

Michigan Department of Agriculture Commission of Agriculture

Kellogg Center, Michigan State University

East Lansing, Michigan

Meeting Minutes

March 10-11, 1999

JOINT MEETING OF THE MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION – MARCH 10, 1999

ADDENDUM A – MINUTES OF THE MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION AND COMMISSION
OF AGRICULTURE

ADJOURN

The joint meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission and Commission of Agriculture adjourned at 9:50 p.m., on Wednesday, March 10, 1999.

RECONVENE – MARCH 11, 1999

PRESENT:

Deanna Stamp, Chair, Commission of Agriculture

James Maitland, Vice Chair, Commission of Agriculture

Jordan B. Tatter, Secretary, Commission of Agriculture

Douglas Darling, Commission of Agriculture

Shirley A. Skogman, Commission of Agriculture

Dan Wyant, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture

OTHERS PRESENT: *(all or part of the meeting)*

Ron Zellar, Assistant Attorney General

Michigan Department of Agriculture Staff

Julie Avery, Michigan State University Museum

Robert Bender, State Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Coordinator

Ann Louise Budd, Michigan Horse Council

Patty Cantrell, Michigan Land Use Institute

Elgin Darling, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan

Brad Deacon, Governor Engler's Office

Steve Errer, Michigan Corn Growers Association

Dr. Jim Flore, Michigan State University

Tom Frazier, Senator Spencer Abraham's Office

Tom Guthrie, Michigan Integrated Food & Farming Systems

Jane Marshall, Food Bank Council of Michigan

Jim Miller, Michigan Farm Bureau

Keith Muxlow, Michigan Corn Marketing Committee

Ron Nelson, Michigan Farm Bureau

Dr. Larry Olsen, Michigan State University

Tom Reed, Michigan Livestock Exchange

Ken Swanson, Michigan Corn Marketing Committee

Gary Voogt, Michigan Cattlemen's Association

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Deanna Stamp called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m., March 11, 1999. Secretary Tatter called the roll with Director Wyant and all Commissioners present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: COMMISSIONER SKOGMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 11, 1999, AGENDA AS PRESENTED. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MAITLAND MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 10, 1999, MINUTES AS PRESENTED WITH A CORRECTION TO PAGE 4, FIRST PARAGRAPH, 2ND SENTENCE, TO READ "OLEIC" INSTEAD OF "HI-LAKE." SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Michigan Commission of Agriculture is tentatively scheduled for April 14, 1999, in Lansing, Michigan. The meeting will be held in the Dean Pridgeon Conference Room, Michigan Department of Agriculture, 4th Floor, Ottawa State Office Building.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSIONERS' PER DIEM AND TRAVEL

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MAITLAND MOVED TO APPROVE COMMISSIONER STAMP'S PER DIEM AND TRAVEL TO ATTEND THE MICHIGAN BEAN SHIPPERS MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 24, 1999, IN FRANKENMUTH, MICHIGAN, AND THE ULTIMATE FARMLAND TOUR '99, MARCH 25-29, 1999, SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF DIRECTOR'S OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

MOTION: COMMISSIONER DARLING MOVED TO APPROVE DIRECTOR WYANT'S OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL ON APRIL 21-22, 1999, TO ATTEND THE REGION 5 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY MEETING IN MINNESOTA. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Tom Reed, Executive Director of the Michigan Livestock Exchange (MLE), provided the Commission with an update on the various issues and projects within Michigan's livestock industry. He discussed Dairyland

Direct, a joint venture between dairy cooperatives, as well as the new Quality Uniform Identified and Documented (QUID) cattle program. Mr. Reed expressed his appreciation to Director Wyant and the staff of the Michigan Department of Agriculture for their assistance during the Packerland purchase of MURCO process.

RESOLUTION HONORING LLOYD RUESINK

MOTION: COMMISSIONER DARLING MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE RESOLUTION HONORING LLOYD RUESINK BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Jordan Tatter reported that following the February Commission meeting, he and Brad Deacon of Governor Engler's office attended the public comments session of the Natural Resources Commission meeting that focused on the deer baiting issue. Commissioner Tatter also attended the final day of Southwest Michigan Horticulture Days, a two-day educational and display program. MDA's migrant labor group had an excellent display booth. Major programming emphasis was on the economic concerns of the horticultural industry, as well as production practices. Commissioner Tatter also attended a local grower meeting conducted by Senator Abraham and Representative Upton. The meeting of over 200 attendees focused on farm labor availability and associated paperwork concerns, as well as the economic plight of pork producers. A specific issue dealing with the collection of peach crop economic data in Michigan that puts growers at a disadvantage for crop insurance payments was presented; Dale Sherwin of MDA is assisting the peach growers group in resolving this issue.

