

**Michigan Commission of Agriculture Meeting  
Michigan Department of Agriculture  
Wm. C. Geagley Laboratory  
1615 S. Harrison Road  
East Lansing, Michigan**

**MEETING MINUTES  
September 18, 2002**

**PRESENT:**

Douglas Darling, 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  
Jim Riley, Assistant Attorney General  
Ron Zellar, Assistant Attorney General  
Kristine Fedewa, Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems  
John Fink, Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems  
Tonia Koppenaar, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Dan Marsh, Michigan Deer and Elk Farmers Association  
Ron Nelson, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Bridget Patrick, Michigan Department of Community Health  
Dale Sheltroun, State Representative

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Darling called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture to order at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 18, 2002. Secretary Pridgeon called the roll with Director Wyant and Commissioners Darling, Maitland, Pridgeon, and Tatter present. Commissioner Viau was absent.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MAITLAND MOVED APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 18, 2002 AGENDA AS PRESENTED. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**APPROVAL OF AUGUST 15, 2002 MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 15, 2002 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Commission of Agriculture is scheduled for October 9, 2002 at the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Constitution Hall, 525 S. Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan.

## COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

**Commissioner William Pridgeon** stated that in the southwest area it is dry and harvest is starting. It was a year of "have and have not" as the crop yield varies greatly from area to area; there are 10-bushel beans, and some areas with their best yields ever. There is a lot of interest in the new Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funds. Livestock producers are interested because the cap has been removed on the size of operations and monies released. There is a tremendous amount of interest in the Manure Management Plans and whatever it takes to upgrade the facilities.

**Commissioner Jordan Tatter** reported that blueberry harvest in southwest Michigan is done and the crop was close to the three-year average. Peaches came in at about one-third of normal crop. Niagara grape harvest is underway and it will be about half a crop. Some concord grapes will not be harvested, as yields will be so small that the minimum per acre mechanical harvesting charge will not be covered. Fall apple harvest is beginning, and it looks like two-thirds of a crop. The diverse vegetable crop season has produced excellent yields being fed into a less than attractive price market. The American consumer has a bountiful choice of affordable fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, but it is less fun down-on-the-farms producing this bounty.

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

- The Michigan Deer and Elk Farmers Association Upper Peninsula reception and meeting.
- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce Water Use Sub-committee meeting, to revise the State Chamber policy statement on water use.
- Π The Michigan Food Processors Association Annual Harvest Golf Outing and dinner.
- The MBI International Board meeting.
- The Kalamazoo County MSU Extension Council meeting.
- Π The Michigan Chamber of Commerce Environmental Quality Committee meeting, followed by the State Chamber Board of Directors meeting.
- Π The 4-H Centennial Gala Celebration at which Director Wyant was honored.
- Π A tailgate event in the 4-H Youth Garden at MSU.

Chronic Wasting Disease in deer in Wisconsin has been met with seemingly drastic deer population control efforts when compared to our Michigan response to the Governor's Order to eliminate Bovine TB in Michigan. Involved state agencies should consider similar targeted efforts to the so-called "hot spots" of Bovine TB in the Deer Management Unit 452. Our directive from the Governor was to eliminate, not reduce the prevalence of, the disease.

**Commissioner Jim Maitland** returned from a China tour on Monday. He will give a formal presentation on the trip at the next Commission meeting. He stated that a report and pictures of China are on the Michigan Farm Bureau web site.

Apple harvest in the north has not started, as the crop is not maturing very well, even Macintosh are still green and hard. Cool night and warm day temperatures are needed to mature and color apples. It will be a late harvest and smaller fruit than normal due to the dry summer.

The cherry harvest was virtually nothing. It will be a tough year for the tart cherry growers.

Commissioner Maitland reported that while in China he looked into the possibility of selling deer antler velvet. Most of the velvet in stores he visited is imported from Russia. He left samples and information with the consulate in Beijing and in Shanghai, where they had some sample displays of products. He was told the best way to get into the China market was to contact Wal-Mart, as they are building stores in China.

