

**MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE**  
**Michigan Municipal League Capitol Office Conference Room**  
**208 North Capitol Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**  
**Lansing, Michigan 48933**

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 18, 2009**

**PRESENT:**

James Byrum, Chairperson  
Ann Jousma-Miller, Vice Chairperson  
Dale Norton, Secretary  
Don Coe, Commission of Agriculture  
Todd Regis, Commission of Agriculture  
Don Koivisto, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Byrum called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture to order at 9:02 a.m. on March 18, 2009. Commissioner Norton called the roll with Commissioners Byrum, Coe, Jousma-Miller, Norton, Regis, and Director Koivisto present.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Byrum reported a change in the order of the agenda is requested to move item twelve ahead of item eleven. This will allow the department's Budget Liaison to participate in the House Appropriations Committee meeting this morning.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER REGIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE  
REVISED MEETING AGENDA FOR MARCH 18, 2009. SECONDED BY  
COMMISSIONER NORTON. MOTION CARRIED.**

**REVISION TO JANUARY 8, 2009, MEETING MINTUTES**

Commissioner Jousma-Miller advised her comments during the January 8, 2009, meeting, should be corrected from reference to Pseudorabies (PRV) to Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD), noting there is no PRV in the Upper Peninsula (U.P).

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER NORTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE  
REVISED JANUARY 8, 2009, MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY  
COMMISSIONER REGIS. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 18, 2009, MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 18, 2009, MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER REGIS. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting will be held on April 28, 2009, at Constitution Hall, Lansing.

### **COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL**

Commissioners Jousma-Miller, Coe, and Norton traveled to attend today's meeting. There was no other travel submitted for approval.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER REGIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER NORTON. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

**Commissioner Norton** reported that during the Annual National Pork Industry meeting in Dallas recently, he was elected to the National Pork Board, which is the check-off portion of the pork industry. He will be one of 15 members who serve on the Board, five of whom are elected each year. The Board hires a CEO and ensures proper expenditure of the approximate \$55 million that the check-off generates. He has been Chair of the Board's Animal Welfare Committee for the past four years and most likely will step down from that committee.

Their cows have begun calving, for which the warm weather has been helpful. Corn prices continue to fluctuate and, although hog prices have increased somewhat, they are still not at a profitable level. With planting only a month away, there remains much indecision as to who is going to plant what.

A fellow seed corn producer in Iowa reported that, as is happening in Michigan, one of their major companies is cutting back 50% with others reducing also. In part, this is needed to reduce inventory, but also is in anticipation of a reduction in corn acreage.

**Commissioner Regis** reported he continues to work on changing food stamp distribution in the State of Michigan and is hopeful for that change before the end of this year. He is also working with a group to help fill some of the food desert in the Detroit area and looks forward to some announcements in the near future as to what that can mean – a true grocery store with fresh produce and meat within the city limits.

Last week, it was announced that one in five families in Michigan currently receive some type of food assistance. Even though a food collection effort was not possible for today, the need continues and he reminded anyone who has some additional food to please give because there are those who need it everyday of the year.

He had the opportunity to attend the Michigan Horse Council's annual Horse EXPO last weekend, which was another successful event enjoyed by a significant crowd. It is an amazing industry that generates considerable revenue for the community, but certainly a part of the agriculture industry not always remembered.

USA Today recently published a food safety article highlighting the problem of counterfeit foods entering the U.S. market. The incidence is increasing in these products where manufacturers have deliberately mislabeled the produce to increase profit margin. The most frequent area found is in seafood, but it is also being identified in olive oil, honey, maple syrup, and vanilla. This emphasizes why we need to increase our efforts in food safety.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) rule was implemented on March 16 and the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has that information available on their Web site.

He requested the department continue all of their great efforts in communicating and providing information relative to food safety, including the MDA Web site, Facebook, and hard-copy publications to ensure availability to producers, processors, and retailers, especially as new laws and regulations are introduced. This information is invaluable to the industry.

Today is Agriculture Day at the Capitol. March is national campaign awareness month for flowers, frozen foods, nutrition, and peanuts.

**Commissioner Jousma-Miller** reported the Upper Peninsula (U.P.) is just now beginning to realize the economic downturn.

