

Agricultural Issues Committee Meeting
8/8/22, 7:30 PM at the Hamden Office

In Attendance:

Fred Kuhn, Chair, Carolyn Scobie, Recording Secretary, Paul Cerosaletti, Rich Toebe, Dale Dewing, James Romack, Kirk Fletcher, Ben Hepler, Joyce Gray, Vanessa Merrill-Wickham
Attending via Zoom: April Wright-Lucas, Carla Crim, Brad Taggart, Jessica Richard
Interim Director Jack Salo was unable to attend
The meeting was called to order at 7:42 PM, recorded

Paul gave a general introduction of Jack Salo to members present. Mr. Salo is working part-time (20 FTE), making sure that “the bills get paid” and other essential organizational tasks of the Director. He has leadership experience and will guide the beginning of the Executive Director search.

Dale noted that Cornell has well defined parameters for the ED search.

Carolyn stated that the initial meeting of the search committee will be Wednesday 8/10/22

Carla had begun the planning for a recognition event for Jeanne Darling for her years of service, to be held Sunday, September 18th, at Birdsong Farm. Unfortunately, Jeanne will be unable to attend, and Carla is re-directing the focus of the “yearly celebration” to honor volunteers. The Annual Business Meeting will be held separately in November.

Minutes from April 5th, 2022, were reviewed, with no additions or corrections. Motion to approve-Joyce, seconded by Carla, all in favor.

Paul recognized **Dr. Chris Camann’s** many years of service as an advisor to the Ag Committee. Dr. Camann has retired and has stepped down from the advisory role. Paul suggested that she be recognized at the September celebration. Dr Camann has been recognized by the NYS Ag Commissioner and received the 2020 Friend of Extension Award at the Holley Farm.

Joyce asked for more info regarding the September recognition. Carla stated that, since Jeanne will not be available, the focus will be on 4-H volunteers, Master Gardeners, and benefactors. Dale – add committee members.

Fred asked if we need a replacement for Chris. Dale noted that Janet Becken Smith is also an advisor. Brad questioned if we needed another Vet. Paul noted that the focus should be a passion for education. Vanessa suggested Maddie Chapin at Delhi Animal Hospital

Fred noted that with the Fair coming up it would be a good time for networking

April suggested a Banker. Vanessa mentioned Wayne Bank, Tim Gutliph. Brad agreed that a banker would be good.

Fred asked for an update on the **Delaware County Farm Enhancement Grants Program.**

Dale said that it is moving along quickly and has been well publicized. Jessica reported that as of Sunday evening there were 26 participants signed up. Room capacity is 40 and half will be attending via Zoom, so late comers are welcome for the meeting tomorrow night Tuesday (8/9/22).

Joyce asked how many are focused on infrastructure vs crop expense? Dale replied that a lot of people were still deciding which is the better thing for them to focus on. The FAQ page will be updated regularly.

Something that cropped up this morning – the County is asking to require prevailing wage for all projects. The Grant projects are not Public Benefit projects, so this needs to be worked through with the Department of Labor and the County Attorney. Stream stabilization on private property is not a public benefit whereas a flood zone mitigation project is a public benefit. Dale is hopeful for a favorable

outcome. People will have to consider “how” they apply, with equipment vs labor in mind. Many things qualify. Rolling stock and cows do not. A business plan is not required, but a budget is required. CCE Staff will help people technically, will not help to review the application. Deadline is September 2, 2022. A second round might be available if the money is not all used. Probably looking for a balance between crop and infrastructure grants. Cap of \$5K for crops, \$25K for infrastructure. Target date for announcement of awards recipients is September 25th, the contracts will be drawn up (quick process) and then a check will be sent to the farm. The idea is to provide money up front to accomplish goals. The contract is between CCE and the farmer. Completion to be within 12 months, farmer gets the money and does all the “legwork”.

Farm Business Management Position- staffing- Jessica Richards has accepted a position at USDA as a Dairy Economist and will be moving to Washington, DC., leaving August 12th. She has been prioritizing the American Rescue Plan Grant and will give an overview of Ag Economy She will share “what attracted her to CCE” and what the candidate’s role looks like.

