

**Michigan Commission of Agriculture Meeting
Michigan Department of Agriculture
Terrace Bay Inn
7146 P Road
Escanaba, Michigan**

**MEETING MINUTES
August 15, 2002**

PRESENT:

Douglas Darling, Chair, Commission of Agriculture
Nora Viau, Vice-Chair, Commission of Agriculture
Bill Pridgeon, Secretary, Commission of Agriculture
James Maitland, Commission of Agriculture
Jordan Tatter, Commission of Agriculture
Dan Wyant, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture

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

Michigan Department of Agriculture Staff
Upper Peninsula State Fair Board Staff
Ken Keeley, Michigan Association of Deer and Elk Breeders
Tonia Koppenaar, Michigan Farm Bureau
Dan Marsh, Professional Deer Producers
Rory Mattson, Delta Conservation District
Mindy Moore, Escanaba Daily Press
Shirley Skogman, Foster City, MI

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Darling called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture to order at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, August 15, 2002. Secretary Pridgeon called the roll with Director Wyant and all Commissioners present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: COMMISSIONER VIAU MOVED APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 15, 2002 AGENDA AS PRESENTED. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF JULY 16, 2002 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED APPROVAL OF THE JULY 16, 2002 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Commission of Agriculture is scheduled for September 18, 2002 at the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Wm. C. Geagley Laboratory, 1615 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing, Michigan.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSIONERS' PER DIEM AND/OR TRAVEL

NONE.

APPROVAL OF DIRECTOR'S OUT OF STATE TRAVEL

MOTION: COMMISSIONER VIAU MOVED APPROVAL OF DIRECTOR WYANT'S TRAVEL AS SUBMITTED:

SEPTEMBER 10, 2002, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, MEETING WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.

SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Jordan Tatter reported that his dismal comments last month regarding Michigan's 2002 fruit crop yields are still on target. Only blueberries are not suffering a major reduction from last year, yet they too are picking out short of initial estimates.

Since the July Commission meeting Commissioner Tatter participated in the following agriculture-related activities:

- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce Workgroup on Water Use.
- A joint meeting of the MSU Berrien County Extension Council and Berrien County Board of Commissioners.
- International Association of Refrigerated Warehousemen and the World Food Logistics Organization committee meetings in Washington, D.C.
- Π MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Scholarships Funding Golf Outing, along with Commissioner Maitland and Director Wyant.
- Viticulture Field Day, wine tasting and dinner at MSU's Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center, with over 200 attendees from the US and Canada.
- Michigan Chamber of Commerce Land Use Sub-Committee meeting, held to consider revising the 1998 Chamber Policy Statement on Land Use for full board action at its September meeting.
- Π Michigan Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association 2002 Apple Crop informational meeting for southwest Michigan growers and apple industry participants.

Efforts to utilize the remaining Agricultural Processing Renaissance Zone designations prior to year-end seem to be in the works. If tax breaks are considered for existing facilities, or even new facilities that duplicate and, thereby, compete with existing facilities or services, an outcry of anguish will be forthcoming from in-place businesses.

The state will, once again, be accused of picking winners and creating losers in a very fragile and competitive market where tax abatements can turn a losing venture into a momentary winner, at least on paper, wreaking havoc in the market in the meantime.

Commissioner Jim Maitland reported that there is a major disaster in northern Michigan fruit crops. The normal three to four week harvest period of intense work lasted about one day. For example, a normal harvest of cherries of 700 tanks (about 700,000 pounds) was about 20 tanks this year. The full impact is still waiting to be felt, but there will be far-reaching repercussions in the northern cherry area.

Commissioner Maitland attended the first day of a two-day TB meeting in Petosky hosted by Representative Shackleton. He complimented MDA and MDNR staff in doing an excellent job of presentation at the meeting.

Commissioner Maitland commended the UP State Fair Board on the brochure commemorating the 75th anniversary of the UP State Fair.

Commissioner Nora Viau welcomed everyone to the Upper Peninsula. She reported good hay weather this year, good pastures, and that grain harvest is underway.

Commissioner Bill Pridgeon reported that crops were extremely dry in his area, this combined with high temperatures result in low crop yields.

