

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Constitution Hall
Atrium Level, Con-Con Conference Room
525 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933

MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 14, 2011

PRESENT:

Don Coe, Chairperson, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Velmar Green, Vice Chairperson, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Jennifer Fike, Secretary, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Diane Hanson, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Bob Kennedy Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Keith Creagh, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson Coe called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 9:03 a.m. on September 14, 2011. Commissioner Fike called the roll with Commissioners Coe, Green, Fike, Hanson, Kennedy, and Director Creagh present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: COMMISSIONER FIKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2011. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HANSON. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 17, 2011, MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER KENNEDY MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 17, 2011, MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HANSON. MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting will be held on November 9, 2011, at the E.C. Heffron Laboratory, 940 Venture Lane, Williamston.

INTRODUCTION

Commissioner Coe introduced Senator Hune, who is chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Senator Hune advised he was happy to join the meeting today and looks forward to attending future meetings when his schedule allows.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL

Commissioner Hanson joined Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) representative, Craig Knutson, for a visit to the western area of the Upper Peninsula (UP). That area is experiencing problems with wolves and a letter from cattle producer Duane Kolpack detailing the issues was shared with the Commission. The western UP is also having issues with their milk hauler and farmers are forming a co-operative, through which they will purchase their own milk hauling truck.

Manistique Papers and the NewPage Corporation paper mill in Escanaba have filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11. Manistique Papers was closed for one week and has since reopened for business. The Escanaba mill is in the process of refinancing.

The UP State Fair was held August 5-21 and attendance was up by 3,000, with over 61,000 in paid attendance. The Junior Market Livestock Sale traded over 300 animals.

On August 17, her family and MFB hosted a dinner at Hanson Farms with Governor Snyder, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Director Stokes, Secretary of State Johnson, Senator Casperson, Representative McBroom, and MFB directors and staff in attendance. Several UP farmers joined the event as well.

The UP members of the Michigan Potato Industry Commission held their annual Field Days at TJJ VanDamme Farms in Rock, Michigan, on August 31, which featured test plots of various types of potatoes. Michigan State University (MSU) Extension is instrumental in facilitating this event each year.

The Great Lakes Logging Congress was held in Escanaba on September 8, 9, and 10. She joined the event on Saturday that week.

UP weather has been dry the entire summer and the first frost hit on September 6, with the corn and bean crops evidencing damage. Potatoes have been irrigated for about eight weeks and harvest has begun. The pastures are extremely dry and not much second crop hay is anticipated.

Commissioner Kennedy thanked department Division Directors and staff for meeting with him yesterday to provide an overview of their programs and activities. The orientation was a very enlightening experience and helped him realize the true diversity of Michigan agriculture and how many different areas in which department staff are involved. He complimented staff on the efficient manner in which they accomplish their complex program activities, especially with the relatively small staff compared to previous years, and added that it truly is amazing the amount of work the department accomplishes.

There is concern regarding the prediction of frost for the next three nights in central Michigan. If the frost is severe, it could be devastating for the crops, because roughly 30 percent of the corn and nearly 50 percent of the soybeans are not mature enough for harvest.

Commissioner Fike attended the August 3 Governor's Summit on Production Agriculture. The summit was well planned and facilitated by MDARD staff.

She attended the Farmers' Market at the Capitol and the Michigan Gold Medal Wine Competition reception on August 4.

The Food System Economic Partnership held a Farm Bill Forum on August 10, which was attended by Bill Bobier from MDARD. Approximately 30 people attended and the purpose was to educate stakeholders and the general public about what is in the Farm Bill and how it affects everyone.

She attended Representative Dingell's annual farm tour at Calder Dairy in Carleton on August 30, and a tour of the proposed Washtenaw County Food Hub project on August 31, which will create a space for farm business incubators, processing, and distribution.

On September 6, she attended the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce Legislative Luncheon with Senator Stabenow. The HomeGrown Festival in Ann Arbor was held on September 10 and drew about 3,000 attendees to this local food and beverage festival held at the Ann Arbor Farmers' Market.

October is the first ever National Farm to School month. There are now Farm to School Programs in all 50 states. She thanked all those who are working with schools and farmers to help source local foods for school meal programs.

