

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE
Dearth Community Center
Branch County Fairgrounds
262 S. Sprague Street, Coldwater, MI 49036

MEETING MINUTES
September 16, 2008

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

Todd Regis, Commission 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 September 16, 2008. Commissioner Dale Norton called the roll with Commissioners Byrum, Coe, Jousma-Miller, Norton, and Director Koivisto present; and Commissioner Regis absent.

Chairperson Byrum recognized Representative Bruce Caswell, who joined the meeting for today's proceedings.

RECOGNITION OF HOST AND GUESTS

Commissioner Norton recognized Janice Murphy, Manager of the Branch County Fairgrounds, and thanked her for hosting today's meeting. Ms. Murphy gave a brief history of the Dearth Community Center, noting it was the successful result of a community-wide effort that was initiated by one family's generous donation. The Center is used extensively by the community and surrounding areas.

Commissioner Norton introduced special guests: his father, Roland Norton, who is an integral part of their multi-generational family farm; Roberta Osborne, the Branch County Extension Director; Kendra Everett from Senator Cameron Brown's office; and the special guest presenters for today's meeting, Steve Smith, Agriculture Director for Red Gold, Inc., and Dr. Paul Sundberg, Vice President of Science Technology for the National Pork Board.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 16, 2008. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER NORTON. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 20, 2008, MEETING MINUTES

One change was noted for the August 20, 2008, meeting minutes: on page six, the first word should be corrected to border.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER NORTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 20, 2008, MEETING MINUTES AS CORRECTED. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER COE. MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting will be held on November 12, 2008, at Constitution Hall in Lansing. The December 9, 2008, meeting will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in conjunction with the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, and Farm Market EXPO.

COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL

Commissioners Coe and Jousma-Miller traveled for today's meeting.

There was no other travel submitted for approval.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER JOUSMA-MILLER. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Coe reported the Traverse area is hoping for several sunny days to help ripen the crops; otherwise, most expect a good harvest. He attended several Grand Traverse Vision Program meetings recently, noting that agriculture, the environment, and natural resources are the top priorities developed for the five-county community. There is a newly formed Food Policy Council in the Traverse area, on which he is representing the Michigan Commission of Agriculture. On September 9, he gave a Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) presentation to the Traverse City Rotary Club and he thanked the department for providing the presentation material.

Commissioner Jousma-Miller reported the Upper Peninsula (U.P.) is very involved in the bio-energy concept and resource management to achieve those efforts. They are involved in the second phase of development, whereby the Chemrec/NewPage paper mill would produce synthetic gas through relationship

with a Swedish company initiated by the Governor; resource capabilities are being pursued and confirmed. Delta County has entered into a joint governmental resolution of support for various bio-energy initiatives. Governor Granholm recognized Delta County as the first county in the state to have initiated this type of agreement and Commissioner Jousma-Miller summarized the various efforts moving forward as a result of the resolution. She also reported an increase of wolf damage and farm complaints in the U.P.

Commissioner Norton reported he has been involved with activities relative to the Pork Industry, including a group that is developing “The Responsible Pork Initiative” message for customers and consumers; a group responsible for rewriting the brochure dealing with euthanasia of swine; and planning work for the National Pork Board budgeting process. He reported heavy rainfalls in the area recently have slowed the tomato harvest. On September 15, he and Commissioners Coe and Jousma-Miller attended the Branch County Annual Farm Bureau meeting.

Commissioner Byrum reported the current drought conditions in numerous areas of the state will result in varied yields, while in the thumb and Saginaw Valley areas, record harvest is anticipated. The recent rainfall has interrupted harvest in many regions; if temperatures stay low, damage should be minimal. Issues continue with fertilizer supply, as the Potash Corporation remains on strike. He has been meeting with various commodity groups discussing the Specialty Crop Block Grants. Sugar beet yields are projected to be so high that producers are considering voluntarily setting aside as much as 10-15% of their acreage. The agriculture industry will continue to be busy during the fall months as it addresses various issues relative to the industry.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Koivisto reported he has attended various farm events and tours recently; he also had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Stupak to discuss issues at the national level.

Under Chief Deputy Director Wenk’s leadership, the department quickly mobilized on Friday, September 12, to assist in gathering evidence in response to the gas gouging issue.