Commissioner Tatter traveled to California for six days of industry meetings. The Western Frozen Food Convention, sponsored by the American Frozen Food Institute, was the prime purpose of the trip. The meeting of about 1,600 people was well-attended by Michigan frozen fruit and vegetable processors, as well as major wholesalers, retailers, brokers and distributors. Several other states had delegations of agency staff in attendance and Commissioner Tatter believes this may be an opportunity for MDA marketing to support Michigan-based processors in sales efforts. He added that the Michigan Apple Committee field sales staff was in attendance.

He also reported that he attended the two-day Michigan Food Processors Association 1999 Winter Conference; moderated an annual Benton Harbor/St. Joseph Urban-Rural Rotary luncheon, at which a panel of local growers spoke on the future of agriculture in Berrien County; and, along with other commissioners, Director Wyant and MDA staff, attended the Dean's Luncheon, toured the MSU Meat Laboratory with Commissioner Darling, and attended the Future Farmers of America dinner that was held in conjunction with MSU's Agriculture and Natural Resources Week.

Commissioner Tatter said that he, Director Wyant and MDA staff participated in a meeting with the Michigan Land Use Institute and allied groups. The Institute had issued a press release critical of Michigan's Right to Farm program that is administered by MDA in partnership with other state and federal agencies.

Commissioner Tatter also said he attended a luncheon meeting with the USDA/DNR/MDA/MDPH group that was in the middle of a three-day session dealing with the design of split-state status for bovine tuberculosis regulation.

Since the last commission meeting, Governor Engler appointed Commissioner Tatter as the agricultural representative to the Transportation Funding Study Committee. This committee will consider the distribution formula for allocating money among state highways, county road commissions, municipalities and transit agencies, as well as review transportation funding options, transportation investment priorities and potential strategies for maximizing return on transportation investments. The committee's recommendations will guide the Legislature in distributing over \$2 billion a year in the years to come.

Commissioner Tatter commented that the weather is still "strange" in southwest Michigan and peach growers in Berrien County will be looking to the year 2000 for their next crop.

Commissioner Shirley Skogman reported that winter is still holding tough in the Upper Peninsula, with a week of below-zero mornings. The last three major snowfalls that hit lower Michigan missed the Upper Peninsula and the cold weather has helped to keep full potato storage areas cool. She said that the potato market continues to be sluggish. She said that she knows of farmers in Wisconsin who are delivering number-one potatoes to a food processor in the Detroit area for \$6.00/cwt. delivered. This is a market where their farm normally sends number-two potatoes. She said the processor certainly would not buy the number-two potatoes when number-ones can be purchased at the same price. She said that they did manage to ship out 11 loads of seed that were under contract. She added that the Wisconsin growers are unsure of their planting intentions for next spring and are unwilling to commit to any seed. She stated that their farm did have a three-year contract with one grower, and they have called him repeatedly to see when he might take delivery. Unfortunately, he has told them he does not know what he is going to do this spring and they should find other markets. Commissioner Skogman said they are in a very serious predicament. She said that if they do sell them to someone else, which is highly unlikely, and then this grower decides to take delivery in April or May, they could be accused of breaking their contract and become liable for a lawsuit. On the other hand, if they force the grower to take an unwanted delivery, they may not receive payment. She commented that everyone she spoke with has indicated that many potatoes will be dumped this spring. She feels that this is extremely unfortunate when the potatoes could be used in school lunch programs or food banks.

Commissioner Skogman attended the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) listening session held recently in Marquette. She said there were many sportsmen, county officials, foresters, and a few dairy farmers in attendance. The DNR was well represented with field staff and biologists. Most of the people who spoke expressed opposition to a statewide deer feeding ban. Commissioner Skogman shared some of the comments that were made at the meeting: "the deer herd has become so domesticated it cannot survive without help from humans;" "the Ag Department should tighten its rein on the dairy producers because maybe it was the cattle that transmitted the disease to the deer;" and "if we outlaw feeding, we will be making outlaws out of people."