The recent annual Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference held in the U.P. was an excellent conference that focused on new innovative agriculture. Nearly 200 were in attendance, which was a record for the conference.

Relative to the U.P. State Fair, on Monday, the title search (paid for by the County) was complete and although over 1,000 pages, no items of concern were noted. The Legislative piece required for transfer of the property and inventory is with the Legislative Services Bureau (LSB). Wording for the Authority (the

governing body) for the facility is complete and being transferred to all 15 U.P. counties.

**Commissioner Coe** attended the American Small Distillers Conference on February 19, during which they discussed the distilling legislation passed last year and the changes to that legislation that are required.

On February 21, he made a presentation at the Illinois Wine and Grape Conference on creating agriculture tourism destinations for the wine industry. That conference drew a large number of Midwest wine producers, emphasizing it is definitely a growing industry throughout the entire area. Michigan now has 62 licensed wineries.

He monitored the Specialty Crop Block Grant Advisory meeting on February 23, which the Director attended. He was very encouraged when MDA proposed to assist farms and other operators in deferring some of their costs on programs, and yet, they advised a preference for the department to use those funds for inspection services. It indicated the industry itself realizes we have a massive food safety concern and we have to do everything we can to devote additional resources to that effort.

The Commission had requested the department form a workgroup to consider specific food safety issues, particularly in the fruit and vegetable and fresh foods areas. On March 17, he attended the initial meeting of that Fruit and Vegetable (F&V) Workgroup, during which it became apparent we are reaching a stage where something must be done about the problem. A key obligation we have as a Commission is to ensure Michigan residents have a safe food supply, as well as certifying our exported food sales. The emerging small farm community who moves food directly to consumers presents another challenge and we have an obligation to ensure food safety from the small suppliers as well as the large producers.

However, in the absence of the Workgroup recognizing the issues and being prepared to come to the table with solutions, we can't expect funding for the inspection services of the food safety program we need to have in place. He made a modest proposal during the Workgroup meeting that perhaps a 1% sales tax on fresh food could be imposed to generate the funds needed to ensure we have an adequate inspection program in place.

The latest Michigan agriculture statistics indicate that over 10,000 farms are selling direct in one way or another to the consumers. This factor alone would overwhelm our current staff resources, which consists of only one federal and five state inspectors. Because we will be facing some major challenges if we

don't do something, the Workgroup should continue meeting to address the issues.

On February 24, he attended the first Food and Agriculture Summit in the Traverse City area for the six-county region, which was also attended by Kathy Fedder from MDA. The conference reiterated the fact we are changing the nature of our food systems and that food safety must be the cornerstone for any of these programs moving forward.

**Commissioner Byrum** emphasized that Commissioner Coe's proposal relative to a sales tax increase is merely his proposal during a workgroup meeting, not a proposal of the Commission. The local food movement is exciting and on the move; however, because of the challenges it brings, we are bringing key parties to the table for review and development of a strategy.

Animal welfare issues are drawing more attention following Proposition 2 in California. The Michigan Agri-Business Association (MABA) is engaged in several activities to address those concerns as they relate to the future of livestock and poultry production in Michigan.

Nutrient management will also continue to be a concern. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) approach with the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative is a departure from previous activities. Michigan needs to be very aggressive on how it pursues nutrient management, specifically manure, but fertilizer as well.

MABA has been heavily engaged in discussion of the Julian-Stille Bill that will be in front of the House Agriculture Committee at noon today and has been adamant the bill be maintained purely as a grant program. This is important to encourage the continued growth of innovative agriculture activities in Michigan.

An issue has developed with fertilizer containment. All large liquid fertilizer tanks in the state are required to be contained; however, some farmers are being creative to avoid that containment. There also are a great number of ammonia storage tanks around the country side, and since ammonia is a precursor to methamphetamine, there is concern about the old tanks individuals are requesting be filled. MABA will be watching both of these situations very closely.

There currently is a move in Minnesota to change the way the groundwater fees for pesticides are collected from manufacturers, putting the responsibility on retailers to remit the pesticide groundwater fees and looking to a private company for administration. This is another issue of which Michigan needs to be aware and track as it progresses.