MDA received notice from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that we are one of a select few states chosen to receive a grant of \$500,000 per year for three years. Mr. Wenk reported the FDA grant is designated for the establishment of a Michigan Food Protection Rapid Response Team within the department, which will allow the department to add a toxicologist and an epidemiologist, and to improve Michigan’s efforts to prevent, detect, and respond

quickly to food and feed incidents. Additional detail, including a news release is forthcoming.

The department recently participated in a very beneficial Foot and Mouth Disease exercise which was coordinated by MDA's Brad Deacon, conducted with Homeland Security funds, and coordinated with the Michigan State Police and several other state agencies. Consultants will be preparing an After-Action Report and developing an Improvement Plan which will help steer the department's emergency management efforts in the future.

Director Koivisto met with the Black Farmers Coalition to discuss various issues. Also in Wayne County, he joined a meeting with Forgotten Harvest, a three-county agency that gathers and redistributes food classified as out-dated by supermarkets, and discussed how the department might partner with them in the future.

A great deal of effort has been dedicated to the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) issue, including he and Chairperson Byrum recently participating in the Natural Resources Commission meeting for a discussion on that topic.

Budget Officer, Amy Epkey, reported on current budget issues. She reported House Bill 5343, the Pseudorabies Supplemental for \$415,000, and House Bill 5674, the Agriculture Equine Development Fund for \$11,600,000 for 2009, are moving through the Legislature. The department is also working closely with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to prepare a joint request to the State Budget Office related to the CWD efforts.

DIRECTOR'S TRAVEL

Director Koivisto reported he plans to travel this week to Bismark, North Dakota, to attend the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTOR'S TRAVEL. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER NORTON. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

Richard Sprague of Triple R Ranch Whitetails, Fremont, Michigan, spoke on behalf of several Privately Owned Cervid (POC) facilities in the state. He shared several documents, including a letter outlining his various concerns, MDA's CWD Mandatory Surveillance Plan, MDA's CWD Certification Program, MDA's January 10, 2008, letter to cervid producers, and MDA's letter to him dated July 25, 2008.

Mr. Sprague noted it is his understanding that MDNR and MDA work together enforcing the rules and regulations regarding the POC operations in the state.

He quoted various requirements in the CWD Surveillance Plan and CWD Certification Program. He advised he feels the sampling requirement and lack of herd plans has jeopardized all POC facilities in Michigan and that this represents a gross omission on the part of the State.

In June/July of 2008, he submitted a formal written request to MDA for an epidemiological evaluation of his POC facility and to be granted advanced status in Michigan's Voluntary CWD Certification Program. That request was denied based on program requirements and standards, which Mr. Sprague feels was due to a misunderstanding of his request. He feels the State Veterinarian should be responsible for having herd plans and testing guidelines in place for each facility in the state. He further expressed that facilities that are in compliance and not related to the positive CWD Index Herd should be released from quarantine immediately. He shared several views related to lab testing in general and compared CWD procedures with those being completed for the Bovine TB Program. Because of what he views as confusion surrounding the CWD issue, his business is losing money everyday; his life savings is on the line. The delay in releasing from quarantine those facilities that have participated in the programs, he feels, is unfairly placing a severe burden on the cervid business. He asked that someone from the State help him understand why it appears nothing is happening and to release him from quarantine today. Mr. Sprague offered if there is anything he can do to assist, the department please let him know.

Leonard Sprague of Sprague Whitetails, Fremont, Michigan, also shared a letter directed to the Commission. He expressed his frustration and advised he feels the State is being unresponsive to his concerns relative to what he needs to do to be released from quarantine and to remain in business.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Nancy Nyquist, Legislative Liaison

Nancy Nyquist reported the Legislature returned to session last week and the House Tourism and the Joint Senate Agriculture/Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation Committees received presentations on the CWD situation. The major focus of those meetings centered on the feeding and baiting issues and on personal economics for ranch owners and bait/feed distributors/growers.

Ms. Nyquist summarized the House Agriculture bi-partisan package that represents the "farm to school" package, including House Bills 6365 and 6366; House Bill 6367 which would create the "Select Michigan Act;" and House Bill 6368 that would create the "Farm-to-School Procurement Act" that delineates duties required by the Michigan Department of Education (MDOE) and MDA.

In addition, several resolutions of interest are on the House floor agenda today, including a Michigan Harvest for Michigan Kids Week, recommended MDOE

actions to promote local farm-to-school initiatives, and a Buy Fresh, Buy Local, Select Michigan Day.