Commissioner Green will be attending the U.S. Animal Health Association Annual meeting as a director. MDARD's Dr. Steve Halstead is president of that organization.

Commissioner Coe traveled on August 22 to Sparta, Michigan, to attend the Rural Forum hosted by Senator Stabenow and Secretary Vilsack for western Michigan farmers, agri-businesses, and agricultural leaders. On August 24, he attended the first meeting of the Liquor Control Advisory Rules Committee that will review the entire liquor control system, from statutes and promulgated rules to the internal processes of the Commission. Results should assist the small distillery, winery, and brewery industries.

He participated in an August 25 conference call with the newly formed Michigan Equine Foundation for which he and the department's State Veterinarian, Dr. Steve Halstead, will be directors. They will be working on equine issues, primarily horse rescue. Also that day, he attended the Leelanau County Research Station Open House and an Environmental Council meeting.

On August 26, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) presented to the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation concerning their regional economic development plans. They indicated MDARD as a potential member of these Regional Economic Development Councils. Commissioner Coe encouraged the department to remain involved with MEDC on rural development issues and move MDARD to an active partner with MEDC. He also suggested MEDC present to the Commission in the near future.

The department is currently working with the City of Detroit regarding their development of an urban agriculture ordinance that would meet the needs of both community groups and for-profit organizations. Detroit could be a flagship city for urban agriculture.

Importance of the Pure Michigan campaign continues to positively impact the agriculture tourism industry in Michigan. The department should continue to request support from the Legislature for that program.

Considerable work with Senator Stabenow continues on the Fresh Produce Pilot for schools in Michigan and Florida. The Senator's office remains very open to comments from any of the local food groups for making the pilot program work effectively.

Meetings held recently with the MFB Labor Committee have focused on migrant labor issues and the bills currently before Congress. This is a time for commodity and special interest groups to let Congressional members know how important migrant labor is to the agriculture industry in Michigan.

Commissioners Coe, Fike, Hanson, and Kennedy also traveled to attend today's meeting.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER GREEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KENNEDY. MOTION CARRIED.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Creagh advised he appreciated Senator Hune's attendance today, noting the two of them met recently to discuss items for the fall agenda.

The Governor's Health and Wellness message will be delivered today, which is multi-purposed in function. It will contain an agriculture component that includes expanding access to a safe and healthy food supply, strengthening the Farm to School Network, and expanding the Double Up Food Bucks Program. The department has been working with Gerber, Meijer, Kroger, Kellogg, and Spartan Stores to promote healthy lifestyles with local products.

Also today, the department will announce U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) approval of the Split State Status and Zoning Rules, 2011, which grants Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Free Status for 57 Michigan counties. He congratulated Animal Industry Division Director, Dr. Averill, his staff, and the industry on this great accomplishment, which marks a turning point in the Bovine TB Program. The challenges moving forward include continuing to assist producers remaining in the TB Zone, addressing needs of the sportsmen, and ensuring a comprehensive plan toward TB Free Status for the entire state.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) met with legislators regarding migrant labor and the E-verify proposal. Discussions are ongoing with the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) relative to building capacities of the Migrant Labor Program. A letter from the Migrant Labor Housing

Structure and Budget Subcommittee outlining several recommendations was received recently and he will forward a copy of that letter to the Commission. That group recommends focusing on migrant labor housing and expanding that capacity over time. The department continues to work toward efficiencies to eliminate duplication of efforts between the various agencies involved.

Jane Whitacre, previously the Executive Director of the Food Bank Council of Michigan, has agreed to provide leadership for the Michigan Food Policy Council, the position recently vacated by Kirsten Simmons. Ms. Whitacre will be a great asset to MDARD as we move toward meeting the goals established by the Council earlier this year.

The department will soon be developing its budget goals and metrics. This year, each agency director will discuss their goals and program objectives directly with the Governor and the Budget Director prior to release of the budget.

Because he now will be attending a Cabinet Retreat on September 16, Chief Deputy Director Wenk will be attending the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) meeting in Salt Lake City on his behalf. Action items the department will be supporting at NASDA include action to promote services provided by USDA Wildlife Services and the need to maintain current funding, and to support funding for the International Food Protection Training Institute in Battle Creek. As requested by NASDA, Mr. Wenk will give a presentation on the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) water quality and voluntary programs.