With the indecision present in the agriculture industry, MABA's analysts are suggesting that, in the absence of change, we will essentially see about the same production as last year. Word was just received that some of the VeraSun ethanol plants have been sold. Seven of the original plants were acquired by Valero, an oil company. VeraSun's other plants, including the Woodbury plant in Michigan, remain unsold.

During the Lansing Agriculture Club meeting this morning, the Director received several accolades, including remarks from the Minority Leaders and the Agriculture Committee chairs. With all that is happening in agriculture today, it is good to hear the industry and our Legislature are acknowledging and recognizing what the department accomplishes, especially relative to food safety.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Koivisto noted that during Commission meetings, Commissioners often have suggestions or request the department pursue specific issues or concerns, and the department has developed a system that is working effectively to manage those requests. Ms. Ayers tracks all request items, reviews with Mr. Wenk and myself, assures all are assigned to staff within a week of the Commission meeting, and follows-up on completion of each, including communication back to the Commission.

In light of the recent animal welfare ballot initiatives in California, Florida, and Arizona, the issue will be very contentious in Michigan. The department wants to ensure its message on this issue is consistent with the Commission's wishes. He requested the Commission address the issue at some point in the near future.

He recently attended the Grape and Wine Industry Annual Conference held at Crystal Mountain. It was an excellent meeting and very well attended, which further confirms the tremendous interest in that industry.

He noted that Commissioner Coe touched on a portion of what the department is doing relative to the commodity section of the Farm Bill. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Advisory meeting on February 23 was an excellent meeting. Pursuant to U.S. Congress and Senator Stabenow's wishes, MDA is attempting to ensure the commodity groups receive the vast majority of the funding, with only a small percentage for the department to cover administrative costs. At that meeting, the department intended to transfer money for the Good Agricultural and Good Handling Practices Audit Program (GAP/GHP) initiatives; however, the commodity groups advised they prefer we put the money into more GAP/GHP inspectors to more effectively accomplish the inspections.

Commissioner Jousma-Miller is working diligently on conversion of the U.P. State Fair and the department is doing its best to ensure a smooth transition. She has

taken the lead and we know the entire community is very appreciative of all her efforts.

Relative to the peanut recall issue, MDA issued a news release yesterday highlighting the cost associated with just that one recall, which is already over \$420,000. Congressman Stupak is chairing a subcommittee later this week dealing with food safety issues and will be incorporating that report into his meeting to emphasize the need for the states to receive a greater share of FDA dollars for food safety. Michigan's report will be used in part as an example of what the states are encountering – FDA issues the recalls and the states do 95% of the work, which requires time and money.

The Director turned to the Chief Deputy Director Gordon Wenk to continue with the report.

Mr. Wenk noted Commissioner Coe did a good job defining what happened during the initial F&V Workgroup meeting. There was a wide range of discussion, and during the next meeting, focus will be concentrated on the two or three key items around which an action plan could initially be implemented.

Mr. Wenk provided a report of the recent National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) meeting which he attended in Washington, D.C. He had an opportunity to meet with the MABA leadership group, which was an excellent addition to the itinerary. USDA Secretary Vilsack and EPA Administrator Jackson also attended and spoke about the partnership between USDA and EPA moving forward to ensure they are working together.

He also met with the Cuban Special Interest Section, who is pushing for normalization of relations with the U.S. There was one resolution passed by NASDA recommending normalization of travel, which serves as a precursor to establishing normalized relations.

There was considerable discussion around the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit decision relative to pesticide application near water bodies that rather than being governed by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), would require applicators obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for application of pesticides that may drift onto or be in contact with surface water. Because this ruling could have an impact on agriculture across the country, discussion concluded the first step should be an attempt to request all 15 judges of that court hear the case, as opposed to merely the three who made that decision.

Animal welfare was a major topic of discussion in terms of what was happening in other states, which states were being targeted next, and what action should be

taken. No resolutions were passed in regard to that issue; however, there was considerable amount of discussion.

The topics of biotech, primarily from the animal side, cloning, and animal gene technology also generated much discussion, as well as emerging technology. In response to question from Commissioner Coe, Mr. Wenk confirmed that discussion around those topics were strictly science-based.