She said that there was a lot of concern voiced about Michigan's wild turkey population. It is believed that the turkeys have no chance of survival in the Upper Peninsula if they can not be fed and many feel that feeding is their right. They also believe that any decision made on banning deer feeding needs to be based on biological and scientific evidence, not on emotion. However, some people commented that they did not believe what the biologists told them anyway. Many expressed the opinion that antlerless deer hunting should be allowed more in the Upper Peninsula. Commissioner Skogman said she was amazed by the amount of money that is raised for the supplemental feeding of deer. In Dickinson County alone, Wildlife Unlimited raised \$400,000 for supplemental feeding. She said there were a few people who voiced support for a feeding ban. One was a forester who spoke of the regeneration efforts that are hampered by a larger deer herd. He also said that when deer are fed they do not migrate as they should and when the feeding is stopped the deer are trapped and usually do not survive.

Commissioner Skogman expressed her appreciation that a district soil conservationist has been hired to fill the vacancy in the Upper Peninsula.

Commissioner Douglas Darling reported that during the past month he attended a Soil Conservation District reception and a National Corn Growers Association meeting in New Mexico. He said that many of the same issues that face Michigan are of concern to other states as well.

Commissioner Darling said he also attended the Michigan Corn Growers Association Annual Meeting held in Frankenmuth, Michigan, the Dean's Luncheon held in conjunction with MSU's ANR Week, and toured the MSU Meat Laboratory. He also participated in the FFA banquet and convention. He commented that it is very refreshing to see the enthusiasm of these youth involved in agriculture. He added that the FFA legislative reception was very well attended, and offered legislators an opportunity to see agriculture's future generation. Commissioner Darling also attended a Senate Ag Committee hearing regarding township livestock restrictions. He believes that there is a quiet depression going on right now with historic lows across the board in every commodity group. He said that it is important the MDA and the Commission look at what tools can be given to help the farmer. He believes that the federal fast track trade legislation will be addressed this fall with the World Trade Organization and China is working on becoming a partner. The Commission may need to address this issue soon, as well as the issues of ag security zones and property taxes.

Commissioner James Maitland reported that he attended Senator McManus' hearing on township zoning restrictions and was quite impressed with the reliance upon MDA by legislators and staff. He said he had an opportunity to talk with Lee Wilson, supervisor of Garfield Township in Grand Traverse County and president of the Michigan Townships Association. They discussed the issues of zoning and township rules and regulations. Mr. Wilson has offered to assist the Commission and MDA in the development of recommendations. Commissioner Maitland believes that Mr. Wilson has an excellent understanding about the concerns of agriculture and would be a great asset.

Commissioner Deanna Stamp reported that she attended the Michigan Bean Shippers Association Annual Meeting held in Frankenmuth, Michigan. There is a lot of uncertainty about the future of agriculture. She said that black bean acreage was up this year in Canada and in the Minnesota/North Dakota regions of the country. She added that there is potential for increased acreage in Michigan, but the black bean market is very depressed at this time and there is no price on the board or contracts offered. She said that there have been some fairly good contracts available for some of the other types and there could possibly be a market for navy beans this year. Many growers have moved away from the traditional crop of navy beans because of the quality problems experienced over previous years.

Commissioner Stamp expressed her concern about the crop insurance program and how it is written in regard to dry beans. It is very difficult to use crop insurance as a protection when growing such a quality-sensitive crop and when all varieties are treated the same in the dry bean category.

She also reported that even though milk prices have seen record highs recently, expected lows would occur in the next few months. Prices have gone from a \$16.27 basic formula price in January to a February price of \$10.27; a \$6.00 decline.

Commissioner Stamp talked about the Dairy and Beef Quality Assurance Program and explained that this is a voluntary program used by dairy producers and is a certification process the producers go through with their veterinarian. It is an excellent educational program for producers to learn and understand the implications of antibiotic usage. She encourages all producers to participate in this program. She also said that it has been suggested that MDA notify producers when certificates are in need of renewal. Commissioner Stamp agrees that by sending a postcard to the producer reminding them of the upcoming renewal date could eliminate unnecessary fines. Director Wyant agreed and indicated he would discuss the matter with appropriate staff in the Food and Dairy Division.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Vicki Pontz-Teachout, Legislative Liaison

Vicki Pontz-Teachout, Legislative Liaison, distributed and reviewed the March MDA Legislative Report. She reported that MDA's budget has passed the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee and will go before the full Senate Appropriations Committee. Additional monies were added to the Governor's recommendations--\$4.9 million to the General Fund--a total of \$6.8 million. These additional monies will be directed toward the Michigan Biotechnology Institute, the Migrant Labor Housing Program, the 4-H Foundation of Michigan, and horse race programs.