The department will invite MEDC to join a Commission meeting to make an economic development presentation sometime after the Asian trip. Their reference to a potential partnership with MDARD is because of MDARD's limited resources available for economic development; however, the department will continue to build its capacity around rural development.

MDARD continues to work with MDNR Director Rodney Stokes to find solutions for both the private and industrial aspects of the forestry industry. MDARD was directly involved with the Manistique Papers economic problems, which would have affected 261 families in that area. He congratulated Jim Turner, from the USDA Rural Development Agency, and Mike Finney from MEDC in developing solutions to sustain the mill through the legal process. NewPage Corporation did file for bankruptcy and the department will be working with them on various economic models, as they are a significant part of the UP timber industry.

He recently participated in the Governor's Town Hall meetings held in Caro and Mayville. Agriculture was well represented at each meeting; presented to the Agro-Culture LIQUID Fertilizer Plant, which will hold a groundbreaking on December 27; and participated in Representative Forlini's cable show that focused on local produce.

He will be joining the Governor for a trip to Asia later this month. There are some very definite opportunities for agriculture in that region of the world. He has met with the Chinese General Consulate, who indicated interest in dried cherries, blueberries, and

powdered milk. Various meetings are scheduled while overseas, including with the Agricultural Trade Officials and the Foreign Agriculture Service.

He encouraged Commissioners to attend MDARD's October 13 All Employee Meeting and Employee Awards Ceremony to be held at the Kellogg Center, and the October 17 media event in recognition of the 1000th MAEAP Verified Site in Shiawassee County.

An article in the September *Michigan Food News* covered an interview with Michigan Liquor Control Commission Chairman, Andy Deloney. Mr. Deloney advised his vision for the Liquor Control Commission is to move from an enforcement-first "gotcha, cite ya, fine ya" type agency to one that operates more like other agencies, such as MDARD who partners with industry to identify problems and develop solutions. The Director complimented MDARD staff on embracing that tenor and attitude in working with their customers.

The Governor requested the department develop an urban agricultural strategy. The Administration is looking for specifics toward enhancing and promoting urban agriculture activities. With the Right to Farm (RTF) preemption, it is a complicated issue; however, local units of government may adopt ordinances. Through a policy statement, there is a means to recognize the long-standing tradition of RTF, provide some guidance and leadership to the local units of government, and preemptively approve an ordinance based upon population size. If a Generally Accepted Agriculture Management Practice (GAAMP) were adopted for urban agriculture, the department would be required to resolve disputes, which may not be the best utilization of its resources. At the same time, we need to ensure those interested can benefit from MDARD's background and expertise.

Commissioner Coe reported there have been several discussions with Detroit around their concerns with RTF and their ability to establish an urban farming ordinance. The Commission recognizes opportunities in Detroit for both the voluntary groups and the for-profit sector, including the potential for meeting objectives of the Commission for investment and jobs creation; and further recognizes the City of Detroit's uniqueness under a population guideline. The Commission supports MDARD working collaboratively to assist the urban areas and reach solutions that meet the Governor's objectives, as well those of the Commission.

Relative to forestry, Commissioner Coe noted the department needs to keep in mind the numerous farmer wood lots to avoid forestry becoming a state land only issue. Director Creagh confirmed MDARD represents the position of those private forest lands.

Commissioner Green inquired who would be responsible for developing strategies as a result of the two agriculture summits. Director Creagh advised the summit goals and objectives would be discussed in depth later in the meeting and that a representation of the summit participants met in follow-up to the summits. The next steps are developing the strategies and clarifying who will be responsible, which will potentially include government, legislature, and industry partners.

DIRECTOR'S TRAVEL

Director Creagh has no out-of-state travel planned in the near future.

PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

There was no public comment relative to agenda items.

MICHIGAN FARM TO SCHOOL WORKGROUP UPDATE: Colleen Matts, Farm to Institution Outreach Specialist, and Jekeia Murphy, Program Assistant for W.K. Kellogg Food and Fitness Initiative, C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems, Michigan State University; Marla Moss, Assistant Director, Child Nutrition Programs, and Kevin Sarb, School Nutrition Consultant, Michigan Department of Education; Diane Golzynski, Nutrition Consultant, Michigan Department of Community Health; and Jeanne Hausler, Food and Dairy Communications

Colleen Matts advised she is a farm to institution specialist with the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU. The Michigan Farm to School Workgroup also includes the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), MDARD, and the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). She thanked the Commission for the opportunity to provide an update.