The Specialty Crop Task Force meeting offered an excellent opportunity for discussion around what was happening in this regard in other states and in Michigan. When compared to that of other states, Michigan's program is very well organized.

He held a good discussion with the Georgia attendees around the peanut recall situation. They expressed their frustrations with FDA and we shared some of our experiences with FDA as well.

The motion to send a letter from NASDA asking for the ability to increase from 10% to 20% the blend of ethanol in gasoline did not pass. However, a letter from some of the interested states will be sent.

He also had an opportunity to meet with Cindy Smith, Administrator of USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), about Michigan's Bovine TB Program Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). We will hear more about that later in the meeting today. In an attempt to manage this disease, we are taking an innovative approach in Michigan and this offered a good opportunity to explain our proposed program.

In response to question from Commissioner Coe relative to legislation in Congress that would merge USDA and FDA food safety responsibility and place it under the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS), Gordon reported that issue had not matured enough for NASDA to make a recommendation during their meeting. Commissioner Byrum reported several agriculture entities met with Senator Stabenow on Monday and all were united in agreeing that for food safety, the primary agency should continue to be USDA. Commissioner Byrum requested the department prepare a two-page document for the next meeting with recommendation as to whether MDA or the Commission of Agriculture should specifically pursue action in this regard.

### **DIRECTOR'S TRAVEL**

Director Koivisto advised he 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.

### **BUDGET UPDATE: Amy Epkey, Budget Officer**

Ms. Epkey reported the House Appropriations Committee is today considering a transfer package for the 2009 fiscal year, in which MDA has \$1.5 million of transfers for five different programs. Four of those programs are federally funded, meaning \$1.1 million is simply increased authorization to allow our spending of the federal dollars. The other \$400,000 is actually transferring the Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Program funding to the Animal Health and Welfare appropriation as a result of increased efforts on the cervid programs.

The 2010 budget is high priority at this point. The department had been scheduled to meet with the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee today for their report of recommendations; however, that meeting has been cancelled. Three meetings have been held with the Subcommittee, during which a department overview was provided; discussion ensued relative to dairy fees, racing programs, fairs, and the Bovine TB program; and the commodity groups also testified. The department is in constant communication with Senate staff and is beginning to receive inquiries from the House staff.

### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Nancy Nyquist, Legislative Liaison**

Ms. Nyquist summarized the current legislative activity, noting there are 15 bills at this point that the department is tracking. The Julian-Stille legislation is expected to move out of committee today; and, hopefully, by the first part of April, it will be signed into law. Department staff is confident they can have grantee workshops and related activities ready to go within 30 days of passage.

The Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) legislation is currently in the Senate Committee. The Legislative Service Bureau (LSB) is overwhelmed at this point and experiencing delays.

Commissioner Norton advised relative to Bill 4263, which would prohibit carbon monoxide or carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) euthanasia of a dog or other animal, the American Association of Swine Veterinarians and the National Pork Board conducted an update of the euthanasia guidelines for swine and including CO<sub>2</sub> as an acceptable practice for small pigs. He will provide a copy of those guidelines to Ms. Nyquist.

In response to inquiry from Commissioner Regis, Ms. Nyquist advised the Care of Animals Bill 4465, which would regulate pet shops, animal control shelters, etc., is most likely in part a result of reports that surfaced over the last few months relative to issues in Southeast Michigan.

**BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS ANNUAL SURVEILLANCE REPORT and BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU): Dr. Steven Halstead, State Veterinarian, and Dr. Steve Schmitt, Wildlife Veterinarian, Michigan Department of Natural Resources**

Dr. Schmitt reported the Bovine TB Annual Surveillance Report was also recently presented to the Natural Resources Commission. Reviewing the wildlife perspective of bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in Michigan, he noted in 2008, 16,260 deer were tested for bTB, nearly twice the number tested in 2007. The increase was a result of increased required testing for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

Commissioner Byrum suggested that copies of today's PowerPoint presentation be provided to the media representatives present at today's meeting. Ms. Ayers will coordinate distribution following the meeting.