Commissioner Pridgeon attended a meeting on Animal Initiatives hosted by Michigan Farm Bureau. Concerns expressed at this meeting were that staffing levels at MSU were down due to retirements and not being competitive with salaries for livestock specialists.

Commissioner Douglas Darling reported that crops were looking poorly until the end of July when fairly uniform rains came through Southeastern Michigan and crops improved considerably over the last three weeks. Soybeans that should have pod-set are just now blooming, so the crops are behind somewhat. Crop reports recently released are reflecting the status of the nation's crops and the market is responding.

Commissioner Darling reported that Congress has passed the trade promotion authority and the President signed it last week, which is good news for US agriculture and trade. There are 190 different trade agreements and the US is party to only three of these. Trade Promotion Authority is extremely important to make us competitive in export trade.

WELCOME BY UPPER PENINSULA STATE FAIR MANAGER GRANT LARSEN

Director Wyant introduced Grant Larsen, Manager of the UP State Fair. Grant is taking advantage of the early retirement and his professionalism will be greatly missed.

Grant recognized Joanne Stefl and Dick Breyer from the UP State Fair Board and thanked them for attending. On behalf of the board he welcomed the Commission to the UP and gave a brief overview of the ag related activities taking place on the fairgrounds.

UPDATE OF BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS: Dr. Joan Arnoldi, State Veterinarian and Dr. Larry Granger, Animal Industry

Dr. Arnoldi and Dr. Granger met with USDA APHIS in Washington, DC on August 5 and 6 to present MDA's application for **split state status**. The application was very well received, with questions regarding Emmet County. She feels that their concerns were satisfied and promised to keep them informed on what was discovered during testing in Emmet County. APHIS was receptive to considering the natural boundary portion of the application. They also supported the idea of the lottery for testing in the free zone and asked to share it with other states with TB testing programs. APHIS predicted that it would be approximately one year before publication in the Federal Registry.

Dr. Arnoldi stated that she had offered an invitation to Ron DeHaven, the new Deputy for Veterinary Services to visit Michigan to see our programs. This visit is tentatively scheduled for November for him to become familiar with Michigan's problems and progress.

Dr. Granger presented to the Commission "**Bovine Tuberculosis Disease Free Zone - Surveillance Herd Testing and Animal Movement Requirements/Infected Surveillance Zones – Animal Identification Requirements**". As required by PA 466 of 1988, Section 9, The Animal Industry Act, the Department must inform the Commission of intentions to revise bovine TB movement testing requirements, publish the document, and receive public comment on the draft. The approximate effective date will be October 2002.

Dr. Granger reviewed the process for testing. Intrastate movement would be allowed under this plan. It does not change anything for Interstate movement. This order also does not change requirement for all herds to have been tested once before the end of 2003. Animal identification requirements were also reviewed.

Public comment was requested. Tonia Koppenaal, Michigan Farm Bureau indicated that MFB is supportive of the plan. She felt that this plan would move the TB program forward and take some of the cost off of the producers.

Final presentation to the Commission will take place after publication and public comment period.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT: Brad Deacon, Legislative Liaison

Brad Deacon reported that little had changed legislatively since the July Commission meeting. The legislature did meet on August 13, 2002, introducing changes to PA 232, Marketing Act; the Drain Code (requiring communities to have representation on drain boards); and a Wildlife Damage Claims Abatement Program (providing reimbursement to farmers with wildlife crop damage). Brad also gave a brief report on legislative races and primary results that may affect agriculture. The Legislature will be in session beginning September 17 for two weeks.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Dan Wyant

The Legislature passed and the Governor signed a **Farmland Preservation Act**. The Farmland Preservation Board has been meeting quite actively with our Environmental Stewardship staff. The Board has put together a scoring system that will allow utilization

of the revenue dollars that are in place for purchase of development rights. This is not yet finalized, but is close.

Natural Resources Commission is announcing this month, along with MDA, the **MDA/MDNR Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Surveillance and Response Plan**. MDNR had a Deer Management meeting in the UP on August 14, 2002 to talk about CWD. A press release will be going out to the public this week.

West Nile Virus – Thirty-two states to date have identified West Nile Virus, with thirty-six counties in Michigan having positive tests. The Department is involved with mosquito control and pesticide use.