Commissioner Maitland visited Xian, in the northwest part of China and visited an apple processing plant. The manager of the plant was very willing to talk with the group. This plant reported processing 300 million pounds of juice apples; the same amount of juice apples that the state of Michigan processes. The facility used state-of-the-art European equipment, and was spotlessly clean. At the back door farmers came in with 100 pounds of apples on the back of a three wheel cart; a terrible looking product, rot, and deformed, but no worms. Apples come from approximately 40,000 farmers. The group did not see any large apple farms, but every farm in that area had about 50-100 apple trees. The owner of the facility had many acres of Granny Smith seedlings. They were top grafting all the old Fuji trees to Granny Smith, which is a better juice apple. They pay approximately three-quarters cent per pound to the growers. The average peasant makes about \$300 per year. The manager said that last year he sold ten percent of his production to the U.S. and the rest was sold to Europe. Europe reprocessed it, mixed it and sold it to the U.S. China will continue to be a major player in apple juice concentrate.

Commissioner Maitland stated that if China wanted to get into grapes, they could destroy the grape market in the U.S. At this time they sell mainly fresh large, seeded grapes. He didn't feel they had changed their farming practices for many years. Sanitary conditions are nonexistent, using human waste for fertilizer. People with backpack sprayers were observed spraying apple orchards. No disease problems were noticed. No tractors were seen, corn was cut one stalk at a time, brought to the village, shucked out on the cement to dry. They burn the stalks and straw, as they have no use for it. He felt that if the Chinese wanted to dominate any form of agriculture production they have the manpower to do it.

**Chair Douglas Darling** attended the Michigan State Fair and felt that each year the grounds show improvement. The prices received at the auction were down this year.

Chair Darling judged a district discussion meet for the Michigan Farm Bureau. He enjoyed hearing the young farmers and their viewpoints on the various issues.

He also attended a Farm Bill meeting hosted by FSA and MSU Cooperative Extension. They are hosting many around the state, educating farmers on the new farm bill, what

the programs are, and how to apply for them. There are many new commodities that are in the farm program now.

Chair Darling stated that with more farmers planning to plant wheat, seed might be hard to find. Bean harvest in southern Lenawee County has started and bean yields are between 10 and 15 bushel. Corn harvest has not started, but the crop looks marginal. This same area had record crops last year due to rainfall, but this year rain completely missed them.

Chair Darling thanked Commissioner Jim Maitland for representing the Michigan Commission of Agriculture on the Michigan Farm Bureau China tour of September 1 – 15, 2002.

**Director Wyant introduced Steve Reh**, Director of the Laboratory Division. Director Wyant also noted that the Commission was meeting in the Guyer Conference Room, named for the former director of the MDA. Dr. Guyer was able to secure \$10 million in funds to help renovate the Laboratory.

Steve Reh welcomed the Commission to the newly renovated Geagley Laboratory. Steve invited everyone to join him on a tour of the Laboratory that afternoon. The renovation took approximately five years, two years of planning and three years of actual construction. The facility was entirely renovated, interior walls were removed, rooms were redesigned for functionality and efficiency. Steve commended the Lab staff for working through this entire time frame; through dust, noise, moving from one area to another, squeezing into small spaces, in order for the work to get done.

#### **UPDATE ON BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS: Dr. Joan Arnoldi, State Veterinarian**

Dr. Arnoldi reviewed the plan for testing in the disease free zone and the lottery systems developed to allow testing of a statistically significant group of cattle in the zone over the next six years. Public comment was accepted for 30 days and, in addition, a public comment meeting was held in Lansing. Six individuals attended the meeting, two spoke, and two written comments were received. Support for the surveillance system seems very strong; no negative comments were received. MDA staff is looking at ways to handle concern raised about a person being chosen twice in sequence. The bigger concern was about the mandatory identification. A couple of comments were received about the cost to producers and whether or not it was fair to require identification. This program is not just about identification of the diseased TB cattle, but also a traceback system in the event of any severe disease problem. MDA, along with our federal partners, is looking at using electronic identification on a cost share basis. MDA has some federal support monies available, and during the next year could do testing on a cost share basis and then review. The plan is to move ahead with the surveillance system starting October 1. There was support at the public comment meeting for this.