Nearly 100 Farm to School Programs in Michigan have been identified across the state. In 2009, a survey indicated 41 percent of school food service directors (FSDs) reported having purchased food from a local producer, which is a significant increase from previous surveys. The group's task is to track the programs, develop a baseline, and determine where projects can be enhanced.

Part of the success of farm to school projects can be attributed to various resources published to assist farm to school practitioners, FSDs, and farmers develop farm to school programs. Those have been developed through efforts of the collaborative workgroup and include the step-by-step guides: "Marketing Michigan Products," for farmers; the "Purchasing Michigan Products," for FSDs; and "Putting Michigan Produce on Your Menu," for institutional food service professionals on how to use local produce. The hope is that these guides will help to break through the challenges of farm to school and farm to institution programs. They are all freely available on the Farm to School website: www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu.

Also on the website is a section for inclusion in the Michigan Farm to School Listserv, which includes 680 members, with several national subscribers. It provides a good venue for sharing information. There also is space for FSDs to register their Michigan Farm to School Programs.

Farm to School Programs have also been able to expand over the past few years because a number of policy barriers have been removed at the federal and state levels. The federal Geographic Preference Final Rule allows for FSDs to specify for local products during the bidding process. The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act is the Child Nutrition reauthorization that will provide mandatory funding for the Farm to School Grant Program and strengthens nutrition standards for school meals programs. October has been designated as National Farm to School Month and the National Farm to School Network is using that platform to raise awareness about farm to school. At the state level, a Farm to School bill package passed in 2008 increased the small purchase

threshold to \$100,000, giving FSD's more room to utilize informal procurement methods to purchase local foods. The Michigan Farm to School Procurement Act calls for MDE and MDARD to collaborate and cooperate to support Farm to School Programs in Michigan and to coordinate their efforts with MDCH. An effective partnership between the C.S. Mott Group and those agencies had already been established and this Act initiated the formal workgroup meetings to share information and work toward solutions.

Aside from the state agency partnership, other Farm to School partners collaborating on the Farm to School Program include the Michigan Land Use Institute, the Food System Economic Partnership, MSU Extension, and the Ecology Center from Ann Arbor. National connections include the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference, the National Farm to School Network, and the Food Corps, of which Michigan is one of the ten host states.

All of the work being accomplished on Farm to School and Farm to Institution Programs ties in well with the Michigan Good Food Charter goal of "Michigan institutions will source 20 percent of their food products from Michigan growers, producers, and processors." Three of the agenda priorities designated in the Charter that relate to Farm to School are: 1) implement a reimbursement program to provide an additional 10 cents per school meal to supplement the purchase of locally grown fruits and vegetables; 2) develop a farm to institution grant program to provide planning, implementation, and kitchen or cafeteria equipment grants to maximize the use of locally grown, raised, and processed foods in institutional cafeterias – a Kellogg Foundation grant to the C.S. Mott Group at MSU serves as a pilot; and 3) implement a food safety audit cost share or reimbursement program targeted at small and medium-sized farms – this will help to address the concerns of those farms in completing USDA Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) or other third-party audits.

The USDA Fresh Produce Pilot Program announced recently will be effective January through December 2012 for schools in Michigan statewide and in 10 school districts in Florida. Eyes will be on Michigan for results of this program. Schools can use commodity entitlement dollars to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, specifically, lettuce, apples, grapes, oranges, carrots and/or blueberries. USDA will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for vendors in November 2011 for which food safety, food defense, and domestic origin documentation will be required. Schools will then seek bids for produce from approved suppliers. Purchasing consortia in Michigan will monitor funds, as is currently being done. Several questions around the new program need to be addressed, such as how purchases will be tracked, how local product identity will be preserved in the supply chain, how schools will connect with local vendors outside of current distribution systems, and if Michigan farmers will benefit.

Ms. Matts advised she can be reached at 517.432.0310 or matts@msu.edu for additional program information or any questions.

