



Huller

VOLUME 23
NUMBER 1
JANUARY /
FEBRUARY 2003

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- **MARCH 20, 2003**
10:00 AM
Board & Committee Chair Meeting
North State Hulling
Chico, California
- **MAY 6-9, 2003**
Annual Meeting and Trade Show
Hyatt Regency Monterey
Monterey, California

GENE BEACH
President

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2350 Lecco Way
Merced, California 95340

WHAT'S INSIDE...

- Chairman's Report
- President's Report
- Safety and Insurance: Does Crime Pay
- A Personal Note...
- What has Ag Been Doing to Clean Up the Air
- Almond Hull Market Review
- Safety Series: Evaluating Ergonomics in Your Workplace"

WEBSITE...
www.ahpa.net

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

By Jeff Ferguson

Bloom is well on its way to what seems to be a successful one! (Another billion pounds?) We'll see!

Early in February, Gene and I went to California State University, Fresno to visit with Dr. Jon Robison, head of the Dairy Department, regarding our hull study. We had a real good visit, and I think the study is going to show some good results on almond hulls. We invited Dr. Robison to the Conference in May, 2003 for a question and answer session.

My employment with Lake Shelling has come to an end. I will bring this to the attention of the Board on March 20 when we meet in Chico. I would like to stay in the industry, as I've enjoyed the past 14 years. We'll see what happens.

Keep up the good work making prime hulls prime. Remember, hulls are a feed commodity. ❁

"Bloom is well on its way to what seems to be a successful one!"

AHPA ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 6-9, 2003

HYATT REGENCY • MONTEREY

On the old Del Monte Golf Course

Mark your calendars now and make plans to attend the 2003 Annual Meeting and Trade Show. Highlights of this year's convention include:

- Accommodations at the Hyatt Regency Monterey
- Opening Reception and Trade Show
- Casino Night
- Strolling Dinner at the Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Golf and Tennis Tournament at the Old Del Monte Golf Course (managed by the Pepple Beach Company)

Registration packages will be mailed in early March.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Gene Beach

Bloom is upon us, albeit about ten days earlier than last year, and the once feared billion pound crop from 2002 is moving in an orderly fashion into the worldwide marketplace. Shipments continue at yet another record-breaking pace. Almond hulls, although we can only estimate tonnage, surely set a record for tonnage also. Best guess would be that 1 million tons were produced; demand appears to be steady.

At the January Organizational Meeting, new Board members Jerry Armour, Sherman Garner and Fermin Campos Jr. were introduced.

"Shipments continue at yet another record-breaking pace."

At the Board Meeting, highlights of the meeting that Jeff Ferguson and I had with the Department of Health Services were presented. In general, the huller inspections by the Department found most huller / shellers in reasonably good compliance with the health code. However, there were some recurring deficiencies commonly noted on their notices of observation. Those mentioned were operating with open doors and lights without coverings. We discussed ways to mitigate these deficiencies with staff. Basically, staff agreed that using bug electrocuters and rodent bait stations outside the door opening and traps inside the door would mitigate the "open door" issue. In regard to covers for lights, they agreed that FDA approved shatter-proof light bulbs are acceptable without having covers. Operators should keep a copy of the purchase receipt for the approved lights.

DHS also mentioned that they inspected one or two huller / sheller buildings that were not totally enclosed. This is one matter that DHS will not compromise on. It is imperative that shelling buildings (not precleaners) be fully enclosed to deny access to insects, birds and

continued on page 4

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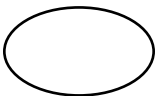
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SAFETY AND INSURANCE DOES CRIME PAY?

By Greg Gordon, HRH Insurance

Clearly crime must pay handsomely for some, evidenced by the fact the business of stealing is booming! Insurance reports to Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO), show an increase in the rate of theft of up to 20 percent every year since 1996 and show theft as the most common cause of loss for heavy equipment...over 50 percent of all causes of loss combined.

Statistics indicate as little as 10 to 15 percent of stolen equipment is ever recovered. Compared to the automobile recovery rate of 62%, the chance of ever seeing that stolen piece of equipment again is very slim. Part of the problem is the time lapse when equipment is stolen and when it is noticed. Usually a car theft is reported within hours, but it could be days before missing mobile equipment is noticed.