Dr. Arnoldi also reported on a situation occurring at the MSU Lab last week. MSU has ongoing research to develop a vaccine for pneumonia in swine. This organism, *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae*, which usually causes lung lesions and pneumonia, produced encephalitis in swine and death in less than 24 hours. A break-in occurred at the MSU Laboratory and the organism and laboratory books supporting the research, were stolen. An effort was made to notify swine producers, the Michigan Pork Producers Association and practicing veterinarians. Dr. Lonnie King notified AHDL, so they would be alerted to look for unusual circumstances and sudden death in large numbers of

swine. APHIS was also alerted and a press release was issued. The FBI and local authorities have been notified.

**Representative Dale Sheltroun** addressed the Commission regarding a major concern in Northeast Michigan regarding two farms that had depopulated after TB two or three years ago, went through the sanitation process, and have brought herds in from out of state and now have TB again. This is of major concern.

Representative Sheltroun also talked about Chronic Wasting Disease. He felt that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' plan is not extensive enough for this fall's deer season. He feels that more surveillance is needed.

**Director Wyant** stated that there was a new herd brought into a depopulated farm and the herd was reinfected. There was clear indication that the new herd did not have TB. It is proven now that reinfection can occur, but it is not determined how at this time. One herd owner has stated that he will not go back into business. Due to the stress involved, it is quite apparent that he is not willing to put cattle back on the farm and go through it again. He made this decision independently of any regulatory response.

The department has just recently identified the second herd. It is unknown what the owner's response will be. The department will have to make a recommendation on what the policy will be on bringing cattle back in. There are some options to consider, many which are resource-dependent; MDA will work with these farmers to find agriculture practices and enterprises that can be successful. USDA has taken over the indemnification process.

**UPDATE ON WEST NILE VIRUS: Kenneth Rauscher, Director, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management (PPPMD) and Dr. Steve Halstead, Animal Industry Division**

Ken Rauscher reported that WNV is a relatively new disease in the U.S. and new to Michigan in 2001. The PPPMD has a long history of monitoring arbovirus disease in cooperation with MSU, Michigan Public Health and local health departments. As a result of this standard operating procedures have been developed. Michigan Arbovirus Emergency Manual is a guide on how to react to arbovirus outbreaks. As anticipated the arrival of WNV occurred in August, 2001. There were eight counties determined to be positive for WNV as a result of dead crow collection with the disease confirmed in those crows by MSU and the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). In 2001 a task force consisting of persons from the MDCH, MDNR, and MSU was formed to formulate a plan for dealing with WNV in 2002. There is substantial effort going on to monitor equine health. A lot of effort has gone into public relations over the last two months, including press releases and educational efforts.

Dr. Halstead distributed an update on the WNV cases by county. 1999 was the first time the disease was identified as being present in the Western Hemisphere, showing up on the East Coast with a few human and horse cases. It spread from that area over the next two years as far as the Rocky Mountains. It is speculated that it will spread to California and up the West Coast to Oregon and Washington. It has also shown up in the four most eastern provinces of Canada, both human and horse cases. As of today, September 18, there are 166 human cases with 11 fatalities. Most of the cases are appearing in densely populated areas. There have been 123 horses in Michigan tested positive. Two horses have died from the disease, some horses have been euthanized; some horses recover if treated promptly. There is a vaccine available for horses. It is

recommended that all horse owners consult with their veterinarian and have their horse vaccinated.

Ken Rauscher stated that the first freeze will reduce the mosquito population; however, the incubation period for WNV is three to 15 days, so human and horse cases will continue to develop over that time period. In the spring of 2003 monitoring of crows and equine will take place and effective mosquito control and prevention will be stressed. There are a number of different species of mosquitoes that carry the disease. Some only feed on the bird population and other species feed on birds, humans and horses.

Part of the Emergency Response Plan calls for a policy committee to be organized to respond, and that is in place. That policy committee has asked the response committee to take a look at forming a uniform message to deliver to the public asking for information on control. The message that the various departments continue to provide, through press releases, is an integrated pest management approach to this particular disease. That is mosquito avoidance, source reduction, larvalciding, and adultciding. There is an outreach session scheduled for mid-October at Cobo Hall in Detroit.

