

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Lansing Center
Meeting Room 203
333 E. Michigan Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48933

MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 16, 2013

PRESENT:

Bob Kennedy, Vice Chairperson, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Diane Hanson, Secretary, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Trevor Meachum, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Fred Walcott, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Gordon Wenk, Chief Deputy Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

ABSENT:

Don Coe, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONER, AND ROLL CALL

Vice Chairperson Kennedy called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 9:05 a.m. on January 16, 2013. Commissioner Hanson called the roll with Commissioners Hanson, Kennedy, Meachum, and Walcott, and Chief Deputy Director Wenk present.

Commissioner Kennedy welcomed Fred Walcott to the Commission. He replaces Velmar Green, whose term expired on December 31, 2012. Commissioner Walcott advised he is excited to be a part of the Commission and feels it is an honor to be serving with his peers to set direction for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). He comes from a life-long family farming operation that has been in the dairy business, produced turkeys, and currently is involved with poultry production and pigs for livestock. The operation, which has 74 employees, keeps him busy on a day-to-day basis, and he is looking forward to including time for Commission activities.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Meachum proposed to add recognition of Velmar Green for discussion during the Commissioner Issues item.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MEACHUM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA FOR JANUARY 16, 2013. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HANSON. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 12, 2012, MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER HANSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 12, 2012, MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MEACHUM. MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting will be held on February 13, 2013, at GreenStone Farm Credit Services, 3515 West Road, East Lansing.

ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

MOTION: COMMISSIONER HANSON MOVED TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER KENNEDY AS CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MEACHUM. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER KENNEDY MOVED TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER HANSON AS VICE CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MEACHUM. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER KENNEDY MOVED TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER MEACHUM AS SECRETARY OF THE COMMISSION. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HANSON. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL

Commissioner Hanson reported she attended the January 10 Growing the Upper Peninsula (UP) meeting, during which this farming organization discussed plans for their annual meeting.

The Michigan State University (MSU) research facility in the UP will continue its operation in Chatham under a new name: UP Research and Extension Center. Research and extension activities at the facility will focus on livestock, plant, and local food systems. Research projects will include activities with UP universities and community colleges, as well as joint research with Wisconsin and Minnesota. An evaluation of the operation will be conducted in five years.

The UP has received very little snow and remains extremely dry. Ground cover and moisture are sorely needed in the region.

Commissioner Meachum reported he attended the VanBuren County School District meeting to discuss initiation of a new agriculture program. The Intermediate School District has donated 10 acres of land to the physically and mentally challenged classes who will work toward growing vegetables, including greenhouse varieties, with the goal of becoming healthier eaters. They also plan to work toward becoming MAEAP (Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program) verified.

He joined a meeting with fruit and vegetable growers at the Southwest Research and Extension Center to discuss vegetable growing issues in 2012 and the potential concerns for 2013.

Southwest Michigan is hoping for more snow in the region to protect root stock from the single digit weather being predicted.

Commissioner Kennedy reported he has been participating in the Michigan Agri-Business Association (MABA) Winter Conference, which has enjoyed record attendance of 1,200 registered participants, and is clear evidence of the expansion of all agriculture sectors. On the first day, the Governor's message of relentless positive action was very well received, especially his continual support of agriculture and referral of constituents as customers. Commissioner Kennedy emphasized that being as helpful as possible to agriculture businesses is clearly the mission of MDARD as well.

Many training sessions during the MABA Conference focused on increased regulations and how to efficiently meet requirements. MDARD and other state agencies are working to help simplify some of these regulations so the industry knows how best to implement them. Sessions on the drought included a presentation by Dr. Good from the University of Illinois who reported the Corn Belt remains severely dry; and even if the area receives timely rains this summer, only trend-line yields can be anticipated. This equates to higher prices remaining for the near term, and Dr. Good predicted \$4.50-8.00 corn and \$11.00-14.00 soybean prices.