The Senate Agriculture Committee has also moved forward several bills which are part of the Renewable Fuels Commission Report.

Tomorrow morning, the House Judiciary Committee is considering House Bills 6249 and 6250 which will allow for more definitions related to gas gouging under the Consumer Protection Act, giving the Attorney General additional authority.

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS (TB) PROGRAM UPDATE: Dr. Steven Halstead, State Veterinarian

Dr. Halstead confirmed the USDA Bovine TB Review is scheduled next week and preparations are underway. Since the March 2007 review, a concerted effort has resulted in numerous improvements with key areas still requiring focus to bring the program into compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). As we continue to reinforce the program, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has indicated it would not move the Modified Accredited Advanced Zone to Free Status anytime in the near future. Key areas of improvement include: 1) improve allocation of resources; 2) increase emphasis on preventing newly infected herds; 3) improve cattle movement tracking system; and 4) increase compliance efforts. He summarized the various specific activities being coordinated by the department to ensure progress toward these areas and summarized the numerous challenges involved.

In response to inquiry by Commissioner Coe, discussion ensued relative to various issues involved with surveillance of livestock vehicles at the Mackinac Bridge Check Station and means of potentially improving the law enforcement portion of the surveillance efforts. Director Koivisto noted that an additional \$750,000 annually would be required to provide a 24/7 chase vehicle for that purpose, which in practicality limits our capabilities. The Commission directed the department to aggressively pursue various alternative means of accomplishing improved control of livestock movement at the Mackinac Bridge in an effort to meet USDA's objective without having to impose additional regulations on the industry.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE UPDATE: Dr. Steve Halstead, State Veterinarian and Dr. Steve Schmitt, Director, Wildlife Disease Laboratory, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Drs. Halstead and Schmitt provided an overview of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), including the biology of the disease, the disease being discovered in Michigan, and how MDNR and MDA are addressing the issues.

Dr. Schmitt advised CWD is a nervous system disease found in cervidae – white-tailed deer, elk, moose, and mule deer – caused by a mutant version of proteins that occur normally in the body, called prions. It is a slowly progressive disease that causes changes in the brain resulting in emaciation, abnormal behavior, loss of fear of humans, drooling, isolation, increase in thirst and urination, and always eventual death of the animal. It is transmitted by direct or indirect contact through saliva, feces, and potentially urine; and anything which concentrates animals increases the risk of transmission. Resultant environmental contamination can remain for years.

The prion disease first being identified in 1978, CWD has been found in free-ranging cervids and privately owned cervid facilities (POCs) in 11 states and 2 Canadian provinces. No state where CWD has become established in the free-ranging deer or elk population as been able to eradicate the disease.

In response to question by Commissioner Jousma-Miller, Dr. Schmitt reported that Michigan maintains a detailed database of which states allow POC facilities to operate. As requested, he will share that information with the Commission, as well as a report of other states' baiting and feeding regulations.

Relative to human, domestic animal, and deer population health, the main concern is that CWD is a prion disease; however, there is no evidence that CWD can be transmitted to humans or to any animals other than cervids. Over a long period of time, scientific modeling indicates that a significant decrease of deer population may result.

Reviewed were details of Michigan's 2002 CWD Surveillance and Response Plan developed following discovery of the disease in Wisconsin that year. The goal of the plan is to protect the POC industry and prevent the establishment of the disease in the free-ranging deer population.

Dr. Halstead reviewed background of the CWD find in a Kent County POC breeding facility in August 2008; both Michigan State University (MSU) and the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) confirmed the findings. In response, MDNR and MDA acted quickly to quarantine and depopulate the positive herd, as well as quarantine all the approximately 560 POC facilities in the state. He explained details of the ongoing investigation and testing protocol with the goal of determining where the infection came into the CWD positive herd and where it may have gone if any animals were moved from the facility. As investigation continues, POC facilities identified as no longer having a risk will be released from quarantine. Eleven quarantines were released yesterday. He briefly reviewed the Cervid Industry Criteria for Release of Quarantine document, which outlines the specifics of the quarantine release criteria.