**RIGHT TO PROCESS: Katherine Fedder, Director and Jerry Wojtala, Deputy Director, Food and Dairy Division**

Katherine Fedder requested the Commission's approval to initiate the development of the generally accepted fruit, vegetable, dairy product, and grain processing practices that are authorized under Act 381 of 1988, known as the Michigan Agricultural Processing Act. Items that are specifically in the law include generation of noise, odors, waste water, dust, fumes, the operation of machinery and equipment, management, storage, transport, utilization and land application, the conversion of an operation from one type to another and employment and use of labor. These generally accepted practices cover, but are not limited to all those areas. The department will compile information, and then work with a group of stakeholders, some that have already identified themselves as having an interest. This will include the processing industry, dairy industry; FDA and USDA because there are specific requirements that come from those agencies; DEQ and CIS as it relates to labor and employment, and other divisions within MDA that also have statutory requirements that would apply to the Right to Process. It is planned to come back before the Commission in February or March with the draft language for approval.

Director Wyant commented that the department had been meeting with the processing industry. There are many existing laws in place that are specific to the processing industry and these need to be recognized and incorporated into this process. The department will be required to bring the practices before the Commission each year for updates. Anyone interested in being a part of the drafting process can contact Katherine Fedder or Jerry Wojtala of the Food and Dairy Division, Michigan Department of Agriculture.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE INITIATION OF THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED PROCESSING PRACTICE FOR FRUIT, VEGETABLE, DAIRY PRODUCTS AND GRAIN PROCESSING. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **LEGISLATIVE REPORT: Brad Deacon, Legislative Liaison**

Brad Deacon reported the department's main legislative activity this month was the restoration of the Office of Racing Commissioner funding for fiscal year 2003. The Department was successful in getting all its legislative priorities completed. The House Agriculture and Resource Management Committee is scheduled to meet this week to take up revisions to Act 232, Ag Commodities (HB 6256). It is hoped to get this voted out of committee. This revision would allow the commodity groups to receive grants, license fees and other income. It would also allow them to make limited changes to boards in their districts and hold open public hearings. A Right to Forest bill is also up in Committee, to be adopted by the Michigan Natural Resources Commission. Two bills introduced recently are the Pet Shop Act (HB 6289) and a Tax Abatement Bill for diesel plants (HB 6266). The Migrant Labor Housing Act revisions include updating language and moving it out of the Public Health Code and into a separate statute for the MDA. A bill was introduced earlier in the session (SB 1378) to allow for non-economic damages on the loss of domestic animals, potentially allowing people to sue for pain and suffering, up to \$250,000.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Dan Wyant**

Director Wyant congratulated Chair Darling and Commissioner Tatter on their reappointment by the Governor to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture for a term expiring December 31, 2006.

Director Wyant attended the following activities over the last month:

- ? Attended Sanilac County Farm Bureau annual meeting
- ? Participated in the Detroit State Fair opening day ceremonies, Governor's Day activities and the livestock auction
- ? Spoke to Farm Bureau ProFILE group (young leaders)
- ? Attended Saginaw County Farm Bureau annual meeting
- ? Met with Kendra Butters, candidate for National FFA office
- ? Attended USDA Fruit & Vegetable Advisory Committee meeting in Washington, DC. Also attended Public Policy Conference while in DC
- ▯ Attended EPA Region 5 agriculture directors' meeting in Chicago
- ▯ Attended Michigan Grocers Association meeting on Mackinac Island

Director Wyant commended MDA employees that take a significant interest in the livestock auction, the food bank, local schools, and working with youth.

Fruit and Vegetable Meeting in Washington, D.C.: Michigan was selected as one of four pilot states to conduct a supplemental fruit and vegetable program through school systems in the state where resources will be given to the schools to provide fruit and vegetables during the day, in addition to the school lunch program. Twenty-five schools will be selected in Michigan, Iowa, Indiana and Ohio. In Michigan, 300 school districts applied for the 25 slots. USDA intends to monitor, test and document the program's success. This program addresses nutrition and obesity. Michigan is the fifth largest fruit producing state in the nation, and seventh in the production of vegetables.