In addition to travel previously mentioned, Commissioners, Hanson, Kennedy, Meachum, and Walcott traveled to attend today's meeting. There was no other travel submitted for approval.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MEACHUM MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HANSON. MOTION CARRIED.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chief Deputy Director Wenk reported the Director is attending a special Cabinet Meeting this morning in preparation for the Governor's State of the State address this evening. Following that, she will be giving a presentation at the MABA Conference.

During the legislative Lame Duck session, the Severance Tax bills were approved, which is important to MDARD as it establishes a Rural Development Fund that will begin to receive dollars in 2015. This represents a good step forward in creating opportunities for rural economic development and infrastructure improvements.

Additional legislation approved will provide for funding from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to the Eastern Market, with whom MDARD has been working very closely to build the food shed concept within the City of Detroit. This allows for MEDC to invest in the opportunities for entrepreneurship, as well as other growth activities in the Eastern Market area.

The department is initiating meetings with all agency employees to discuss their views of customer service and how the customer experience can be improved. Being a regulatory agency, MDARD strives to assist customers and solve problems whenever possible and when not able, to clearly explain the reasons why.

Over the last month, the Director has visited various agri-businesses and food processors in the western part of Michigan. Her goal is to continue that interaction across the state.

On January 9, Chief Deputy Director Wenk joined the Lt. Governor for a Pure Michigan FIT event in Novi that welcomed Kroger, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and the Detroit Red Wings School Assembly Program as Pure Michigan FIT partners. It was a well-received event that highlighted MDARD's efforts toward encouraging Michigan's youth to choose healthy foods and to engage in regular exercise.

He announced MDARD's Budget Officer, Amy Epkey, has accepted a position with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The department will miss her budget expertise, but wishes her well as she progresses in her career. Search for a replacement is in progress.

DIRECTOR'S TRAVEL

Chief Deputy Director Wenk advised that Director Clover Adams is requesting travel on February 4-7 to Reston, Virginia to attend the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture meeting.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MEACHUM MOVED APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTOR'S TRAVEL. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HANSON. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

There was no public comment relative to agenda items.

AGRICULTURE CENSUS UPDATE: Jay Johnson, Director, U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service – Michigan Field Office

Mr. Johnson reported the first Census of Agriculture was conducted in 1840 in 26 states and the District of Columbia. Now, 170 years later, the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Census of Agriculture in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa, which represents data for more than 3,000 U.S. counties and 30,000 zip codes. Although efforts continue toward building a comprehensive list of farmers, some smaller farmers are missing. Even so, the data does represent 98 percent of the economic value of agriculture and 98 percent of the production land.

A complete count is taken every five years of America's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census of Agriculture represents the most complete agricultural data available and is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and objective information for every county in the nation. The Census includes information on land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and much more. Mr. Johnson emphasized and explained the disclosure and confidentiality aspects of the Census reporting system.

A "farm" is defined by USDA as being any place from which \$1,000 of agriculture products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year. By

participating in the Census, farmers and ranchers help show the nation the value and importance of U.S. agriculture and offer the opportunity to tell how American agriculture provides food, fuel, and fiber to the world. It provides producers with the power to influence decisions that will shape American agriculture for years to come, including transportation and marketing locations, farm services, programs, policies, and research project grants, as well as production practices and new technologies. The Census provides valuable information that will be used to plan the future, including community planning, farm succession planning, store/company locations, availability of operational loans and other funding, and federal budget support for agriculture.

Each and every response to the Census makes a difference. To ensure that the best tools and reports are available, accurate information from all farmers and ranchers is needed, no matter how large or small the operation. NASS encourages early response to avoid the need for personal follow-up contacts. He noted that responses are required and protected by federal law.

The Census was mailed on December 18, 2012, and any farmer or rancher not receiving a form may call 1.800.453.7501 to receive the Census paperwork. The initial census deadline is February 4, 2013 and data collection will continue through June and July of this year, followed by the extensive analyzation and publication process. The Census data will be available in early 2014, including online versions to allow individualized specific queries. Additional information can be obtained through their website at www.agcensus.usda.gov or by calling 800.453.7501.