Over the years, nearly 180,000 free-ranging deer have been tested for bTB, with 631 positives. In 2008, tests revealed 36 positives. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) met all of their testing goals by zones for the year. There were two ten-mile radius testing circles, one in Iosco County and one in Shiawassee County, due to finding a bTB positive deer in each of those counties. MDA and USDA must test all of the cattle in that area within six months and MDNR must test a minimum of 300 deer annually for five years. In Shiawassee and the six surrounding counties, almost 600 deer were tested and no positives have been found. Even more significant, in Shiawassee, they harvest more than 8,000 deer annually and no hunters reported TB lesions in any deer they harvested.

Maps indicating the location of the 36 bTB positive animals were reviewed, which indicated 34 of those were in the in the four-county area of Montmorency, Alpena, Oscoda, and Alcona counties. 78% of the total deer found have been from the Deer Management Unit (DMU) 452, which is the core area. There is some concern relative to the positive found in Iosco County due to the natural traveling corridor provided by the Au Sable River. Iosco County will be included as one of the five counties eligible for animal permits on private land and will be included in the early and late season hunts. Monitoring of that area will continue.

Two eradication strategies for deer have been in place for over ten years: 1) keep deer from concentrating by eliminating supplemental feeding and baiting; and 2) reduce deer numbers through hunting to a level supported by the natural vegetation. Success is measured through apparent bTB prevalence in DMU 452 and prevalence has been reduced from 4.9% in 1995 to 1.8% in 2008, which indicates a significant decreasing trend and confirms eradication strategies have been effective. Of late, the rate is not declining as rapidly, most likely because of the increase in the deer population, which increases the transmission rate and

the risk for the disease to spill from deer to cattle. MDNR is working with land owners in the 452 area to help them develop deer management plans for their land.

On the other side of the equation with feeding and baiting, there are positive reports from field staff in the five-county bTB area that show an increase in compliance with the ban. If this trend continues, it could pay large dividends in the future. MDNR also continues to work with other governmental agencies and private conservation to develop tools to help manage bTB, including an effective bTB vaccination, a new bTB blood test, and the bTB Disease Model, which is being developed with scientists in New Zealand.

In response to question from Commissioner Coe, Dr. Schmitt advised the Natural Resources Commission, although concerned about Iosco County, was pleased with the results indicated in the report and suggested no substantial changes to the program. With the programs currently in place, the bTB prevalence should continue to decline.

Dr. Schmitt confirmed bTB was introduced into the deer herd from cattle approximately 40-60 years ago and the strain has changed somewhat over time. Discussion ensued relative to the prevalence trends and the areas of concern. Commissioner Byrum requested the Commission be provided with the research supporting the current assumptions on the initial introduction, susceptibility, and prevalence factors as related to bTB in Michigan's cervid population.

Dr. Halstead reviewed statistics of the ten years of work around the bTB positive cattle herds in Michigan. 2002 brought the establishment of zones that included the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ) and Modified Accredited Advanced Zone (MAAZ). In 2005, the U.P. was advanced to Bovine TB Free status and three zones were then created. In 2008, the state had two positive cattle herds, one has been depopulated and management plans are being finalized for the other.

He also reviewed statistics of bTB positive cervid herds. Most of the cervids positive for this disease have also been in the DMU 452 area. Staff are currently working on a herd management plan with an owner in Montmorency County, assuming indemnification will not be an option. In that same county, a second cervid herd now has been confirmed positive for bTB.

There have not been bTB positive cattle or cervids in the Western counties of the MAZ in over five years, which is critical in our application to USDA for advancing status on that area. Even though a very low level of bTB may be present in the white-tailed deer population in that area, it is not being detected in the cattle livestock. Current criteria and results of testing meet the USDA requirements for application of status advancement.

The producers have expressed they want change in the Bovine TB Program, indicating MDA needs to use resources in the most effective manner. The current program requires random surveillance testing of over 1,800 herds on an annual basis. MDA's proposal for the program, if modified, would reduce testing to approximately 1,000 herds annually. It is a risk-based strategy that brings a much higher level of precision to the testing because we will be looking for disease where it is more likely to occur, which better utilizes resources for the program.

The program proposal for the next year is to link incentives with requirements that reflect risk. There is an incentive for producers to manage risk because it reduces the testing burden on those herds, as well as on their customers. Coupled with managing risk for the cattle herds, is the Wildlife Risk Mitigation Program effort, which matches producers with wildlife experts to implement management strategies to eliminate contact between the cattle and the white-tailed deer.