Ms. Pontz-Teachout said that a Senate Task Force on Agriculture Preservation, chaired by Senator George McManus, would examine the status and future of Michigan's second largest industry. Senators Ken Sikkema, Joanne Emmons, Don Koivisto and Dianne Byrum will serve on the task force. Public hearings will be held at four or five locations around the state between April and June, with a final report released in September.

Director Wyant informed the Commission that Vicki Pontz-Teachout will assume a new responsibility within MDA and will no longer serve as the Legislative Liaison. She will manage MDA's Environmental Assurance Program and will oversee the department's effort to develop and implement comprehensive policies on land use as part of the Environmental Stewardship Division. In the interim, Dale Sherwin and Keith Creagh will assume legislative activities until a new legislative liaison is hired.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION ON DEER FEEDING BAN

Director Wyant expressed his appreciation for the excellent testimony and discussion at yesterday's joint

meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Natural Resources Commission. He believes that there is a common understanding developing that bovine tuberculosis is a serious issue and immediate actions need to be taken to eradicate the disease in Michigan.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED THAT THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION ON A STATEWIDE BAN OF SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING OF DEER AND ELK BE ADOPTED:

WHEREAS, the supplemental feeding of wild free-ranging white-tailed deer in northeast Michigan has resulted in overpopulation of deer and has directly impacted the health of the deer herd in that area, and;

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Agriculture issued enforced restriction order 1998-01 on March 12, 1998, prohibiting the supplemental feeding of wild free-ranging deer and elk, including the entirety of five counties and portions of six other counties in northeast lower Michigan, and;

WHEREAS, an inflated deer and elk population that cannot be supported without supplemental feed results in the destruction and degradation of habitat for deer and elk and other wildlife, negatively impacts plants, including our forests, and the other animals within the ecosystem, and;

WHEREAS, the supplemental feeding of deer and elk is not scientifically or biologically supported as a resource management practice, and;

WHEREAS, the supplemental feeding has contributed to making northeast Michigan the only known place in North America where the bovine tuberculosis disease is able to sustain itself in a wild free ranging deer herd, and;

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan is committed to the eradication of the bovine tuberculosis disease from this state, the prevention of the disease in the remainder of the state and the maintenance of a stable, balanced, and healthy wild deer and elk herd and a viable livestock industry, and;

WHEREAS, the concentration of deer and elk around a common, unnatural feed source causes prolonged and increased face-to-face contacts among the animals, resulting in increased opportunities for the spread of disease, including bovine tuberculosis, and;

WHEREAS, once established in a wild deer or elk population, disease will threaten the overall health of the herd, the recreational opportunities associated with that herd, the agricultural industries, and the health and safety of the human population, and;

WHEREAS, although the Michigan Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources and their Commissions have lawfully exercised their respective authorities in an effort to eradicate bovine tuberculosis in northeast Michigan, it is clear those authorities are not adequate to ensure the eradication of the disease statewide and legislation is accordingly necessary, and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Michigan Commission of Agriculture hereby calls upon the Michigan Legislature to ban statewide supplemental feeding of wild free-ranging white-tailed deer and elk for the good of the natural environment, the deer and elk resource, the livestock industry and the people of the State of Michigan.

SECONDED.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Darling expressed his support of the resolution and stated the issue of feeding affects all aspects of agriculture, from producers of livestock to grain and feed producers. He believes that it will take everyone working together to solve this problem.

Commissioner Stamp expressed her support of the resolution and added that yesterday's meeting offered an opportunity to hear about the sound science and factual everyday situations. She is concerned, however, about the loss of a market for a farm commodity, but firmly believes that further devastation to the livestock industry in Michigan would have a far greater impact on the total grain marketing structure.

Commissioner Maitland supports the resolution and encourages the Department of Natural Resources to continue to expand its efforts in issuing of deer hunting permits to farmers. He believes that MDA also needs to continue its communication and education efforts with farmers to ensure that they are making every effort to separate feed from the deer herd.

Director Wyant agreed that this is fundamental to moving toward eradication. He said that continuing educational programs, surveillance and testing, and giving the farmers the tools they need are critical to bringing deer numbers down.

Commissioner Skogman expressed support for the ban, but is concerned about the possibility of farmers in the Upper Peninsula being turned in for feeding deer when in fact they are performing day-to-day farming practices.