Commissioner Coe advised the current federal U.S. Department of Defense's (DOD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program that gives schools a monetary incentive to purchase produce is not working. FSD's have advised the current program results in 85 percent of that food being discarded because it is spoiled by the time it is received. Senator

Stabenow's office should be reminded that a new system must be developed for the pilot program to ensure we are truly testing a new paradigm.

Commissioner Fike advised one of the barriers for the smaller farms is becoming GAP certified before the November RFP. The biggest question is whether this pilot actually benefits Michigan farmers. Ms. Matts advised the information received on the program simply refers to a "food safety plan" and does not specify GAP certification at this point. Commissioner Coe noted there is opposition to the program, such as that voiced by the Idaho potato industry. The Commission will be watching with great interest as the program moves forward and wants to challenge USDA and the state agencies involved to craft a true test program that is as flexible as possible to ensure farmers will respond, while keeping in mind the objective of crafting a small scale program to help bring fresh local products to our schools.

Commissioner Green noted that Michigan milk is already a success story in the school lunch programs, but is extremely competitive. Ms. Matts added that school budgets are very tight and reimbursements this year were not much more than the previous year, especially in light of their being asked to buy more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Commissioner Fike noted for farmers to participate in Farm to School, it must make sense for them economically. Ensuring farmers receive a fair price for their products is a critical part of the program.

Because of the federal RFP system, Commissioner Hanson advised she can understand the Idaho potato industry's opposition to the program. She noted the prison system in the UP currently purchases a great deal of food locally and advised it has been economically advantageous for them.

Commissioner Coe expressed appreciation for the C.S. Mott Group's support through Ms. Matts position with MSU and the ongoing efforts for the Farm to School Program. He encouraged her to advise the Commission if there are areas in which it can be of assistance as the program moves forward.

Ms. Matts introduced others members of the Workgroup: Jeanne Hausler, from MDARD; Diane Golzynski, from MDCH; Kevin Sarb and Marla Moss, from MDE; and Jekeia Murphy, who is working with Ms. Matts on the Farm to School Program.

Commissioner Fike commended the C.S. Mott Group, and Ms. Matts in particular, for leadership in helping to grow Farm to School Programs across the state. She thanked the other partners, MDE, MDARD, and MDCH for their outstanding efforts as well and noted it is amazing to see the group working together to help schools improve nutrition.

**FOOD PROCESSORS SUMMIT AND GOVERNOR'S SUMMIT ON PRODUCTION
AGRICULTURE REPORT: Bob Boehm, Manager, Commodity and Marketing Department,
Michigan Farm Bureau; and Doug Buhler, Interim Dean, College of Agriculture and
Natural Resources, Michigan State University**

Bob Boehm advised the Food Processors Summit brought together Michigan food processors and regulatory and economic development leaders to address challenges

and discuss opportunities to support the continued growth of the industry in Michigan. It is important for Michigan growers to have end-use markets located within the state. The summit was attended by 204 individuals who identified opportunities and barriers and created a list of action items that could be used to expand the Michigan food and processor industry.

The Governor's Summit on Production Agriculture was designed to expand the partnership of industry, state government, and MSU to create a shared vision for research, outreach, and education in support of production agriculture in Michigan. MDARD did an outstanding job in facilitating and summarizing the results of that summit.

During his kick-off speech at the Summit on Production Agriculture, the Governor cited the five-year goals of: 1) increasing the economic impact of the food and agriculture industry from \$71 to \$100 billion, 2) doubling agriculture exports, 3) increasing food and agricultural career jobs by 10 percent, and 4) improving access to healthy foods for Michigan consumers by 20 percent. As responses were reviewed, marketing and promotion, infrastructure needs, organized and educated labor workforce, regulatory issues, and food safety were industry needs consistently identified during both summits. This commonality provides a platform for action in moving ahead on priorities. The summaries will be sent to summit participants asking them to identify what they feel is the number one first action item that would advance not only the highest priority for their industry, but also help the industry reach the four overarching goals. There will be a workgroup formed to review those suggested action items and develop strategies moving forward.