Upcoming Programming-

Dale- Fair, at the end of Dairy Barn- “What a cow eats” featuring a cow from the Gray Farm

Carla- Flower farming table, rotating displays

Rich- Meat marketing, poultry, Farm Net will have a table

Paul- County Dairy Tour, Wednesday August 24th, revisit of the 2014 tour, John Burgin Farm. Some farmers are considering robots, so revisiting conversation with the Burgins’ Can’t go into robotic parlor due to space, so that will be handled through a presentation. Different cover crops and trials are going to be discussed.

Jessica- Family Farm Day August 27th- Rack cards have been distributed; brochures have not arrived yet.

Paul- Corn Dry Down Days- Dates between September 2nd and October 20th. Window is wide due to planting dates and heat. Early fields with short season corn will be Sept 2. Dry downs will be done at the office. A bigger day at the Stamford Co-Op will be held when more of the corn is closer to being ready. Fred noted that he is already experiencing bear damage.

Educational Programming-

Carla- Planning Master Gardener program, planning on 10 so far, promoting heavily at the Fair.

Relocating office in the building for better access. Currently 25 active Master Gardeners

Schoharie, Otsego, Madison County, Seed to Supper, geared to new gardeners.

The Community Gardens are flourishing

Line-up of webinars for Fall- interest in no dig gardening and some other types of gardens, it’s good to see such interest around the county

Rich- Livestock programming- doing a lot of one-on-one work, plus 3 projects

Haymaking

Dung Beetle Study – Statewide project, identifying species in NY, the variety that burrows deep in the ground is most beneficial. Evaluating the impact of feed-through insecticides.

Intensive Management Grazing study- will have a pasture walk at Dickie and Dawn Perry’s.

Pasture Walk Eric McLaughlin, continuous weekly moves (8 paddocks). Using bale grazing to slow the rotation and fertilize, the grass has slowed down. Using round bale feeders and this year’s hay, 85%-90% of the bale consumed

BQA Training- Saturday October 1st

Dale- Scissors cuts- same routine as previous years.

Horseweed/ Mare's Tail has been identified in oat fields. It is multiple herbicide resistant. Don't know how it got here, although it has been all around us. May be moving in. Not poisonous, but problematic in corn and soybeans. Pull by hand before it re-seeds.

Watershed Program Updates

Dale- CCEDC-WAC contract update- New contract as of July 1st. Scope of work has not changed, some administrative changes. Changes in reimbursements for administrative costs, actual costs vs the percent budgeted.

DEP has questioned WAC regarding food at Workshops. Need to work on a new procedure, DEP wants to have pre-approval. Dale noted that you can't underestimate the value of the social nature of the meetings and valuable conversations. \$30K per year is budgeted for farmer education, meeting rooms, speakers and food. WAC needs to have at least 25% of Watershed farmers participating with a goal of 40% participation. Food will bring people. There are NYC rules for things and when it comes down to it we are probably not charging as much.

Dale- Enhanced Manure Management- Looking at a Custom Manure Spreading Service. Some farms can't reach their Nutrient Mgt goals without manure injection. Small fields, big distances
Project to run on a grant, no guarantee of success. Sustain some subsidy through the Watershed.
Application for the grant will be going out in about a month. The objective will be "to start a business", incentive payments to farmers.

Brad mentioned a service out of Bainbridge- if there is an existing service that could expand, that would be ideal. April said they would be a good resource

Jim- Garrett Olsen has come "up to speed" and is working well. Doing pasture clips. Watershed Mineral Mix is available at local feed mills and Co-operative feed dealers. High bioavailability. Have discovered a mineral feeding deficit in the area. It is recommended to feed plain salt first, then provide the mineral mix. Making some adjustments to the minerals. Moving beef producers forward.

Fred adjourned the meeting at 9:49

Next meeting October 17, 2022, at 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Scobie