Pursuant to the CWD Surveillance and Response Plan, as well as current regulations, Dr. Schmitt advised an immediate ban was placed on all baiting and feeding of deer and elk in the Lower Peninsula, an increase in testing of deer and elk from POCs is planned, and collecting and testing of road-killed deer in the nine-township CWD surveillance zone will be coordinated. In addition, disease control permits have been made available in the CWD surveillance zone; a mandatory deer check has been imposed in the surveillance zone, with the only parts of a deer harvested allowed to be transported out being boned meat, capes, and antlers cleaned of all soft tissue; rehabilitation of wild deer, elk, and moose has become illegal statewide; all testing will be increased state-wide; and communication efforts will be increased significantly. It is important to aggressively manage this occurrence to prevent the establishment of CWD in captive or free-ranging deer in Michigan.

Dr. Halstead advised the state is bound by P.A. 466 to protect any information that potentially identifies the owner or property associated with a reportable disease investigation and legal counsel has advised that includes revealing the animal numbers associated with a herd, allowing that only a range of numbers may be stated. He confirmed that two tests of the identified animal were performed in Michigan and a third test was completed by the NVSL, all experts provided multiple confirming test results. He advised that after an animal is exposed to CWD, there is a potential period of incubation before it will test positive, which is the case of all biological systems and testing. In response to question by Commissioner Jousma-Miller, Dr. Schmitt confirmed the disease is generally transmitted from animal to animal and not during gestation or through the milk of a doe.

Dr. Halstead assured the Commission that he and his staff will continue to work with Rick Sprague to address his specific concerns and current situation. Additionally, he advised the next 30-50 herds eligible for quarantine release under the release protocol will be addressed in the next two to three weeks; however, the current primary focus needs to be on the ongoing trace activities and ensuring no additional positive animals exist in the POC herds in the state.

FARM MARKET TASK FORCE REPORT: Tom Kalchik, Associate Director, Michigan State University (MSU) Product Center, and Mark Skidmore, Morris Chair, State and Local Government and Finance and Policy, MSU

Mr. Kalchik reviewed the final report of the Farm Market Task Force, noting he and Mark Skidmore served as co-facilitators for the effort. Members of the Task Force were volunteers who represent a broad spectrum of agriculture, academia, and State and local governments. He reviewed the Task Force's four key recommendations: 1) the Michigan Agricultural Tourism, Local Zoning Guidebook and Model Zoning Ordinance should be adopted across Michigan in order to provide clarity of process; 2) a Generally Accepted Agriculture Management

Practices (GAAMP) Task Force should be created to write language that would provide standards for those parts of a Farm Market covered under the Right to Farm Act (RTF); 3) additional legislative action should be taken to address those parts of agricultural tourism that are not covered by RTF; and 4) a study should be commissioned to identify the current and future economic impact of a farm market/agri-tourism activity in Michigan, as currently, there is not enough information regarding the importance of this emerging industry to regional and state economies.

Dr. Skidmore emphasized they created a diverse workgroup and invited participation from a broad array of backgrounds, expertise, and interests to ensure recommending the best possible means of addressing the task. He discussed the challenges and issues expressed by these various interests, which included the struggle to clarify a definition for a Farm Market and to determine what is covered under RTF and the implications of that determination – this is where a Farm Market GAAMP would greatly assist the industry. It is also realized additional challenges will emerge as a farm market grows and expands, becoming more agri-tourism in nature and perhaps additional legislation would be required to assist in this process. The specific issues and contributions of local government were recognized in addressing the community as a whole.

Chairperson Byrum pointed out that a GAAMP will not deal with zoning, building codes, health codes, etc. Dr. Skidmore advised that in a very narrow context, a Farm Market is clearly specified in RTF, so there are some activities where an entrepreneur who wants to engage in some farm market activities should not have to go elsewhere to engage in those activities, but as that business expands, then we approach exactly what Commissioner Byrum is noting.