Mr. Johnson thanked MDARD for their assistance in publicizing the importance of the Census and for the department's Office of Communications, namely Jen Holton, for help in developing a comprehensive marketing plan. Also, the Michigan Integrated Food Farming System (MIFFS) has been instrumental in helping NASS reach the minority, specialty, and smaller farmers in the state.

In response to inquiry from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. Johnson advised their annual report is a quick sample survey that reflects annual year production and is valuable for marketing decisions. The full five-year Census requires much more time to produce because of the vast amounts of data processed and analyzed. It provides a very detailed, comprehensive database for each county in Michigan and is valuable for long-term strategic planning.

Chief Deputy Director Wenk expressed the department's appreciation for the partnership with Mr. Johnson and his staff. The data received is extremely instrumental to MDARD in terms of decision-making, completing required reports, and preparing information that is shared with legislators on the agriculture industry in Michigan and how agriculture economic analyses are developed – that all begins with the Census information.

THUMBWORKS! WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Marvin N. Pichla, PhD, Executive Director, ThumbWorks!

Dr. Pichla thanked the Commission for the opportunity to present and reported he has directed activities of the Thumb area Michigan Works! for quite some time. ThumbWorks! is not your typical Michigan Works! organization and has implemented various innovative

ideas in the agri-business arena. Its members wanted to improve communications and create cutting-edge events to help attract talent.

He reviewed several examples of the innovative events ThumbWorks! has sponsored in the Thumb area, noting these will not be found anywhere else in Michigan. The Virtual Job Fair features live webcast interviews. Each month, they host a television-style program featuring 25 candidates looking for work that is broadcast live to the 200 businesses subscribing to the Virtual Job Fair broadcasts. The host conducts a five-minute interview with each candidate, basing questions on résumés received. These webcast interviews are transportable and provide a tremendously efficient venue for reviewing job candidates. Agriculture-specific Job Fairs have been broadcast, as well as exclusive employer broadcasts when requested. The broadcasts are archived and made available to businesses that may have missed the live event.

In December, ThumbWorks! held their first agricultural “Pitch and Catch” Trade Show. Manufacturers were invited to make presentations and provide networking opportunities for prospective employees. It was a high energy, high impact event. Agriculture companies also had the opportunity to conduct live radio interviews to further promote their businesses.

On January 25, they are sponsoring the fifth annual Women in Agri-Business conference. The event is designed to target areas of specific interest to women and their involvement in the growing agri-business sector. Special guest speakers and targeted break-out sessions will round out the day’s activities.

In cooperation with various agriculture stakeholders, routine specialty trainings are conducted. The most recent being a Pesticide Safety seminar scheduled for February 28 in conjunction with MDARD and MAEAP activities. Conducting these trainings on a four-county regional basis increases attendance and efficiency, especially for required training credits.

One of their most enjoyable events is the annual Future Farmers of America (FFA) Strategy Day, which features keynote speakers and educational break-out sessions.

Although they accomplish much more, the examples reviewed represent the areas of agri-business focus. What ThumbWorks! has been able to accomplish provides a good example of what can happen with only limited resources, as the primary connectivity is provided through the Internet, email messages, and low-cost publications. A large number of people can be reached and tremendous impact can be realized, which is confirmed by the business feedback they continually receive.

Commissioner Kennedy confirmed agri-businesses are continually looking for qualified people, which is very difficult because agriculture is much more technical in today’s market. ThumbWorks! has implemented some great ideas that could be helpful to the industry.

Chief Deputy Director Wenk advised MDARD would certainly like to see the concepts developed by ThumbWorks! transported to the other Works! offices around the state, especially as they relate to agriculture. The Governor is holding an Economic Summit on

Talent in the near future and the department is promoting this type of discussion as a part of that event.