Because we are expecting a \$1.5 million federal fund reduction in the program's budget for 2010, we need to focus on the area where the risk exists in the MAAZ. In addition, our application to the USDA includes a change in the zone structure, whereby we are compartmentalizing the current MAZ and the border with the MAAZ to give us the ability to target the core area where the highest level of surveillance and the highest level of risk mitigation need to be. We will be focusing the resources to be more precise with the program.

This plan has been incorporated into the proposed MOU submitted to USDA two weeks ago. A conference call is scheduled on March 20 to discuss the new model with USDA and explain how it helps them move forward with the program and is consistent with Dr. Clifford's message about being more flexible and more practical within the Bovine TB Program nationwide. This is a model USDA could use to demonstrate that philosophy.

The new MOU needs to first be accepted by USDA and then signed by the three partners MDA, MDNR, and USDA. Following that, the risk mitigation efforts would need to be implemented by the producers. The industry as a whole is supportive of the proposed new program and of their bearing the burden of cost to implement the strategies.

Commissioner Byrum inquired relative to practices with hunt clubs to discourage animal to animal contact. Dr. Schmitt advised strategies include those discussed previously, reducing deer numbers and the feeding and baiting ban.

Director Koivisto reported MDNR Director, Becky Humphries, Michigan Farm Bureau President, Wayne Wood, Michigan United Conservation Clubs Executive Director, Dennis Muchmore, and he recently visited the high-risk area. They met with the media to publicize our desire to have both the hunt clubs and the farming community work together on mitigation and herd thinning in a cooperative fashion and emphasized the need to separate the two. Because of the overwhelming funds that would be required, USDA can no longer indemnify herds and separation has become a key aspect for them. Michigan stands at the forefront of that effort – to educate and accomplish the separation.

Discussion ensued relative to the risk-based program and question as to why this strategy had not been incorporated years ago. Dr. Halstead advised we have always talked about how to eliminate risk or reduce risk on operations. We have now created a program that is totally focused on risk. Commissioner Norton noted this situation has not happened anywhere else and we are moving through this process, learning as we go.

Commissioner Jousma-Miller inquired if the deer population in 452 has been reduced to an acceptable level. Dr. Schmitt noted what is acceptable for disease management is the lower the population, the better; however, what is politically acceptable must be considered. Encouraging hunting, particularly shooting of antlerless deer, or a bad winter are the only ways to decrease the deer population.

Commissioner Byrum requested a graph depicting the hunting take in the DMU 452 area and information on the special hunting seasons in the area. Dr. Schmitt will have staff create that information and confirmed if they could bring the deer numbers down in that area, it would have a considerable affect on the disease prevalence. The problem is mixed among social, economic, and political issues.

Various options specific to the recreational hunt clubs were discussed, on which the animals are not owned and there are no fences. Dr. Schmitt advised they do take measures to manage the herds.

In response to inquiry from Commissioner Byrum, Dr. Halstead advised we have not given up on the concept of eradication of bTB in cattle. Because we do not have direct control over the wild deer, we will focus on risk mitigation efforts to prevent or significantly reduce the risk of cattle being exposed.

In response to question from Commissioner Norton, Dr. Halstead reported the electronic identification (ID) and premise ID lawsuit is still in process, with MDA and USDA named as defendants. In Michigan, electronic ID for cattle was made mandatory because of our disease control effort. Director Koivisto noted electronic animal ID across the world has become the standard and most of the

U.S. is actually behind in that effort, with the exception of Michigan. Dr. Schmitt noted Austria was very successfully able to eradicate bTB due to the capability of tracking animals through their electronic animal ID system.

Yesterday, MDA received USDA's response to November's Bovine TB Program Review and an executive summary of that report was shared. It is very consistent with what they conveyed during the exit interview. Several recommendations were included, as well as commendation for the effectiveness we have accomplished with the program. Copies of the complete review will be made available to the Commission and to our partners.