Then there is the problem with identifying stolen equipment. Automobiles have a standard 17 digit vehicle identification number that can be run through law enforcement or DMV computers to identify stolen vehicles. Mobile equipment has no standardized numbering system, and without the requirements of registration or title the owner may not have a record of the Product Identification Number (PIN). Without a serial number or some other PIN, there is no way to track the equipment if it turns up elsewhere.

WHO PAYS FOR THEFT?

You do. Whether you are insured or not, the cost eventually gets passed on to those who have the exposure. Even when it is insured, you lose your time and effort dealing with the theft, and generally a pretty good sized deductible. So, it is in everybody's interest to protect your stock and equipment from theft.

WHAT CAN I DO?

There are some simple, inexpensive precautions you can take to minimize your exposure to theft. Even if your systems are not foolproof, if you have made stealing from you more difficult than stealing from the next person, the thieves will move on. They generally will have a number of targets, so part of your goal is to make your site less inviting.

Fencing is the first line of protection. You should be using see-through material, such as chainlink, so any activity in the yard after-hours would be visible from outside. Keep the fence clear of debris and vegetation that might inhibit visibility. Ideally, the fence should be at least 8 feet high with posts set in concrete. Limit access to keys for all fenced areas, and conduct frequent inspections making repairs to damaged areas promptly.

Gates should be of heavy construction, with hinge pins spot-welded to prevent easy

removal. The locking hardware should be casehardened chain with a high-security padlock, or better yet, employ shielded or blind locking devices.

Lighting is a low cost deterrent that is very effective in protecting your site. Lights should be of a suitable quantity with well protected power sources. Make sure to test your lighting system during daylight hours to be sure it is in good working order.

Secure equipment that is not under current use by immobilizing it. Remove the battery or rotor, and lower blades and buckets. Electric starting systems can be removed on equipment not in use.

Secure trailers through the use of fifth wheel locks. This will prevent theft of the trailer, but more important, it will protect any stock that has been loaded in the trailer ready for shipping.

Finally, do take the time to record PINs on your inventory records, and use an etching tool or steel punch to record that information in a hidden place on the frame of the equipment. Use decals and signs on your premises to tell potential thieves this has been done. You may not be able to stop crime from paying, but you can reduce your share of the bill. ✪



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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rodents (possible pathogen carriers). All in all, Jeff and I feel that we were able to agree on reasonable mitigation measures on all of the outstanding issues. They've agreed to have a representative from their Department at our Annual Meeting in May to discuss the summary of common violations from their observation reports.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING COMMITTEE REPORTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Industry Affairs Committee: High points of the budget crisis in Sacramento were covered. One affect the crisis will have on our industry will be elimination of general fund monies for overhead in the state Workmans' Comp program. This means yet another increase for a Workmans' Comp costs. Areas where proposed cuts will affect agriculture will be UC research cutbacks, bio-mass subsidies will be eliminated, UC extension cutbacks, increases in the vehicle license fees, 1% increase in the highest personal income tax brackets, in the elimination of state subvention payments to counties for Williamson Act contracts. At this point, the state sales tax exemptions for agricultural equipment and diesel fuel are left intact.

Insurance and Safety Committee: Jay Swanson reported that our liability carrier, Golden Eagle is strong and our business is profitable for them. Our program is competitive and we receive many perks in the way of additional coverages. Conversely, we are all painfully aware of the Workmans' Comp crisis in California. Currently, State Fund writes about 85% of the Comp business in California. You are all aware of the approximate 50% increase the Workmans' Comp premiums this year following last years bump in costs.

Meetings and Seminars Committee: Guy Newman reported that our Annual Meeting will be May 6 - 9 at the Monterey Hyatt Regency - Old Del Monte this year, at Shell Beach in 2004, and hopefully Seascape in 2005. Diane Bullis and Dick Cunningham are the co-chairs for the 2003 Convention.

Membership and Public Relations

Committee: Clarence Abid reported that membership is at an all-time high of 206 and he has indentified four potential new Regular Members and eight possible Associate Members.