Dr. Pichla advised he would be more than happy to assist in any way possible toward the effort to incorporate their concepts into other Works! offices around the state.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

Chairperson Kennedy recessed the meeting at 10:05 a.m. for a brief break. He reconvened the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS SPATIAL MODEL: Dan O'Brien, Veterinary Specialist, Wildlife Division, Michigan Department of Natural Resources; and James Averill, Director, Animal Industry Division

Dr. Averill advised today, they want to share with the Commission some research being conducted in collaboration predominately with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), along with some international colleagues. An earlier version of the modeling concept reviewed with the Commission considered only the deer aspects of Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) and now cattle data from Deer Management (DMU) 452 has also been included in the model. This provides another tool to address Bovine TB in Michigan.

Dr. O'Brien recognized the efforts of others on this project, namely Dr. David Ramsey from the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research in Melbourne, Australia, and Drs. James Averill and Rick Smith from MDARD. Over the last five years, the main thrust in MDNR was to develop a computer model of Bovine TB in white-tailed deer to apply as a tool to help forecast the likely effectiveness of various management strategies to avoid reliance on trial and error approaches.

The recent development of a spatial model of Bovine TB in white-tailed deer has examined the efficacy of management options for DMU 452. Modeled scenarios included increase in harvest, vaccination, increase in harvest plus vaccination, and the effect of baiting. All scenarios were examined as to their efficacy to eradication of TB from white-tailed deer within 30 years.

Eradication is possible within three decades, but is likely to require substantial increases in current harvest and/or vaccination. TB establishment in a previously TB-free region is up to eight times more likely if baiting occurs during the hunting season. In the meantime, cattle on farms within DMU 452 continue to be at risk of TB infection from white-tailed deer.

If complete eradication of TB from white-tailed deer is too difficult, should focus change to risk mitigation for livestock? Acceptable management options may exist that will minimize risk of on-farm transmission from white-tailed deer to livestock. Modeling of different scenarios is proposed as a way forward, with extension of the current spatial model to include transmission of TB from white-tailed deer to livestock.

A small spatial livestock layer was created for the existing model using records from MDARD for farm location, area of cleared pasture, and stocking rate. Data on the TB infections of cattle herds (known as herd breakdown) rate from 2003-2012 was also collated and used to calibrate transmission. TB transmission is dependent upon stocking

rate and contact rate with infected white-tailed deer. A geographic illustration of DMU 452 showing farm locations was reviewed, along with the observed mean herd breakdown rate per year versus the predicted rate and the on-farm risk by location with no risk mitigation.

Effects of management of white-tailed deer in DMU 452 on the herd breakdown rate on farms was evaluated, including increasing harvest rates with and without baiting, increasing harvest (with and without baiting) with 90 percent of animals being vaccinated annually, and vaccination only with and without baiting.

The effect of on-farm management was also evaluated. The baseline model assumes unrestricted contact between white-tailed deer and cattle on farms. The model examined the effect of restricting contact on herd breakdowns, which can practically be achieved by improved fencing and restricting access to food sources.

One less expensive option to management of the entire DMU is managing white-tailed deer in the vicinity of farms only. The spatial model is ideal to answer the obvious question as to what size buffer would be adequate to achieve a significant reduction in herd breakdowns.

Compared with TB control in white-tailed deer directly, management aimed at reduction of cattle herd breakdowns requires much less investment. However, management needs to continue in perpetuity as TB remains in the wider deer population. Gains would be rapidly lost if management ceases. A 25 percent increase in harvest and no baiting would halve the rate of cattle herd breakdowns within 3-5 years and reduce it by 95 percent within 15 years. Annual vaccination only with 50 percent coverage would achieve the same result.

Substantial reduction in the risk of herd breakdowns is achieved if contact between white-tailed deer and on-farm cattle is reduced by at least 80 percent. Local control measures can also be effective – vaccinating at least 50 percent of white-tailed deer within three miles of farms will reduce the cattle herd breakdown rate by 95 percent within 13 years. Culling 50 percent of deer in addition to harvest within the three-mile buffer would reduce the herd breakdown rate by 95 percent within 10 years.