### **COMMISSIONER ISSUES**

Commissioner Byrum reviewed a resolution before the Commission honoring the retirement of Ann Elizabeth Mapes. Ann has over 30 years of service with the department as a food inspector in the Food and Dairy Division and has held various official positions in her 25 years of service with the Service Employees International Union Local 517M.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER REGIS MOVED THE RESOLUTION FOR ANN ELIZABETH MAPES BE ADOPTED WITH BEST WISHES FOR HER LONG AND HEALTHY RETIREMENT. COMMISSIONER JOUSMA-MILLER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

Commissioner Byrum reported that he and Commissioner Regis, as the Commission Subcommittee, will be discussing the reorganization issues within the department during a meeting next Tuesday.

Understanding the broad interest and the many groups involved in the F&V Workgroup inspection situation, he suggested the Commission develop some broad parameters identifying areas of concern or direction to give guidance to the Workgroup. Commissioner Coe agreed this is clearly needed and noted the Workgroup felt the issue was so overwhelming, they asked MDA to: 1) summarize what is happening on the federal level, 2) consider impacts of the department's inspection staff capabilities, and 3) determine impacts of the fee increases on continued inspections.

Mr. Wenk has subsequently discussed with staff the need to organize an internal group to determine in what direction we need to go, and what parameters or focus we need to formulate. Those parameters will provide a starting point and once determined, the F&V Workgroup will again be convened to continue their efforts.

Because it would be impossible to have an inspector on each and every farm, Commissioner Byrum suggested standards be developed. Mr. Wenk advised the

Workgroup discussed developing an approach similar to the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) with those smaller producers, using a combination of a voluntary education and certification program following the MAEAP guidelines. There are also some best practices guidelines utilized in other countries that we could review for guidance.

Commissioner Coe advised the Workgroup also discussed investigating the potential of various resources across the state. He suggested those be investigated, as well as how responsibility might be assigned to the appropriate resources available. Commissioner Jousma-Miller suggested consideration of training contract inspectors or utilizing Conservation District MAEAP specialists to assist in this inspection area.

Commissioner Byrum noted the local food movement presents a challenge and we need to communicate to those producers they need to be very concerned about food safety in those production scenarios. We do not want to be the first state to experience a problem – we can be proactive to avoid those difficulties.

For the April 28 Commission meeting, Commissioner Byrum requested department staff, working with Commissioner Coe, establish parameters to provide guidance to the F&V Workgroup.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Mr. E.J. Brown, Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (MAFE)**, noted the association's concern relative to the Governor's funding proposals. Last week, announcements were made relative to racing fairs. In 2008, they had 25 county racing fairs, and in 2009 will have only 24, with a possibility of others not racing in 2009. In addition, there will be 66 less overnight races occurring in 2009. For all horse racing, whether it is at the big tracks or the county fairs, there is a 26% reduction in purse monies for 2009, in addition to further reductions scheduled for 2010. This is a significant concern to all horse owners, jockeys, and breeders.

MAFE will soon be announcing the Animal Health Livestock Emergency Response Plan for Fairs and Exhibitions, which was developed in conjunction with Michigan State University (MSU) Extension, MDA's Brad Deacon, and MSU Veterinarian School of Medicine. MAFE has been working over the last 4-5 years to education their members on zoonotic diseases, food-borne illnesses, and anything else that might happen at fairs and exhibitions.

On January 7-9, 2010, MAFE will host their 125<sup>th</sup> convention of fairs in Grand Rapids at the Amway Grand Plaza. They have also accepted an invitation from their international association to host their March 2010 regional meeting, which

will include Ontario, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Michigan. These are great opportunities next year to again showcase Michigan.

## **ADJOURN**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER JOUSMA-MILLER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

### Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture Commission Meeting Minutes January 8, 2009, Revised*
- C) *Agriculture Commission Meeting Minutes February 18, 2009*
- D) *Legislative Status – March 2009*
- E) *Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Report, February 18, 2009*
- F) *2008 Bovine TB Surveillance Report*
- G) *MDNR 2008 Disease Control Permit Program*
- H) *Executive Summary of Proposed Changes to MDA Bovine TB 2009 Memorandum of Understanding*
- I) *Memorandum of Understanding between MDA, MDNR, and USDA APHIS VS*
- J) *Executive Summary of USDA Bovine TB Program Review Report*
- K) *Resolution for Ann Elizabeth Mapes*