Michigan was also selected by USDA to participate in a Microbial Data Collection Program of fresh fruit and vegetables that targets specific commodities. The Geagley Laboratory is doing the initial work on microbial contamination.

Horse Racing - The Magna Entertainment Corp. has expressed interest in purchasing property in the Romulus area to develop a dual-purpose harness and thoroughbred racetrack. They have applied to ORC for a race meeting license. The ORC will be reviewing the application, it could be an exciting opportunity for expansion of horse racing in the state of Michigan.

Michigan State Fair – It's anticipated the MSF will not break even this year. There was relatively good weather, one rainy weekend did have some impact on attendance. At county fairs statewide attendance also was down.

The Apple Industry has approached the department on a number of issues. The executive director of the Apple Commission has resigned, and they have asked the department to put together a delegation to go to Washington, DC and discuss assistance with trade issues with respect to Mexico, China and countervailing duties. Dale Sherwin and Paul Burke will accompany apple industry leadership on some congressional visits next week. Other industries have made congressional visits this past week. The Department was specifically approached by the apple industry to provide help with facilitating meetings with the congressional delegation.

**Commissioner Tatter** requested information on the Emerald Ash Borer. He felt that it eventually would need to be dealt with in the wood lots, as well as the municipal areas. He questioned if there was any discussion on establishing saw mill capacity within those five counties, so logs don't have to be taken out of the area. Deputy Director Keith Creagh responded that MDNR is working very closely with MDA staff. The Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division has a meeting with USDA Forest Service in the affected area this week. The long-term solution may entail a compliance agreement with mills to allow processing to take place.

**Commissioner Pridgeon** asked if Legislative interest in selling the Detroit State Fair property will increase with the revenue deficit at this year's State Fair. Director Wyant responded that as long as the State Fair is within the Department, we will be asked to find the resources to cover losses and when we can't, it goes beyond the Department in the form of a request to the legislature for a supplemental appropriation. In this case it is too early to determine what the loss is. It could have an impact on our budget, which in turn may impact our desire to maintain the management responsibility of the fair.

Director Wyant stated that the Commission might be asked to discuss at some point whether the fair should be moved to another department.

Chair Darling stated there are some real opportunities with having ownership of the Fair property at that site and the exposure to the general population in the area. He felt it's time to step back and look at how it's done, how to repackage it, or make better use of the property year-round. Director Wyant said it would take major capital improvement of the failing infrastructure to make it a significant destination area. In the end either the state is going to have to find a dedicated resource, or find a partner. John Hertel does a phenomenal job of promotion, running a clean, safe fair, and generating publicity.

**MICHIGAN ORGANIC AND HOMEGROWN FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM: Robert Craig, Director and Christine Lietzau, Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Coordinator, Agriculture Development Division**



Mr. Craig stated that due to the great interest that organic foods have, in Michigan and other states, the Organic Food Industry has put together a program and has expressed a desire to do more education and promotion. He emphasized that this is an industry program, but MDA is providing some leadership and assistance. Michigan produced organic and locally grown products will be promoted to consumers and retailers. The Department would be working closely with growers in Michigan.

Christine Lietzau gave an overview of the program, including the retail aspects, the grower's role, and the role of the Organic Alliance. The Organic Alliance has received \$200,000 in specialty crop block grant money to conduct this program and a matching grant of \$200,000 was just announced as being awarded to the Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) program. The program consists of two segments, one is an aggressive retail program, the other segment is a direct farmer-marketing component, which will emphasize locally grown, and will be handled by the MIFFS organization.

Christine introduced Ann Woods, Executive Director, Minnesota Organic Alliance. Ann stated that this program is a promotional and marketing program that is oriented primarily toward retail with some direct marketing efforts as well. The program will be focused in the Grand Rapids area and start summer of 2003. The funding is through USDA Specialty Market Funding. This is a partnership among MDA, Organic Alliance and MIFFS. The Organic Alliance mission is to support socially and ecologically responsible agriculture. Ann presented a power point presentation covering the function and focus of the Organic Alliance.