Commissioner Darling agreed, but added that there are guidelines in place that address the generally accepted agricultural practices.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Dan Wyant

USDA Outlook for Agriculture: At a recent NASDA meeting, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman talked about the future of agriculture and it was not encouraging. Export markets are declining, with a \$5 billion reduction in export sales expected for 1999.

Pesticide Residue: The Consumers Union recently released a report alleging that pesticide residues are unsafe, especially to children. The report was followed by the Natural Resource Defense Council and the Environmental Work Group placing a full-page ad in *The New York Times*. Since 1991, MDA has been collecting pesticide residue data and the completed 1998 data shows that 100 percent of the samples taken were below tolerance levels. Director Wyant stated that Michigan was selected to receive an Environmental Protection Agency grant of \$200,000 to track pesticide use and produce data.

Right to Farm Program: The Michigan Land Use Institute issued a press release on February 11, 1999, challenging Michigan's Right to Farm program and alleging failure by MDA to oversee waste handling practices at large livestock operations. Director Wyant, Commissioner Tatter, MDA staff and others held a meeting yesterday with members from the Institute, the Michigan Environmental Council, the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, Clean Water Action, and the Michigan United Conservation Clubs to discuss the concerns. The discussion centered on the evolution of Michigan's Right to Farm program and where it is heading with respect to an environmental assurance program. Director Wyant said that it is important to recognize that agriculture strives to be a good environmental steward of the land and Michigan's Right to Farm program is recognized as a national model. MDA issued a rebuttal on February 16, 1999.

(Director Wyant stated that he would continue his report during the afternoon session of the meeting.)

UPDATE ON ETHANOL-- Keith Muxlow, Executive Director of the Michigan Corn Marketing Committee

Keith Muxlow, Executive Director of the Michigan Corn Marketing Committee, introduced Ken Swanson of the Michigan Corn Marketing Committee, Steve Errer and Elgin Darling of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan.

Elgin Darling explained that the Corn Marketing Program in Michigan is working on the development of an ethanol plant in Michigan. The ethanol steering committee is comprised of growers, farmers, agri-business people, representatives from the automotive industry, and MSU Extension.

Ken Swanson, chair of the ethanol steering committee, said that the committee was organized in 1998. A partial feasibility study has been completed and he explained what has been accomplished so far, and also what needs to be accomplished in the future to make the plant a reality. He discussed the following:

- Price relationship between gasoline and corn;
- Michigan currently uses 30 million gallons of ethanol;

- Michigan grows approximately 250 million bushels of corn and 160 million bushels go out of state;
- Plant size would need to be a 15 million gallon facility, requiring 5.6 million bushels of corn;
- The cost would be approximately \$23 to \$28 million;
- Demand;
- Market segments;
- Channels of distribution;
- Price and market trends;
- Potential growth outlook;
- Livestock numbers and history of feed prices; and
- Distribution and transportation.

Mr. Swanson expressed his appreciation on behalf of the steering committee for the opportunity to discuss the ethanol plant issue. The committee is soliciting the Commission's support in promoting the ethanol plant, assisting in obtaining farmer involvement, giving direction and guidance in working with other state and federal government agencies, and providing state financial assistance.

Director Wyant offered the support of MDA and said he appreciated the preliminary work that has already been completed. This preliminary work and feasibility study will be helpful in seeking state support.

UPDATE ON MSU FAIRTIME EXHIBIT – Julie Avery of Michigan State University, Barbara Hensinger and Marilyn Thelen of MDA Fairs , Expositions and Racing Division

Barbara Hensinger, director of the Michigan Fairs and Exhibitions Division, introduced Julie Avery, assistant curator of history at the Michigan State University museum, and Marilyn Thelen, specialist for fairs and racing at MDA. The Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University Museum, and the Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions have worked together to produce three traveling exhibits which explore the origins and contributions of America's educational fairs. The FairTime exhibit has toured many county fairs.

Marilyn Thelen distributed information about the FairTime exhibits. She said that MDA, Michigan Association of Fairs and MSU have worked to put together the three traveling exhibits that speak to the value of Michigan county fairs throughout history as well as today. The exhibits are "*America's Fairs Educating Communities*," "*Livestock Heritage Serving A Nation*," and "*Horse Racing—Early Fair Entertainment*."

Julie Avery added that county fairs have always reflected the range of opportunities in the region—agricultural, mechanical and domestic arts. She explained that the broad scope of this very unique art collection gives a literal "window to the past." Fair scenes, livestock breeds of the times, exhibition architecture, period fashion and fair time entertainment are featured. In addition to the traveling exhibition series, a major exhibition on America's fair history and Michigan's fairs today is being planned for exhibition at the MSU Museum October 2000 to June 2001.