Processor Committee: Sherman Garner reported that the Processor Committee would like to continue with the Blanchability study for newer varieties. In regard to crop survey, they felt that we should continue in the future, but we should develop a timetable for issuing the first projection. The committee agreed to continue the bin survey and to conduct it sometime in May. The committee felt it would be beneficial to the industry to have a newsletter article on Eco-Fume. The committee also commented on the incoming USDA inspections. The comments were that the inspections in the central area were extremely variable.

Huller / Seller

Committee: Ron Leach reported that the committee was not in favor of implementing a plant certification program for hullers. The following recommendations were made: that we pay visit to the Fresno State

Dairy to check on the status of the almond hull feeding study; that we continue the hull advertising program with quarterly ads in Western Dairyman; and that no more assessments be collected until we expend the balance of the previously collected funds.

EDITORS NOTE

As Jeff mentions in his article, we met with Dr. Jon Robison at the Fresno State dairy in January. The second phase of the feeding study is underway and going well. The final report is due to be issued by April 15. Dr. Robison has agreed to attend the Annual Meeting in Monterey in May to elaborate on the results of the study.

Mark your calendars now and make plans to attend our Annual Meeting and Trade Show in Monterey. It promises to be bigger and better than ever. *



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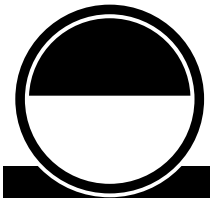
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WHAT HAS AG BEEN DOING TO CLEAN UP THE AIR?

Reprinted from the Cotton Chronicle

According to Mark Boese, deputy air pollution control officer of San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District, more than 2,300 agricultural irrigation pump engines have been replaced with new cleaner-burning engines in the past three years. This has generated more than 2,000 tons per year of NOX emission reductions on a voluntary basis. It is also important to note that the agricultural community has reduced PM10 emissions from unpaved roads by oiling more than 500 miles of unpaved roads, taking advantage of the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This has generated over 457 tons per year of PM10 emissions reductions. Furthermore, utilizing the same program, many farms have turned to chipping prunings instead of burning, and generated an additional 275 tons of PM10 reductions over the last three years. What about pesticides? Since 1990, California agriculture was required to reduce volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from pesticides by 20 percent. We achieved that goal by 1998 and are still going. All the while, agricultural crops are removing harmful ozone (smog) out of the air each and every day. ✿

ALMOND HULL MARKET REVIEW

This information was provided by the Almond Hullers and Processors Association as a service to AHPA members. Information was supplied by USDA's Market News Branch - Tuesday, February 18, 2003

Source: USDA Market News, Portland, Oregon
Corky Legg • (503) 326-2237
www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JO_GR225.txt

Whole Almond Hulls

FOB Butte County	Not Available
FOB Madera County	Not Available
FOB Stanislaus County	Not Available
Delivered Stanislaus County	Not Available
FOB Merced County	Not Available
FOB Kern County	Not Available
Delivered Kings / Tulare Counties	86.00-88.00 steady
Delivered Los Angeles / Chino Valley	95.00-98.00 steady

Note: All prices are prompt shipment, dollars per ton, bulk, unless otherwise stated.



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A PERSONAL NOTE...

By Joe Areias

Dear Friends

On Monday, September 30, 2002, I underwent surgery to remove a tumor in the upper portion of my throat. On the following Friday, October 4, 2002, the results from pathology revealed that it was cancer,

Since then, my life has changed dramatically. I have been going through both chemotherapy and radiation treatments that will continue over the next few months. The side affects of these treatments are extremely challenging both physically and mentally, but I remain optimistic for a full recovery.

Thus far, much of my time has been spent in the hospital, receiving treatments, and convalescing at home, although I have been able to work at times between treatments.

This hasn't left much time for me to communicate to all of you on a personal basis, and so I take this opportunity to thank everyone for the phone calls, cards, letters, and prayers extended to me during this difficult time.

Thanks again for your concern and support.