Christine Lietzau stated that the focus of the program is to market organic products and locally grown products. She stated that "transitional organic" referred to the fact that it takes three years for a traditional operation to convert to organic, during those three years they cannot be marketed as "organic".

#### **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 November 1, 2002:

Ernest Abel, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Nancy Anderson, Laboratory Division  
Ronald Balaze, Laboratory Division  
Larry Barton, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Anita Buckmaster, Environmental Stewardship Division  
Marilyn Coale, Laboratory Division  
John Dunleavy, Food and Dairy Division  
Charles Farris, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Timothy Flint, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Jeffrey Friedle, Environmental Stewardship Division  
Rebecca Hagberg, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Sandra Hartwick, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Kenneth Howe, Laboratory Division  
Jeanette Isaac, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Daniel Keane, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Kenneth Kolanowski, Environmental Stewardship Division  
Jack Ludlow, Laboratory Division

Patrick Mercer, laboratory Division  
Jonathan Nessia, Food and Dairy Division  
Michael O'Connor, Environmental Stewardship Division  
Vincent Parris, Ag Development Division  
Sharon Post, Food and Dairy Division  
Dale Sherwin, Executive Office  
Praim Sood, Laboratory Division  
Carolyn Southall, Food and Dairy Division  
Jacqueline Szymanski, Marketing and Communications Division  
Judi VanScott, Laboratory Division  
Willie Vinson, Marketing and Communications Division  
Victor Warner, Environmental Stewardship Division  
Richard Weidner, Laboratory Division  
Linda Wright, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
Ronald Zellar, Assistant Attorney General

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

**REQUEST TO EXTEND COUNTY FAIR DATES: Cinda Karlik, Ag Fair Financial Coordinator, Fairs, Exhibitions and Racing Division**

Cinda requested on behalf of St. Joseph County Fair to hold the 4-H Shooting event outside of the fair dates. The shooting event would take place four days prior to the opening day of the fair. Regulation 811 requires the Commission's approval to hold events outside of published fair dates. Director Wyant stated that the department is in support of this request.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER TATTER MOVED APPROVAL OF THE EXTENSION OF DATES FOR THE ST. JOSEPH COUNTY FAIR. SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF VERIFICATION OF LIVESTOCK FACILITY: Marvin Johansen, Environmental Service Section Manager, Environmental Stewardship Division**

The Department received a letter requesting review of a Site Selection GAAMP verification. The Siting GAAMP states that anyone within one mile of the facility can request a review of verification of the local unit of government and the producer. The Department then consults with three professionals to review the issue, a report is provided to the Commission and a final determination is made. The facility in question is a 4000 head swine facility in Newaygo County, zoned agricultural, and setback requirements are met. The issue is the groundwater table.

**JULIAN-STILLE VALUE ADDED AG GRANT AWARDS: Robert Craig, Director, Agriculture Development Division**

Bob stated that the purpose of the Ag Development Fund is to strengthen and expand Michigan's food and agriculture industry by providing financial assistance to improve the value of agriculture commodities through value added processing and related ag

production activities. Last year, as part of the USDA specialty crop block grant monies, a portion was dedicated for the Julian Stille Value-Added Ag Grant program. Rules were promulgated, becoming effective March 4, 2002. In late March and April public outreach information was provided on how to write proposals. It was determined that more time was needed for application completion and the deadline was extended to June 14, 2002. Seventy-five proposals were received, reviewed and scored. A review committee consisting of 25 individuals also reviewed, scored and ranked the applications. Recommendations were shared with the Director. There are four categories: marketing research and technical assistance; detailed business plan development; innovation and technology; and processing equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and land.

Director Wyant approved the grants as proposed.