Doug Buhler added that from MSU's perspective, the consistency of the message from both summits is important. The item most critical for MSU is their role in broader workforce issues, which have already been under consideration. The technological needs of today's farmer are being incorporated into their agriculture curriculum. They are also exploring additional ways of partnering with other institutions, particularly with community colleges. Discussions that resulted from the summits are some of the best they have had with stakeholders in some time, particularly in a more integrated approach. MSU will continue to build on integration, and with the support of industry and through leverage with partners from other states and other institutions, will be able to accomplish more with less.

Mr. Boehm advised one workgroup will focus on the two summit reports and activities from the House Agriculture Committee Processor Workgroup. A second workgroup will focus on Project GREEN (Generating Research & Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs) and the MSU Animal Agriculture Initiative, continuing dialogue to potentially combine those efforts. He thanked the department for their efforts and leadership on the summit programs. MSU and MFB are looking forward to working on the broader issues identified toward meeting the goals outlined by the Governor and keeping our industry moving forward.

Commissioner Fike advised with the growth of small farms, they are seeing an increased interest in farming by young people and asked if MSU would be incorporating a small farms program into their curriculum. Dr. Buhler advised as they look at enrollment and

demand from various majors, they have not taken full advantage of that trend. There is a renewed interest among young people in biology, food, and environment and MSU needs to realign their majors to better recruit students, bringing those offerings to the undergraduate level and increasing recognition of existing programs. Commissioner Fike pointed out the advantages of utilizing community colleges and other innovative educational methods to bring new individuals into farming.

Commissioner Green noted that regulations were identified during both summits, noting he feels the state does not overregulate. Mr. Boehm advised the regulatory issues were broader than MDARD and included those of other agencies, as well as local, environmental, and federal regulations. Director Creagh advised the issue was not necessarily overregulation, but the consistency and simplification of the regulations. The Quality of Life cluster offers an advantage as we move toward that effort.

Director Creagh recognized Doug Buhler and Bob Boehm for all of their outstanding efforts toward a very successful summit; he thanked them and their organizations for their contributions. There is a great deal of work that lies ahead. As the Governor speaks about transportation and infrastructure, agriculture is part of that message and Michigan Department of Transportation Director Steudle lists agriculture as their number two priority. Amy Epkey has initiated efforts on workforce development with MSU and ensuring partnership with other educational institutions. Resultant work from these summits will help put people back to work around food and agriculture.

Commissioner Kennedy commented it is encouraging to see walls beginning to come down to allow collaboration and provide for future growth. The industry as a whole would definitely support the community college phase for all facets throughout various regions of the state. Commissioner Coe confirmed the student today is often a working single parent who needs convenience and flexibility in educational offerings and how education is delivered in the future is a challenge that needs to be met. Also, Secretary Vilsack pointed out that with redistricting, less than 16 percent of our population lives in rural districts, lessening agriculture's political clout. We must solve many of the issues ourselves and not expect federal assistance.

Mr. Boehm advised there are challenges for everyone in allocating resources to meet the needs of a very diverse (in both size and type) agriculture industry in Michigan. Meetings such as the summits bring parallels together, with vision and focus for creating better results in the future.

Commissioner Coe suggested the Michigan Good Food Charter could be used as a template for creating a summit action plan because each action step identifies exactly who needs to be involved. Having full support from the Administration, we have an excellent opportunity for developing successful strategies as a result of the summits.

MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR VERIFICATION: Thomas G. Coon, Director, Michigan State University Extension; and Scott Piggott, Manager, Agricultural Ecology Department, Michigan Farm Bureau

Scott Piggott advised he has worked on the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) for many years and appreciates the opportunity to formally present the MAEAP Verification Standards.

MAEAP has been a work in progress for more than a decade with growers and partners developing a program that is a leader in the nation. Nearly 1,000 farms have completed the program to date. The MAEAP Verification Standards presented today will foster continued growth in the program and helps not only farmers to be confident and proud of their achievements in environmental protection, but assures the customers who buy our products that we can protect the environment while creating food and fiber.

In March of this year, Governor Snyder signed Public Acts 1 and 2, which codified MAEAP, placing the program into statute. As a part of that, the legislation provided regulatory incentives for MAEAP verified farms. As a condition of earning those incentives, the Legislature recognized the need for formal standards. To assist MDARD in the development of standards and verification protocols, the Legislature stipulated building on the existing MAEAP partnership and creating an Environmental Assurance Advisory Council (AC), which the Director established in March. He advised that Thomas Coon and he are proud to be chairs of this council and present the product before the Commission today as the standards for the program.