Value Added Agriculture – MDA has been working with the industry and MSU on a coalition for Value Added Agriculture, "The Michigan Food and Ag Integration Center." Arlen Leholm and Chris Peterson of MSU have a very interesting presentation on what their vision of Value Added Agriculture is and what the focus would be.

Environmental Stewardship staff participated in a **National Meeting on Ag Labor** in Chicago. New York Department of Agriculture chaired the meeting with attendance by states utilizing a lot of farm labor. Feedback from the meeting was that Michigan had a much more positive relationship with labor in our farm community and a more extensive network of support services.

The Department received a letter from **Praxis** regarding perceived bias on part of the Department and MSU against bio-control. This is an on-going discussion. There are some issues we need to deal with and the Department will keep the Commission apprised of the situation. Bio-control is not subject to regulation by the State.

Dr. Arnoldi has been asked to sit on a search panel for the new **Animal Science Department Chair at MSU**.

The **Sierra Club** has indicated they intend to hold a rally/press conference for independent water sampling on farms in Michigan. They also have new information on their web site regarding animal factories containing background on the meat industry, stating cases of contaminated meat, workplace deaths, repeated violations of the meat-processing act. It specifically identifies eight or nine sites in Michigan, farms and processing facilities.

Additional monies for **Market Access Program**, a very successful export market program is good news for Michigan.

Mexico imposed a 40% tariff on **U.S. apples**. The U.S. was making good strides into the market and Mexico this week decided to put a tariff on apples.

Steve Reh has been named **Director of the Laboratory Division**. Steve was previously manager of operations at the Lab and has 26 years with the Department.

Bob Craig was recently appointed by U.S.D.A. Secretary, Anne Veneman to serve on **USDA Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets**. Bob's appointment to this Committee will be valuable to MDA programs.

Michigan State Fair, Detroit - Friday, August 23 is Governor's Day. This year the commodity groups are sponsoring the Governor's Day luncheon. MDA thanks the commodity groups for their participation.

Budget: The Office of Racing Commissioner budget of \$3.5 million was vetoed. The Governor wants to put the levels back to original recommendations. The Legislature has the opportunity in September to restore ORC's budget to the original recommendation.

Also vetoed was a \$60,000 grant for the Michigan Festivals Association to do a brochure; this was also vetoed last year.

A liability to pay local taxes on easements that MDA owns was vetoed in the amount of \$50,000. The Governor has asked for legislation to remove the State from this liability.

Early Retirements – The Department has 76 people leaving. About one-third are gone, the remainder will leave November 1, 2002. The full impact of this will start to be felt at the end of the year.

Emerald Ash Borer – Pesticide and Plant Pest Management has been working with USDA to come up with a work plan and federal resources. The issue is - what are we going to do with the dead trees? At this time the estimate is \$3.6 million annually to do sanitation and coordinate removal. Our resource requests focus on personnel to work with growers, enforce quarantines, look at alternatives, and working with MDNR.

Disaster Assistance – On July 16, 2002 the USDA Secretary did declare disaster areas for 26 Michigan counties, plus 24 adjacent counties that will qualify for low interest loans from the federal government. The Cherry Marketing Institute is working to address the loss of cherries; this is on-going and updates will be given when received.

The Michigan Apple Committee has come to an agreement with the Executive Director to leave his position. They will open a national search for a new Executive Director of the Michigan Apple Committee.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE RESOLUTIONS:

Director Wyant presented and recommended Commission approval of the resolutions for the following MDA employees who will be retiring on September 1, 2002:

IIJ. Douglas Park, Food and Dairy Division
IIRajagopal Sitaraman, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MAITLAND MOVED APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE RESOLUTIONS HONORING MDA EMPLOYEES WHO WILL BE RETIRING SEPTEMBER 1, 2002. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT GRANTS: Vicki Pontz-Teachout, Director, Environmental Stewardship Division

Vicki Pontz-Teachout reported on the 2003 grants to Conservation Districts. The matching grant selection process was provided to Commission with approval requested per legislative mandate.