Commissioner Coe summarized the issues that have frequently arisen in his community, emphasizing that “Right to Market” needs to be established as an appropriate farm activity. He applauded the recommendations of the Task Force and recognized them for their excellent efforts in moving this endeavor forward.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MICHIGAN FARM MARKET TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT TO THE MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE. COMMISSIONER JOUSMA-MILLER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER BYRUM MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE PROCEED WITH LEGISLATION AND ACTIONS AS APPROPRIATE TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE ABOVE APPROVED MICHIGAN FARM MARKET TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT. COMMISSIONER JOUSMA-MILLER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE INITIATE THE DRAFTING OF GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (GAAMP) TO INCORPORATE FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OPERATION OF FARM MARKETS. COMMISSIONER JOUSMA-MILLER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

BUDGET UPDATE: Amy Epkey, Budget Officer

Ms. Epkey discussed the department's identified priorities for the budget development process. Detail in the 2010 budget documents distributed provided information relative to funding questions raised during the last Commission meeting. She reviewed the department's 2010 budget priorities which total \$8,598,600. Reviewed were details of the legislative action needed to existing laws, including item pricing and refined petroleum fund; additional funding needs, specifically animal health and response, consumer protection, food inspections and food-borne outbreak response, laboratory testing and response, Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), and plant pest inspections and response; and alternative funding source needs in the areas of Bovine Tuberculosis, animal health and welfare, and information technology. Strategy discussions regarding how to fund the budget priorities are underway.

Chairperson Byrum concurred with the budget recommendations and emphasized the department needs to be forward thinking with resource needs as it addresses the broad issues facing the changing agriculture industry and to fulfill the department's statutory requirements.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE INDUSTRY ISSUES: Steve Smith, Director of Agriculture, Red Gold, Inc.

Mr. Smith provided a brief overview of the processing tomato industry in Michigan, noting there are about 3,300 acres, valued at nearly \$11,000,000 in Michigan. There also is a large greenhouse industry in the state that provides plants for their own crop and for shipment to neighboring states.

He gave an overview of the Farm Flex provision included in the 2008 Farm Bill which allows growers of processing fruits and vegetables to plant seven different processing crops on base acres that were prevented prior to this. This was very critical to the continuation of the processing industry and will allow new generations to take over family operations, allow good Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices-rotations, and allow new producers to diversify – and the provision actually saves money for the Federal government.

Mr. Smith noted that under the provision, 9,000 acres were allocated in Michigan. He reviewed specifics of its numerous benefits and stressed there are many challenges facing the industry in the implementation of this provision. Chairperson Byrum suggested that, before the next meeting, the department determine what needs to be done to assist in the implementation of the Farm Flex provision of the 2008 Farm Bill.

New threats facing all Michigan specialty crops were reviewed, in particular, the scheduled release of Dicamba resistant soybeans in 2012. While there is sound reason for doing this, Dicamba is extremely harmful to most horticultural crops and landscaping – it would be the worst problem ever created for specialty crops. Dicamba is not only prone to drift, it will also volatilize for up to five days and move off-site more than two miles. In response, a regional solution is required involving government regulatory agencies, specialty crop associations, and the media in education of applicators.

Seasonal labor concerns were also discussed. There is movement in nearly all states to legislate very tough rules that are exceeding Federal rules relative to hiring standards and immigration; specific examples were reviewed. The impact on agriculture would have a potentially “chilling effect” on legal workers entering this region – legal workers would simply go to other regions without potential profiling.

Mr. Smith advised he felt that the Midwest has a unique opportunity to re-capture some of the West Coast fruit and vegetable business. Red Gold is very excited about the opportunities available.

Chairperson Byrum thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation and Commissioner Coe requested his PowerPoint be shared with the Commission. Commission Assistant, Cheri Ayers will coordinate that distribution.

PORK INDUSTRY ISSUES: Dr. Paul Sundberg, Vice President of Science Technology, National Pork Board

Dr. Sundberg provided background on the National Pork Board, noting the Board serves as the U.S. pig production industry’s national check-off organization and is funded through USDA by an assessment on each live animal transaction. Activities are directed by a board of 15 producers appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture that coordinates promotion, research, and consumer protection information activities. He confirmed Michigan’s pork industry has a strong and very active state-level association.

He gave an overview of the pork industry, noting pork production in the U.S. is concentrated along the Corn Belt in the Midwest. On any day of the year, there is an average of nearly 100,000 hogs moving in shipment across state lines and

anything that would disrupt that movement would have a devastating affect on the pork industry. 2007 represented a record year in pork exports, with major customers being Mexico and China, and numbers for 2008 are experiencing amazing growth. Exports represent an important part of the industry's profitability potential.

Relative to feral swine and the risk to domestic production, Dr. Sundberg demonstrated the increase in the feral swine population since 1982. He reviewed the various diseases common in feral swine that could spread to domestic swine and pose a significant risk to domestic pork production.