INVITATION TO THE MICHIGAN HORSE EXPO, MARCH 12-14, 1999 – Ann Louise Budd, co-chair of the Michigan Horse Council and Expo

Ann Louise Budd, co-chair of the Michigan Horse Council and Horse Expo, extended an invitation to the Commission to attend this year's Horse Expo to be held March 12-14, 1999, at the MSU Livestock Pavilion. Ms. Budd also distributed a handout about the Michigan Horse Council Trails Committee. She explained that this committee is becoming increasingly active in all trails issues and representatives from the committee have participated in national trails symposiums. Ms. Budd also expressed her continuing concern about Lyme Disease in Michigan and noted that it has now been found in horses in Michigan.

UPDATE ON MICHIGAN'S EMERGENCY TUBE PROGRAM – Ben Darling, Environmental Stewardship Program

Ben Darling of the Environmental Stewardship Division distributed information and gave an overview of

Michigan's Emergency Tube Program. The weather-resistant tubes hold vital information for emergency crews about a farm or facility. Inside the tube is an emergency plan describing building locations, chemical/fertilizer storages, land features and fire concerns. Staff from the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program work with the farmer or owner in developing an emergency plan. Tubes are available from local Michigan Groundwater Stewardship representatives. The tubes must be clearly visible to emergency crews and are usually mounted on utility poles. It is expected that the program will be expanded to 73 counties, with 2,000 tubes in existence. Mr. Darling believes it is an excellent program and MDA will continue to work closely with firefighters, local emergency planning committees, and agricultural industries.

Commissioner Tatter suggested sharing the program with rural volunteer fire departments, and expand it industry-wide, not just production agricultural.

Mr. Darling agreed and said that a video is being developed this year to distribute to all volunteer fire departments and others.

UPDATE ON MICHIGAN INTEGRATED FOOD AND FARMING SYSTEMS – Tom Guthrie, Executive Director, and Jane Marshall, Executive Director of the Michigan Food Bank Council of Michigan

Tom Guthrie, Executive Director of Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS), showed a slide presentation and distributed materials highlighting the activities of MIFFS. The purpose of MIFFS is to promote projects and opportunities that sustain agriculture ecologically and socially. It is a non-profit organization to improve the economic and social well being of the people of Michigan who grow and eat food, and the ecological well-being of Michigan's natural resources. MIFFS focuses on five main areas: farming practices, marketing, farmland protection, education and community organizing. Mr. Guthrie said that MIFFS:

- Helps farmers learn about alternative farming practices to improve their quality of life and the quality of their land;
- Teaches farmers innovative marketing strategies that will make agricultural production profitable;
- Informs consumers about the importance of spending their food dollars in ways that will support Michigan farmers who use environmentally sound practices;
- Helps communities develop strategies to protect farmland from urban sprawl;
- Provides policy makers with examples of the barriers faced when people try to do things a little differently; and
- Forges new partnerships among farmers, consumers, environmentalists, agribusiness people, researchers, regulators, anti-hunger advocates, entrepreneurs, and others.

Jane Marshall, Executive Director of the Michigan Food Bank Council, and a member of the 1999 MIFFS Council, said this is an opportunity to bring together a diverse group of people. Membership of MIFFS is broad-based and represents all facets of the food industry. One of the key features of what MIFFS has been able to do is to provide "risk capital" dollars. The council had set aside \$7,000 for this effort. Five projects were funded: "*Hay Drying Bin*," "*Connected Common Ground for Youth*," "*Build Locally Grown, Direct Market Networks*," and "*Straw Bale Farm Stand*." The council is hopeful to find other funding sources for future risk capital ventures.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Robert Bender, State Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Coordinator, reported that today the Natural Resources Commission passed unanimously the following resolution on a statewide ban of supplemental feeding of deer and elk. They will, however, continue to allow baiting within deer management unit 452.