Joe Areias, General Manager
West Valley Hulling Company

*Joe,
We are all keeping
you in our thoughts
and look forward to
seeing you soon!*

ALMOND HULLERS & PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION

Application / Agreement for Regular Membership

Applicant's Statement. I hereby apply for / request affirmation of regular membership in the Almond Hullers & Processors Association ("Association"), a California nonprofit mutual benefit corporation. I understand that a regular member is defined as any individual, corporation or other entity which is engaged in the hulling, shelling, processing, and/or handling of almonds, I understand that a regular member is a voting member of Association who is eligible to sit on the Board of Directors ("Board").

I certify that I am qualified for regular membership in Association and that I have paid the sum of \$_____ representing membership fees for the current year. I understand that the board may change the annual membership fee from time to time, and may assess additional amounts as necessary for the operation of Association. As a condition of membership, I specifically agree to abide by and be bound by the articles of incorporation, bylaws, resolutions, and procedures of Association, now and hereafter in effect.

Application / Agreement for Associate Membership

Applicant's Statement. I hereby apply for / request affirmation of associate membership in the Almond Hullers & Processors Association ("Association"), a California nonprofit mutual benefit corporation. I understand that an associate member is defined as an individual or firm that provides products or services directly related to the almond industry and who does not qualify as a regular member of Association. I understand that an associate member is a non-voting member of Association who is not eligible to sit on the Board of Directors ("Board").

I certify that I am qualified for associate membership in Association and that I have paid the sum of \$_____ representing membership fees for the current year. I understand that the Board may change the annual membership fee amount from time to time without my approval, and may assess additional amounts as necessary for the operation of Association. As a condition of membership, I specifically agree to abide by and be bound by the articles of incorporation, bylaws, resolutions, and procedures of Association, now and hereafter in effect. I understand that certain privileges afforded to regular members will not be available to me (or will not be available at the member rate).

Business Name _____

Applicant's Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone (_____) _____ Facsimile (_____) _____

E-Mail Address _____ Website _____

Type of business, activities and involvement in the almond industry _____



Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

I understand that my membership may be terminated pursuant to the provisions of Association's bylaws. If the membership is not terminated, the membership shall continue and be deemed to be renewed each year upon payment of the annual membership fees.

Mail to: Almond Hullers & Processors Association • 2350 Lecco Way • Merced, California 95340

EVALUATING ERGONOMICS IN YOUR WORKPLACE

Ergo What?

Ergonomics is the science of making a machine or a workplace and its tools, fit people rather than the other way around. Items are shaped, positioned, or made to work with the body's natural motion instead of forcing people to bend with them. These are some very important issues to address, so this month's safety article is a short course in ergonomics. We will be looking at repetitive motion injuries, stresses, strains and fatigue. A new injury developing in our industry is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS). It shows up in sorting tables, boxing lines, data entry, and with office personnel who routinely use the computer keyboard during the major part of their day. CTS can also show up in manufacturing facilities.

To get a feel for the seriousness of carpal tunnel syndrome, J.J. Keller and Associates, a safety product and education company, states that "in 1995, over 60% of private industry illnesses were repeated trauma disorders including CTS". Think in your own operation where repetitive motion exists or where anyone's posture is at a stationary fixed position for protracted period of time. By reducing the potential for problems, we can check workers compensation losses.

What is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome?

The hand is complex. A main nerve, called the median nerve, extends down the arm to the hand and provides the sense of touch in the thumb, index finger, middle finger, and half of the fourth (ring) finger. In the wrist area, the median nerve is surrounded by several muscles, tendons, a ligament, and bones. The "carpal tunnel" is the narrow channel of the wrist through which the median nerve and tendons pass on their way to the hand.

When swelling occurs around the tendons because of wrist irritation, the median nerve is squeezed. The pressure causes tingling, numbness, severe pain, even partial paralysis in the wrist and hand. CTS is the compression and entrapment of the median nerve where it passes through the wrist into the hand in the carpal tunnel. When a case becomes full-blown, there is constant fatigue, pain, and disturbed sleep. At this point, work performance is inhibited to the extent of requiring off-duty time or light restricted duty.

CTS is but one injury that can be attributed to ergonomics in huller/sheller, processor, and manufacturing operations. Our industry has come a long way toward mediating these potential problems. The following is a list of potential areas that might contribute to the problem. Survey your operation.