In response to inquiry from Commissioners Kennedy and Hanson, Dr. O'Brien advised vaccination of deer would best be accomplished through dropping vaccine-laden baits from airplanes and he confirmed the vaccination does not affect the reproduction capacity of the deer. Strategic timing of the vaccination process would provide a safe deer meat product for human consumption. In response to question from Commissioner Walcott, Dr. O'Brien advised implementation of management strategies remains a future decision. Modeling information has also been shared with the Natural Resources Commission and the Directors of MDARD and MDNR.

In response to inquiry from Commissioner Kennedy, Dr. O'Brien advised the Department of Interior maintains data relative to expenditures by outdoor recreation, including hunting activities. In recognition of the economic impact of hunters in Michigan, Commissioner Kennedy noted the economic impact of vaccination versus increased harvest or culling the herd should be considered.

Commissioner Meachum asked if there were anything the Commission could do to help foster action. Dr. O'Brien advised it is clear all of the easy things have been done at this point and a great deal of progress has been achieved. Further progress will become difficult and will receive more resistance from the public. The Commission developing a common ground with the NRC on how to best move forward would set the tone for the leadership and the solidarity required. Dr. Averill reported the TB Advisory Committee has established a small workgroup to conduct a pilot study of recent management strategies in a specific area of DMU 452. Results of that pilot study will determine how strategies should be applied in other areas of DMU 452.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Derek Bajema, Legislative Liaison

Mr. Bajema reviewed the final 2011-2012 Legislative Status Report, noting the Severance Tax Package was approved, which will be good for the UP by encouraging new mines, and therefore new jobs. Because those jobs are temporal, part of the plan centers around the Rural Development Fund, providing that 35 percent of the revenue captured from new mines in the UP will go into the Rural Development Fund to be used for economic development and infrastructure improvements in rural areas. The Severance Tax provides a dedicated revenue stream for communities, generating cash flow and allowing UP townships and counties to retain their share first, delivering comparable revenue to local governments as the current system.

The Governor also signed House Bill 5926 which gives non-profits, such as Eastern Market, access to Community Revitalization Program dollars. Having corrected an oversight in the original legislation, it will allow Eastern Market to expand and continue to be a world-class facility as part of the revitalization of Detroit. The Director was instrumental in making this happen, having authored the bill while in her former position. He emphasized the department is fortunate to have a Director who clearly understands the legislative process.

Senate Bill 996, indemnification for depredation in certain circumstances, was approved. It basically codifies existing practices and pets are not included, but reimbursed up to \$2,500. MDARD also obtained a compromise on payment for missing animals.

Although not lead on Senate Bill 1008, the department continues to be very active on groundwater dispute resolution. It was a successful program for five years before budget cuts ended it in 2008. Last summer's drought demonstrated the need again for this type of a program. The legislation represents a start; however, because it allows an opt-out, work will continue toward resurrecting the program as it was previously designed.

Having been combined with the Large Carnivore Bill, Senate Bill 1236, which would allow direct contact with bears up to 36 weeks old, was vetoed. The Governor indicated he hopes the Legislature will send the bear contact section back to him for consideration. The department will continue to monitor both pieces of legislation.

Senate Bills 1057-1062, the Private Non-Industrial Forestry Package, was not approved during this session. The Administration has expressed concerns with the funding. Senator Booher will likely be reintroducing the package in the same format in the near future.

Another bill that should be reintroduced in the new session is House Bill 5959, which spells out the process of repopulating conservation district boards in certain circumstances. This need was triggered by Midland County, which recently closed their doors.

The department is working with the Michigan Potato Industry Commission on amending P.A. 29 to allow them more flexibility in their assessment structure.

Mr. Bajema advised he looks forward to seeking guidance from and working with the Commission as we move forward in 2013.