WHEREAS, supplemental feeding of wild free-ranging white-tailed deer in northeast Michigan has resulted in overpopulation of deer and has directly impacted the health of the deer herd in that area, and;

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Agriculture issued enforced restriction order 1998-01 on March 12, 1998, prohibiting the supplemental feeding of wild free-ranging deer and elk, including the entirety of five counties and portions of six other counties in northeast lower Michigan, and;

WHEREAS, in 1998, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources issued a Commission order restricting the use of bait in the same area of northeast lower Michigan, and;

WHEREAS, an inflated deer and elk population that cannot be supported without supplemental feed results in the destruction and degradation of habitat for deer and elk and other wildlife, negatively impacts plants, including our forests, and the other animals within the ecosystem, and;

WHEREAS, the supplemental feeding of deer and elk is not scientifically or biologically supported as a resource management practice, and;

WHEREAS, the supplemental feeding has contributed to making northeast Michigan the only known place in North America where the bovine tuberculosis disease is able to sustain itself in a wild free ranging deer herd, and;

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan is committed to the eradication of the bovine tuberculosis disease from this state; the prevention of the disease in the remainder of the state; and the maintenance of a stable, balanced, and healthy wild deer and elk herd and a viable livestock industry, and;

WHEREAS, the concentration of deer and elk around a common, unnatural feed source causes prolonged and increased face-to-face contacts among the animals, resulting in increased opportunities for the spread of disease, including bovine tuberculosis, and;

WHEREAS, once established in a wild deer or elk population, disease will threaten the overall health of the herd, the recreational opportunities associated with that herd, the agricultural industries, and the health and safety of the human population, and;

WHEREAS, although the Michigan Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources and their Commissions have lawfully exercised their respective authorities in an effort to eradicate bovine tuberculosis in northeast Michigan, it is clear those authorities are not adequate to ensure the eradication of the disease statewide and legislation is accordingly necessary, and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Natural Resources Commission hereby calls upon the Michigan Legislature to ban statewide supplemental feeding of wild free-ranging white-tailed deer and elk for the good of the natural environment, the deer and elk resources, the livestock industry, and the people of the State of Michigan.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 11:50 a.m. to allow the Commission to participate in the President's Luncheon.

RECONVENE

The meeting reconvened at 2:00 p.m.

UPDATE ON PROJECT GREEN – Dr. Larry Olsen of Michigan State University

Dr. Larry Olsen, Plant Coalition Coordinator, Michigan State University, distributed information highlighting Project GREEN. He also introduced Dr. Jim Flore, Professor of Horticulture, Michigan State University, and chair of the Project GREEN Director's Action Team.

Dr. Olsen said that the Pesticide Research Center has been renamed as the Center for Plant Systems. Dr. Olsen gave the following highlights on Project GREEN:

- A portion of the allocated money will be used to create new diagnostic lab services;
- An integrated crop management (ICM) coordinator and an ICM agent for Christmas trees have been hired; additional ICM agents specializing in fruits, vegetables and ornamentals will be hired;
- Crop integrators will be hired and located at MSU and will work with industry to anticipate needs and crises in their areas and inform the Plant Coalition; and

- New permanent, automated weather stations will be set up at outlying field research stations to provide weather data and forecast information to growers.

Dr. Olsen also distributed a copy of the 1999 Project GREEN proposals funded in the following areas: value-added, applied research, extension and education; and basic research.

UPDATE ON THE FOOD QUALITY PROTECTION ACT – Kenneth Rauscher and Brian Rowe, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division

Kenneth Rauscher, director of the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division, provided information on the MDA/MSU Food Quality Protection Act Targeted Pesticide Residue Study—1998; distributed copies of the brochure, "*Pesticides and Food—What you and your family need to know*," a handout on the Food Quality Protection Act, Year in Review, and information about the Farm Gate Residue Monitoring data. Mr. Rauscher reviewed the information and highlighted the following:

- MDA and MSU are completing their work on the summarization of data from the 1998 Farm Gate Pesticide Residue Monitoring program. The project, a \$200,000 EPA grant, evaluated pesticide residues at the farm gate and at various steps in the processing cycle and linking the information with pesticide use and usage information collected from the same growers for eight commodities. The commodities in the survey were apples, asparagus, blueberries, cucumbers, peaches, grapes, potatoes, and tart cherries.
- MDA has been doing farm gate sampling since 1991 and has a history of looking at six to eight commodities each year to determine residue levels at the farm gate. The goal is to provide real-world data regarding residue and usage to EPA for utilization in its tolerance reassessment activities.

Brian Rowe, manager of MDA's Pesticide Data Section reviewed the preliminary information. It is expected final results will be released by April 15, 1999, and will be made available through the MSU Experiment Station Journal Reports, scientific journals, MSU and MDA web sites and funneled directly to EPA to be included in the registration process.

He said that as EPA works to develop the way it will analyze the potential risk to humans it also would be developing a system called the "*Lifeline Model*." The model will look at what a person eats, touches, drinks, how often a home is sprayed for pests and insects, how often the lawn is sprayed, etc. As EPA breaks new ground on assessing tolerances, a number of issues will need to be addressed to develop a system that will involve science and public comment.