The Department receives \$138,000 in private oil overcharge settlements, about \$36,000 of this goes to the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) to run the Envirothon Program, which is environmental education and competition run at the high school level. In the General Fund/General Purpose grants there is a \$1.954 million line item, which is broken down to the 79 Conservation Districts getting a base grant of \$20,000. One hundred thirty thousand dollars goes directly to MACD for training of board members and staff, and two hundred and forty-four thousand dollars that the legislature distributes to Conservation Districts on a competitive basis. This is a local matching grant that gets a 100% match at the local level (this is the portion that needs Commission approval). Additional dollars that go to Conservation Districts support 32 ground water technicians.

Vicki requested that the Commission approve the selection criteria for Conservation District proposals.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED APPROVAL OF THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT MATCHING GRANT SELECTION. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tonia Koppenaar of the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) encouraged the Department's and Commission's attendance at any of the MFB Annual Meetings taking place through the fall.

Tonia stated that based on discussions she has had with the Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) regarding the Emerald Ash Borer, the department and MSU have been very responsive in attempting to put forth dollars for research, control and treatment of the Emerald Ash Borer. There does appear to be some confusion as to what can be done to treat trees or prevent spread. She encourages the department, along with MSU, to get communication out to the producers, understanding that resources are scarce and a lot is being done to monitor the pest. It appears that there are various treatments taking place. In some cases, this may be poor investment, due to the market possibilities for the trees. MNLA is hosting a meeting in September to visit with legislators and share concern for the industry and possible loss of product.

Michigan Farm Bureau has been continuing work with the department on TB surveillance testing protocol and are very pleased that they have been able to reach a resolution on the cost to producers for testing.

Right to Forest legislation would provide some type of nuisance protection for forestry activity. MFB had some concerns on the legislation that it might infringe on some protection already offered for private woodlots through the Right to Farm program. Michigan Farm Bureau has been involved in discussion and some resolution has been reached at this time, basically holding Right to Forest harmless with this legislation, so if someone already meets the requirements under Right to Farm, then they would still have

that protection under Right to Forest. Michigan Farm Bureau believes that forestry is an agriculture practice.

Dan Marsh of Professional Deer Producers - There is a window of opportunity in the target counties to get samples to the diagnostic lab and get protocol in place. These are businesses that don't want their business interrupted, or if interrupted, in the least way possible; hopefully the protocol will ease that burden. We're working with the Department now to get something in place by the first of September. That will be a good thing for everybody because the people that are getting aligned are leaders in the industry and they will demonstrate cooperation and compliance. There isn't much of an issue with people understanding Chronic Wasting Disease and how important we find this disease. On August 29 we have a meeting with Jeff Armstrong, Dean of College of Ag and Natural Resources, MSU, about a full-blown farm cervidae study program. This has been in the works for about two years, and there is a contract in place with a scholarship program for large animal science; however funding is needed. We have worked with Michigan United Conservation Clubs on funding for the diagnostic lab and for testing costs for Chronic Wasting Disease.

The Michigan Deer and Elk Producers have put in a couple of grant applications for the Value Added for Velvet for Pets, and for funds for the PA 232 Marketing Committee to develop a business marketing plan to help increase sales and supply.

An invitation was extended to the Commission to attend a reception being held at the Terrace Bay Inn this evening.

Rory Mattson, Delta Conservation District – Thanked the Commission for their support of the Conservation Districts. There is a movement going on with conservation districts to look at more stable funding for conservation districts, to get away from the general fund budget.

On August 14, 2002 the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) held a Wildlife Habitat Summit in Crystal Falls. Bob Garner, Chair of the NRC, called this Summit, the objective was to work on habitat in the UP. The next meeting is October 9 in the eastern UP, it would be nice to have an MDA representative in attendance.

ADJOURN:

MOTION: COMMISSIONER VIAU MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:50 A.M. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ATTACHMENTS:

The following documentation is on file in the Commission of Agriculture office and is available upon request by contacting the Commission Secretary, Michigan Commission of Agriculture, Post Office Box 30017, Lansing, Michigan 48909, (517) 373-1104.

Attachment A	Commission of Agriculture July 16, 2002 Meeting Minutes
Attachment B	Bovine TB Disease Free Zone – Surveillance Herd Testing and Animal Movement Requirements and Identification Requirements
Attachment C	Director's Report August 2002
Attachment D	Retiree Resolutions
Attachment E	Conservation District Grant Selection Process