting four years for the CPG food and beverage industry. Covid halted new product development in 2020 and 2021. Supply chain disruptions curtailed innovation in 2022. And, in 2023, inflation has caused food and beverage manufacturers to put a premium on profit margins and "value" products. Fortunately, honey is holding its own as a premium sweetener in an environment where low costs are a priority.

Honey's continued use in the CPG food and beverage industry is due to the ingredient's consumer sentiment, trending status, story and a robust 2023 Ingredient Marketing

campaign. The focus of this year was primarily on the baking and snack categories, and non-alcoholic beverages. These areas account for the most volume of honey used, which was important to focus on when an economic environment is impacting new product development.

To reach this audience the NHB relies on a variety of tactics, with direct outreach serving as the foundation. The direct mail program yielded impressive results, leading to the scheduling of Honey Up Close in-person meetings with multiple companies, including Pepsico and E.J. Gallo, which is a leader in the spirits and RTD cocktail categories. Eight virtual Honey R&D Summits were also conducted, which attract R&D professionals from the largest food and beverage companies in the world.

In 2023, the NHB also boosted its social media activities to include more videos and Reels to increase audience reach. These strategies were effective resulting in a 172% growth in followers and 35k views of our Event videos. The Hive Side Chats were launched in March, which is a weekly series of educational videos that has garnered 350k views. To target the spirits and beer categories, the NHB conducted its annual competitions and a combined Honey Alcohol Summit. The beer and spirits events were merged into one to increase collaboration and cut costs of hosting two separate in-person events.

A new program focused on University food science students was also launched this program year. The initial programs included sponsorship of various student activities at IFT First, and partnerships with five Universities for the Fall Semester.

FOODSERVICE MARKETING UPDATE

Amy Shipley, Sterling-Rice Group, reviewed the progress of the 2023 NHB foodservice programs. The presentation started with a recap of the latest industry report, and what that means for the honey industry. The foodservice industry is projected to hit \$1 trillion dollars this year for the first time ever, and the NHB is focusing on restaurant segments where we see the most volume growth potential (casual, and fast-casual restaurants).

Shipley then shared examples of recent NHB advertisements in industry publications. Board members received a copy of the latest Flavor & The Menu magazine where the NHB has a prominent placement and a copy of the latest Honey On The Menu brochure piece. The brochure also lives digitally on honey.com, and is the resource for two paid social campaigns currently running: Innovation and Chef's Roll.

Shipley finished her presentation with what is next to come and initial ideas for 2024. Before the end of the calendar year, the honey.com/foodservice website will be refreshed, and the NHB team will be meeting with a popular Mediterranean fast-casual concept, CAVA, for an educational honey session in November.

David Coy asked how we support the restaurants that support us, for their trade organization meetings. Along with lists of which restaurants use and promote honey in menus, breweries, bakeries etc. Create a list for everyone of all these resources.

Dan Winter wanted to share with the marketing team that for all the events that the NHB and its hive does, it would be nice to partner with supplying the honey and sponsoring.

ACTION ITEM VIII: TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion by Dan Winter, seconded by Joan Gunter to adjourn the meeting at 11:52 and passed to accept.