Dr. Coon advised two items are presented for approval – the MAEAP Verification Standards and the MAEAP Verification Protocol. The standards are necessary to determine whether a farm is qualified for MAEAP verification. They are separated into three key system areas that have been a part of MAEAP – Farmstead System, Livestock System, and Cropping System. The second item is the Verification Protocol which will determine whether a farm is verified, or remains verified. Public Acts 1 and 2 stipulated these two items be approved by the Commission by the end of September, 2011.

The AC began working the first of April to develop the standards, commissioning three subcommittees, one for each of the systems. They reviewed current standards, determining if they were still relevant and compiled with existing laws or regulations that may apply under other jurisdictions. Working closely with MDARD staff verifiers, the AC developed the Verification Protocol into a set of concise steps to determine if a farm qualifies for verification, or continued verification. He acknowledged the considerable time and effort devoted to this effort by MDARD staff, namely Jim Johnson, Jan Wilford, Josh Appleby, Joe Kelpinski, and Tom Young, the AC, the System Subcommittees, MSU, MSU Extension, and industry partners to ensure the standards and protocol are accurate and effective.

In response to inquiry by Commissioner Coe, Dr. Coon confirmed the standards and protocol are integrated with the GAAMPs and include references, not only to the GAAMPs, but applicable regulations and legislation guidelines. Based on those assurances, coupled with the fact that industry and public input have been solicited, Commissioner Coe recommended the Commission adopt the MAEAP Verification Standards and Verification Protocol as presented.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER FIKE MOVED THE MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM VERIFICATION STANDARDS BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER GREEN SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Dr. Coon advised that, as suggested by the Commission, the Verification Protocol was reviewed by the Attorney General's Office and their recommended changes have been incorporated into the document presented today.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER GREEN MOVED THE MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM VERIFICATION PROTOCOL BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Dr. Coon advised the next steps for the program include voluntary water quality monitoring, ensuring desired outcomes, and meeting the goal stipulated in the legislation of 5,000 MAEAP verified farms within five years. It will take a large partnership to achieve these goals. Part of the challenge is understanding what obstacles farmers currently face and what can be done about those, whether through the standards, education, research, or services. A special taskforce will be reviewing the standards on an annual basis.

Mr. Piggott advised the MAEAP Taskforce has a schedule established for next year, is open to the public, and involves many members of the AC. MFB is honored to be part of that important group. He also recognized the efforts of the Systems Subcommittees: Shelly Hartmann, from True Blue Farms, chair of the Farmstead System; Dr. Allen Krizek, from MSU, chair of the Cropping System; and Dr. Dale Rozeboom, from MSU, and Gary Trimner, from the Michigan Milk Producers Association, co-chairs of the Livestock System. He, also recognized MDARD staff for their support of the council and continued efforts in the program, and complimented the MAEAP verifiers for maintaining integrity of the program throughout the countryside. MFB is grateful for being able to help lead the group and looks forward to working with the program as it moves forward.

Commissioner Green inquired about the obstacles referenced. He also noted that in addition to the goal of reaching 5,000 verified farms, those already verified must be re-verified every three years, and questioned if resources were available to accomplish those tasks. Dr. Coon confirmed resources are the first issue to be addressed. Director Creagh advised the Legislature is acutely aware that the department will be seeking funding during the next budget cycle.

Director Creagh also recognized the outstanding efforts of the various committees in completing the standards and thanked Thomas Coon and Scott Piggott for their leadership and the extra time they have devoted to driving the process.

In response to question from Commissioner Coe, Director Creagh advised MDARD Environmental Stewardship Division staff are implementers of the program. Dr. Coon advised responsibility for the program within MSU lies with the Agriculture and Agri-business Institute, and Mr. Piggott noted MFB's responsibility is in the hands of its

members, but ultimately with him. Dr. Coon advised the AC includes members from various other state agencies. He suggested stepping back to the original broader MAEAP Partnership that co-signed the original agreement. To reach the 5,000 verified farm goal, it will take investment from that entire partnership and a commitment to drive the campaign. Because the AC, as formed according to the statute, does not represent the entire better than 50-member MAEAP Partnership, the Director emphasized the need to engage that total partnership.