**AG PROCESSING RENAISSANCE ZONES: Robert Craig, Director, Agriculture Development Division**

Bob reported that this is the last year for the ag processing renaissance zones and the application deadline for the program is September 30, 2002. A total of 10 ag processing renaissance zones have been authorized. The program has been administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) since 1997. MDA provides information, education and marketing of the program. The purpose of the program is to help economically distressed areas in Michigan. There are currently three Ag Processing Renaissance Zones that have been adopted. There are eight or nine applications in the process, it is a competitive situation. There is a revised, lower threshold set for the remaining seven renaissance zones of \$3 million dollars of new investment, they must generate at least 30 new full-time jobs over a 15-year period. Bob talked about the promotion ad for the ag processing renaissance zone program in the Business Xpansion Journal. The department is pleased with the results of the program at this point. Commissioner Tatter asked who was responsible for auditing the programs. Bob stated that MEDC has a development agreement with various thresholds to be met usually three to four years into the program. Commissioner Tatter questioned what would happen if a company did not meet criteria at some point, what arrangements in the contract would protect the tax abatement monies. As this is a function performed by MEDC, it was not known what the process was. Jim Riley, Assistant Attorney General, stated that he would contact MEDC with that question.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Dan Marsh of Michigan Deer and Elk Farmers Assoiaiton** had comments on the six-month ban on deer and elk imports. He stressed that they have been working closely with MDA and the industry. They have recently received grant money for a feasibility study and have started putting a group together to look at co-ops in Northeast Michigan. He feels that the deer population needs to be reduced to eliminate TB and that the registration program is an effective tool for traceback. He stated that the Deer and Elk Producers are grateful to the department for all the help they have provided.

**Tonia Koppenaar of the Michigan Farm Bureau stated that MFB** testified on September 10 in support of the surveillance testing protocol. One issue raised in testimony is that there needs to be more communication. There is some confusion with regards to the sites that have been repopulated and are reinfected. MFB would like to join MDA in holding some structured, but open meetings in the Northeast area. If the

split state status is 18 months away, there may not be any significant changes until that time. As there have been a lot of changes made in regard to TB testing in the last six to eight months, there may be an opportunity to create a consistent program that all the livestock organizations in the state can be using.

MFB is pleased that CWD testing protocol is in place, but again there is a communication issue. As this is new protocol the industry needs to get together with MDA and MFB to review the program.

There is support from MFB on the grain indemnity fund. The industry is supportive and would like to see a bill introduced during this fall legislative session. The Agri-Business Association has raised some concerns and MFB is working to address them.

Director Wyant introduced Jim Riley, Assistant Attorney General, who will be working with Agriculture.

### **RECESS**

The meeting recessed at 12:20 p.m.

### **RECONVENE**

The meeting reconvened at 1:15 p.m.

### **WATER QUALITY AT FAIRS: Doug Park, formerly with the Food and Dairy Division and Cinda Karlik, Fairs, Exhibitions and Racing Division**

In 1999 when there were food and water-borne illness outbreaks, and animal source outbreaks at fairgrounds around the nation, the Department was concerned about vulnerabilities in Michigan county and state fairgrounds. Six pilot sites were assessed in 2001 and six in 2002. Doug presented a power point presentation covering water borne outbreaks, food borne outbreaks and animal source outbreaks, with the common denominator being water.

Commissioner Darling asked what the overall cost would be to bring all county and state fairgrounds to an acceptable level of safety. Director Wyant stated that it would be site specific depending on the fair, and in some cases, it would be mainly education and recognition of the proper procedures. In some cases it may be a significant investment to assure a high level of safety. Doug Park stated that there was indeed a wide range of infrastructure among the fairs. When MDA made detailed site assessments and presentations were made to the fair associations, the fairs were very receptive to the department's findings. The fairs that can afford, financially, to follow recommendations are doing so. MDA will continue to educate the fair industry. MDA has some expertise in this area, and is not only taking action to prevent problems, but is taking a leadership role so our fairs are recognized as some of the best and most proactive in minimizing risks of food borne illnesses.

### **ADJOURN:**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MAITLAND MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 2:00 P.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 August 15-16, 2002 Meeting Minutes
- Attachment B West Nile Virus
- Attachment C Legislative Report September 2002
- Attachment D September Director's Report
- Attachment E Michigan Organic and Home Grown Food Promotion Program (power point presentation)
- Attachment F Employee Retirement Resolutions
- Attachment G Request to extend county fair dates
- Attachment H Request for Review of Verification of Livestock Facility
- Attachment I Julian -Stille Value-Added Ag Grant Awards
- Attachment J Ag Processing Renaissance Zones
- Attachment K Water Quality at Fairs (power point presentation)