- Very high levels of forceful and / or repetitive movements.
- Jobs where a person must stand or sit for very long periods of time without a break.
- High levels of bending or twisting in order to reach the work.
- Constant rubbing against the edges of the work or machinery.
- Extreme temperatures or high vibration levels.
- Poorly designed tools and work station, with a lack of adjustable chairs, footrests or other forms of body support.
- Continuous heavy lifting.

The following five ergonomic principals can be used as a baseline for fitting the job to the worker in an effort to reduce the potential for injuries.

KEEP WORK WITHIN EASY REACH

Work stations should be arranged so workers do not have to continually stretch for frequently used parts. Generally this is about 15 inches. Accommodations like tilting tables, a lazy Susan, or adjustable stands could be used to mediate potential problems.

WORK AT PROPER HEIGHTS AND USE GOOD POSTURE

Generally, the best working height is at or near the elbow. Slings the work from one location to another instead of lifting should be considered. Maintain wrists in a neutral position as much as possible. Keep arms low and elbows in the majority of the tasks performed. Maintain the natural curve of the back and let the spine, rather than the back muscles, support the head. Minimize bending and twisting to reduce stress on the discs of the back.

MINIMIZE FATIGUE

Let the tool do the work. An example would be to use a powered screwdriver or air ratchet instead of a manual one. Adjusting a chair position, raising or lowering the keyboard, or redirecting ambient light may reduce fatigue. Often the use of simple protective devices (wrist splints, gloves, keyboard and mouse pads) can help. Anti-fatigue floor mats which differ from simple, improved-traction mats through the use of special cushioning might be used in your operation.

Employees can take responsibility for their health by exercising hand and arm muscles with rubber balls or grips for strength. A few sit ups each day will strengthen back and stomach muscles and reduce fatigue.

MAINTAIN A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

While our huller / sheller buildings and manufacturing facilities may not be well suited for temperature control, there are things that can be done to make the workplace

more comfortable. One area you have heard from us before is a good housekeeping program. This means tool placement for quick easy reach. Eliminating barriers where possible, such as those created by storage, floor obstructions, air hoses and extensions cords.

Provide appropriate lighting by eliminating glare and removing shadows that hide details. Skylights can provide good diffused light.

ENHANCE CLARITY AND UNDERSTANDING

In a manufacturing or repair operation, more eye strain and lower response time result when displays are difficult to read or interpret. Like worn tape measures, obliterated scales on lathes, milling machines and dial indicators, drill holders with worn or missing size information. All these seemingly significant details can add up to stress and strain.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

Communicate your intent to employees clearly using lists and check-off sheets as a reinforcement to verbal communication.

- Encourage worker involvement in developing methods of accomplishing tasks or solutions to "problem" tasks.
- Communicate continuously and effectively by encouraging feedback.
- Use teamwork to get jobs done.
- Think of the next person down the line - be considerate.

CONCLUSION

While implementation of these principals or ideas may not be practical in every situation, many of them can be adapted to fit the workers' needs. The challenge to management is to review existing workstations and methods and implement as many of the preceding ideas as practical. The pay back should be increased worker comfort and morale, resulting in fewer injuries and illnesses relating to ergonomics. This in turn will hopefully result in improved productivity and profitability for each of us.



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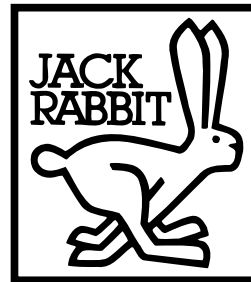
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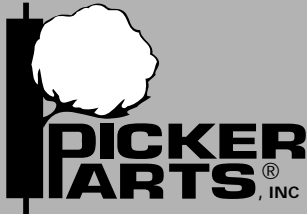


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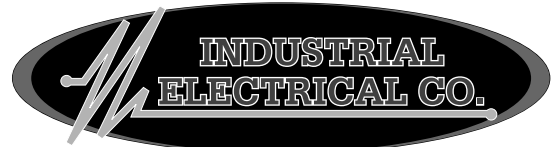


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