Commissioner Coe stated the Commission encourages commodity groups and other interested parties to remain active, involved, and supportive of the ongoing MAEAP Verification efforts. The Commission agreed with Director Creagh's suggestion that the department and Commission send a letter to the full MAEAP Partnership encouraging that continued involvement in the MAEAP Program.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Director reported that Legislative Liaison, Derek Bajema, is attending legislative committee hearings this morning. The Commission reviewed the Legislative Status Report and no comments were expressed.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES

Commissioner Coe reviewed a resolution before the Commission in support of National Farm to School Month, which read:

WHEREAS, Michigan producers offer an abundance of high quality crops, meats, and dairy products placing Michigan second only to California in agricultural diversity and making our state a major contributor to the local foods movement; and,

WHEREAS, local food is fresher, tastes better and comes from farmland near you, and, because many fruits and vegetables can lose up to 50 percent of their nutrients in just five days' time, buying Michigan locally grown food is a healthier choice; and,

WHEREAS, by cultivating the relationships between farmers and Michigan schools, universities, and other institutions, we encourage diverse and healthy meal offerings and new economic opportunities for our growing agriculture sector; and,

WHEREAS, Farm to School programs should be recognized as a proven effective strategy that provide immediate and long-term benefits to child health, agricultural producer income, and community economic development; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development supports the National Farm to School Month of October 2011; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it further resolved that we encourage food service directors and food buyers to seek out locally grown and processed foods and incorporate into their menu offerings in school meals; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it further resolved that we encourage schools, farmers and farm groups, local businesses, nonprofit institutions, churches, cities, state government, and other local groups to support and participate in Farm to School efforts in their communities.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER FIKE MOVED THE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH OF OCTOBER 2011 BE ADOPTED. COMMISSIONER GREEN SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Fike requested the department share a copy of the resolution with the Governor's Office.

PUBLIC COMMENT

E.J. Brown, Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (MAFE), reported in follow-up to question from the Commission last month as to the potential impact of the Pure Michigan campaign on MAFE. Having contacted 52 of the 86 fairs, there is no doubt the Pure Michigan campaign has had a positive impact on the county fairs industry in Michigan this year. The campaign has also benefited their associate members, such as the ride amusement companies, food concessionaires, etc., who work a wide variety of events across the state.

On average, they are seeing a three to five percent increase in attendance at all county fairs this year. The livestock auction sales have seen a substantial increase of 10-15 percent over last year.

Commissioner Coe noted the Local Food Network displays at the fairs in his area have been very well received. Commissioner Hanson advised the UP Fair enjoyed an increase in attendance.

There was no other public comment requested.

ADJOURN

MOTION: COMMISSIONER HANSON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER FIKE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes August 17, 2011*
- C) *UP Producer Letter from Duane Kolpack*
- D) *Director Keith Creagh – Issues of Interest Report*
- E) *Michigan Farm to School PowerPoint Presentation*
- F) *Michigan Farm to School Brochure*
- G) *Michigan Farm to School Budget Information*
- H) *Fresh Produce Pilot for Schools in Michigan and Florida Information Sheet*
- I) *Executive Summary – Michigan Food Processors Summit and Governor's Summit on Production Agriculture*
- J) *Combined Summits Complete Report*
- K) *MAEAP Advisory Council Roster*
- L) *MAEAP Verification Protocol*
- M) *FAS 221 – MAEAP Livestock System Verification Standards*
- N) *FAS 107 – MAEAP Farm System Verification Standards*
- O) *FAS 110 – MAEAP Cropping System Verification Standards for Field Crop and Vegetable Producers*
- P) *FAS 114 – MAEAP Cropping System Verification Standards for Nursery Crop and Christmas Tree Producers*
- Q) *FAS 104 – MAEAP Cropping System Verification Standards for Fruit Producers*

- R) *FAS 108 – MAEAP Greenhouse System Verification Standards*
- S) *Legislative Status – September 2011*
- T) *Resolution in support of National Farm to School Month*