October 2025 Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting Minutes

Element	
Institution	Auburn University
Meeting Date	Wednesday, October 01 , 2025
Meeting Time	1:00 PM – 1:12 PM
Meeting Type	Hybrid (In Person and Zoom)
IBC Members Present	Present: Kevin Huggins, IBC Member, IBC Chair Catherine Situma, IBC Secretary Deepika Suresh, BSO Kassie Conner, IBC Member, Plant Expert Ruediger Hauck, IBC Member, Faculty Rep Andrea Loewen, IBC Member, Institutional Policy Pat Rynders, IBC Member, Veterinarian/Animal Expert David Acker, IBC Alternate Member, Alternate for Situma Niki Johnson, IBC Non-voting Member (*Ex officio*) Not Present: E.N. Burson, IBC Member, Local Non-Affiliated Julio Garcia, IBC Member, Local Non-Affiliated Zachary Noel, IBC Member, Plant Expert Miranda Reed, IBC Member, Faculty Rep
Quorum	The IBC has 11 voting members, and 6 members are required to conduct business.
Other Individuals in Attendance	Valerie Riggins - IBC Administration Adrienne Booker - IBC Administration Chen Ding – Faculty, Forestry, Wildlife & Environment
Call to Order	The IBC Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.
Conflicts of Interest, if Applicable	There were no conflicts of interest.
Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	No previous meeting minutes were reviewed/approved.

NEW IBC REGISTRATIONS	
	No New Registrations

DEFERRED IBC REGISTRATIONS	
PI Name(s)	**Hao Chen**
BUA Number	Deferred Registration - #1125 (from September 2025 meeting)

Project Overview	This project aims to conduct field trials that will evaluate growth, resilience, and phenotype of CRISPR-edited low-lignin elite *Populus* varieties and compare greenhouse vs field phenotypes. Trials will involve planting gene-edited trees outdoors and thereby collecting agronomic and wood quality data over multiple seasons.
NIH Guidelines Section	Section III-E-2-a
Risk Assessment and Discussion	• The edited poplar varieties were developed by another institution using Multiplex CRISPR editing and sent to AU as plant tissue, which was then amplified in the lab, then grown in the greenhouse, and finally will be planted in the environment (release). • This project has an APHIS BRS permit to conduct a field release of these trees at an AU research and extension center. • The transgenic plants have been edited to contain a precise woody feedstock design by optimizing lignin composition and wood properties. • To mitigate the risk of flowering, trees will be monitored weekly, particularly during the typical natural flowering season, to ensure early detection. Any flower buds identified will be promptly removed before petal opening to prevent maturation. • Any shedding of pollen or production of seed will require immediate removal and containment of flowers/seeds and will be reported immediately as an unauthorized release to APHIS BRS. • Testing procedures in the field will include non-destructive measurements such as tree height, stem basal diameter, and leaf gas exchange parameters. • Additionally, visual observations for morphology, flowering, and overall plant health will be conducted. • Destructive sampling of tissues (e.g., stem, xylem, and twig) will be collected from the field and transported to lab for additional tests such as RNA extractions, wood density measurements, lignin and sugar content analysis, and evaluations of modulus of elasticity (MOE). • Following the completion of the experiment, the field will undergo weed treatment and preparation for future agricultural or landscaping use. To ensure minimal competition from weeds, PI/staff will apply herbicides annually and perform weed control on a monthly basis. • After the experiments, all materials will be destroyed using one of the methods listed in the BRS permit, and all other plants, supplies, samples, etc. will be autoclaved and disposed of. • Monitoring and periodic review will ensure continued compliance and safety
Training	All lab personnel have completed the required Laboratory Safety, Biological Safety, Managing Regulated Waste and NIH Guidelines training. The PI will conduct any protocol specific biosafety training and containment training.
Occupational Health Representative Review if Applicable	N/A
Biosafety Level Assignment	BL1-P
IBC Vote	A motion was made to approve the registration.

	• Votes for: 7 • Votes against: 0 • Abstain: 0

ADDITIONAL IBC TOPICS	
Review of Prior Business	None
New Business/Additional Topics	None
Review of Incidents if Applicable	Nothing To Report
Inspections/Ongoing Oversight	Not Discussed During This Meeting. This Will Be Discussed Quarterly.
IBC Training if Applicable	N/A
Public Comments if Applicable	There were no public comments.
Adjournment	The IBC Chair moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:12 PM. • Votes for: 7 • Votes against: 0 • Abstain: 0