Commissioner Tatter asked how many samples have been tested.

Mr. Rowe responded over 250.

Commissioner Tatter asked how many of those 250 contained a pesticide not registered for the specific crop.

Mr. Rowe responded that there were none.

Commissioner Tatter asked how many of those 250 samples contained a pesticide over the tolerance level for the specific crop.

Mr. Rowe responded that there were none.

Commissioner Tatter asked who is responsible for sampling fruits and vegetables in the grocery store.

Mr. Rauscher responded that the MDA inspection is done at the wholesale outlet.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Patty Cantrell, Economic Analyst, Michigan Land Use Institute, referred to a report and press release issued February 11, 1999. She explained that the Michigan Land Use Institute is involved in land use issues. This organization and five other public interest groups have recently become involved in looking at the

Department of Agriculture due to the complaints they received about MDA's complaint response program. These organizations are concerned about the trend of large livestock factories in Michigan, Michigan's Right to Farm program, and MDA's complaint response program.

Ms. Cantrell said that the meeting held with MDA staff and Commissioner Tatter was appreciated. However, she does believe that Michigan needs stronger guidelines and standards and as people move from urban to rural areas, there is a lot of concern about property rights.

Director Wyant said that yesterday's meeting between the Michigan Environmental Council, West Michigan Environmental Action Council, Clean Water Action, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, and the Michigan Land Use Institute was very productive. Many issues were brought forth and there is a common interest and concern among all parties involved about environmental issues.

He said that there is occasional conflict about farm odor and noise between neighbors with respect to farming practices. He added that one of the purposes of Michigan's Right to Farm program is to address some of these concerns. It is possible that some of these standards need to be strengthened. He believes that this is a fair debate and one that MDA is open to discussing. However, it is important that the concerns raised be reviewed as separate issues. The Right to Farm program is not the cure-all for all of the concerns raised. It also should not be used to regulate the size of an operation or define the meaning of a "corporation." It is also important to recognize that the odor issue is one that is currently being addressed through research and technology.

Director Wyant thanked Ms. Cantrell for appearing before the Commission today and discussing these concerns. He said that MDA looks forward to working together with her organization and other groups on this issue.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (continued) – Dan Wyant

Food Safety: Recently at a National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) meeting, Director Wyant was elected as chair of the NASDA Food Safety Committee, which is part of the President's food safety initiative. He and MDA staff will be addressing the food safety issue.

MDA Organizational Changes: Keith Creagh reviewed some of the reassignments that have occurred recently within the department. The commodity assistance and international marketing programs will be reassigned to the Office of Agriculture Development. Denise Yockey has been transferred to the Executive Office to provide the necessary support to the Director for media relations, and the web site and GIS responsibilities have been transferred to the Finance and Technology Division.

ADJOURN

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MAITLAND MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS

The following documentation is on file in the office Commission of Agriculture office and can be obtained upon request:

ADDENDUM A JOINT MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION AND COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE – MARCH 10, 1999

Attachment A February 10, 1999, Michigan Commission of Agriculture Meeting Minutes

Attachment B March 1999 Legislative Report

Attachment C March 1999 Director's Report

Attachment D MSU *FairTime*—Three Exhibits on America's Fairs

Attachment E MSU *FairTime* Exhibit Schedule for 1999-2001

Attachment F Michigan Horse Council Trails Committee

Attachment G Michigan Horse Council Brochure

Attachment H Michigan Emergency Tube Project—Overview and Status Report

Attachment I Michigan Emergency Tube Brochure

Attachment J Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program

Attachment K MSU Extension Bulletin E-2575 "*Emergency Planning for the Farm*"

Attachment L Michigan Integrated Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS) Brochure

Attachment M Proposal Writing for Farmers Flyer

Attachment N MIFFS First Annual Meeting Report

Attachment O "*MIFFS Memo*" Newsletter

Attachment P "*Community Organizing for Farmland Protection in Michigan*" Handbook

Attachment Q GREEN 1998 Highlights

Attachment R 1999 Project GREEN Field Program Support

Attachment S 1999 Project GREEN Proposals Funded

Attachment T Food Quality Protection Act—Year in Review

Attachment U "*Pesticide and Food*" What you and your family need to know

Attachment V MDA/MSU FQPA Targeted Pesticide Residue Study-Preliminary Report, March 1, 1999