He provided an explanation of the various stages of the Pseudorabies Virus (PRV) Eradication Program, which was implemented during the eradication of PRV from the domestic swine herd, and what is required to receive PRV Free status. Reviewed were the protocol required when there is a confirmed case in commercial production swine and the disruptive consequences of just one state losing PRV Free status, particularly its devastating effect on the international trade market. He reported the Federal government is currently working on a comprehensive PRV Surveillance Plan that focuses on "high risk" herds. It was noted that because it is not known otherwise, feral swine must always be considered disease positive and a threat to the commercial pork industry.

In response to question by Commissioner Norton relative to how neighboring states may define the status of our commercial hogs, Dr. Sundberg noted it is an outcome based process – if the interface of feral swine with commercial pigs is controlled and the commercial pigs are disease free, PRV Free status is maintained and recognized by everyone.

The next step in the PRV Surveillance Plan is applying the Hazardous Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) concept to state plans for feral swine, through which clear definitions of feral and transitional swine will be developed. He emphasized that emergency preparedness and response always remain high priorities for every state.

Dr. Sundberg shared copies of the Board's Science and Technology Department brochures. Chairperson Byrum thanked Dr. Sundberg for his informative presentation, copies of which will be shared with the Commission.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES

Chairperson Byrum reported in relation to the resolution passed by the Commission relative to the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) position at Michigan State University, the USDA has reversed its position and will be filling that position. This is very good news – maintaining that station is critical to the dry bean, sugar beat, poultry, and food processing industries in Michigan.

He also noted there is confusion across the country-side regarding propane merchandising and selling. The department needs to provide some clarification on that situation and should ensure it stays ahead of that issue.

Another significant issue that will come before the Commission is the situation of the ban on all baiting and feeding of deer in elk in the Lower Peninsula that is in effect. This ban results in the producers of certain commodities having no traditional market for their harvests.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Leonard Sprague of Sprague Whitetails, Fremont, Michigan, again thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak. He pointed out that one of the trace-in farms is now released from quarantine and that he was advised by the industry that ranches have been designated as having the CWD lowest risk. Based on the current plan, Sprague Whitetails will be months down the road from possible release from quarantine. If there is anything the Commission could do to help this situation, he would greatly appreciate those efforts.

Richard Sprague of Triple R Ranch Whitetails, Fremont, Michigan, again spoke on behalf of several Privately Owned Cervid (POC) facilities in the state. He questioned why the wild deer population is not considered the same as feral swine in Michigan and seen as posing a health risk to the POC facilities.

Mr. Sprague asked what consideration is being given to his business and its value. He also noted their animals should not be considered captive (he noted as provided in P.A. 190, they are livestock animals) and he felt using the terminology captive disrespects the industry. Mr. Sprague advised that the department has not provided statistical tables to indicate what kind of numbers would be required for testing to be 95% confident at 2% prevalence rate.

Mr. Sprague expressed his disappointment in the MDNR and MDA, feeling the State is not doing its job in helping the cervid industry and that nothing has been offered in way of assistance to his business.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Coe suggested the Commission reconvene in the near future for the purpose of continuing discussion of CWD issues.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER NORTON SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture Commission Meeting Minutes August 20, 2008*
- C) *Public Comment - Letter and packet of supporting information from Richard Sprague, Triple R Ranch Whitetails*
- D) *Public Comment – Letter from Leonard Sprague*
- E) *House Bills 6365, 6366, 6367, 6368, 6338, 6339, 6402,*
- F) *House Resolutions 407, 408, 409, 413, 415, 421*
- G) *Legislative Status – September 2008*
- H) *Chronic Wasting Disease – Power Point Presentation by Dr. Steve Schmitt and Dr. Steve Halstead*
- I) *Chronic Wasting Disease Eradication Program Update – September 5, 2008*
- J) *Cervid Industry Criteria for Release of Quarantine*
- K) *Michigan Farm Market Task Force Final Report to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture*
- L) *Michigan Department of Agriculture 2010 Budget Priorities*
- M) *Red Gold, Inc. – Power Point Presentation by Steve Smith, Director of Agriculture, Red Gold, Inc*
- N) *The Pork Industry Perspective – Power Point Presentation by Dr. Paul Sundberg, Vice President of Science and Technology, National Pork Board*
- O) *National Pork Board, Science and Technology Department Brochure*