Chief Deputy Director Wenk advised Mr. Bajema did a tremendous job during the Lame Duck session coordinating the numerous legislative issues involving agriculture to ensure the department's interests were well represented. His tireless efforts were greatly appreciated.

COMMISSION POLICY MANUAL: Brad Deacon, Emergency Management/Administrative Law Coordinator

Brad Deacon reviewed the proposed changes to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development Policy Manual. Under the Statement of Purpose and Responsibilities sections, reference to rural development was recommended by Commissioner Coe to clearly indicate the Commission's obligations in that arena.

Reference to the Seal of Quality Act was removed from the Legal Authority section, as the Act is no longer in effect. The Seal of Quality was no longer being used by any of Michigan's industries.

Also included is the overarching change in the letterhead to the new Director, as well as her signing the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy. In the last item of the Food Safety Policy, "second largest industry" is replaced by "food and agriculture industry."

Clarification of Greenfield development and reference to urban agriculture are recommended in Policy No. 7, Environmental Stewardship and Farmland Preservation. Minor departmental clarifications are recommended in Policy No. 8, Right to Farm Program.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MEACHUM MOVED THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES IN THE MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY MANUAL BE ADOPTED. COMMISSIONER HANSON SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSION FOCUS AREAS: Gordon Wenk, Chief Deputy Director.

The Chief Deputy Director led discussion with the Commission to ascertain what issues or areas of focus they would like to include in their 2013 meetings.

Commissioner Meachum suggested inclusion of presentations to explain how the department helps the Commission accomplish its legal authority responsibilities as delineated in the Commission Policy Manual. He also suggested discussion regarding the U.S. Department of Labor and Migrant Labor Housing inspections. In addition, he suggested an update on the Site Selection Generally Accepted Agriculture Management

Practices (GAAMP). Chief Deputy Director Wenk advised the Site Selection GAAMP Committee chair is convening a conference call to plan their next steps and an update will be provided at the February Commission meeting.

As suggested by Commissioner Kennedy and agreed upon by the other Commissioners, the topic of "Commission Focus Areas" will be added to the February agenda for further discussion.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES

Commissioner Hanson reported she will be in Colorado for the National Potato Board meeting at the time of the scheduled March 13 Commission meeting. Changing the meeting to Monday, March 11 was determined to be a convenient day. A location will be determined as soon as possible.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MEACHUM MOVED TO APPROVE A REVISION IN THE COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE, CHANGING THE MARCH COMMISSION MEETING TO MONDAY, MARCH 11. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KENNEDY. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Kennedy reported that recognition for past Commissioner Velmar Green will be accomplished through formal presentation of an appreciation plaque during an industry meeting in the near future.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tonia Ritter, Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB), recognized the contributions that Commissioner Green made to the Commission during his tenure and she welcomed Commissioner Walcott, noting MFB is excited to have him on the Commission. Ms. Ritter introduced **Laura Campbell** who joined the MFB staff in November and will be managing their Agriculture Ecology Department.

Ms. Ritter distributed copies of the MFB 2013 Policy Book, noting it will also be available in electronic format. She highlighted some of MFB's areas of focus for the year, including the Michigan Agriculture Plan which considers the objectives established in 2011 for growing the Michigan agriculture industry, namely workforce development, market access, and regulations. Under those umbrellas, their legislative focus will include transportation and infrastructure, the Food and Agriculture Growth Initiative (a competitive, industry involved grant project), flexibility in merit curriculum, wetlands regulations, "Miss Dig" requirements, and the Right to Farm discussion. The Policy Book is delivered to all legislators and MFB members are instrumental in bringing issues forward to their elected officials.

Ms. Campbell advised MFB has projects focused on achieving the department's goal of 750 new farms being MAEAP verified this year. MFB will be sending letters to the counties giving them goals for each Farm Bureau to meet for MAEAP verifications. They are retooling their guide on how to achieve more verifications and will be focusing on connecting the Conservation Districts and the MAEAP Technicians and Verifiers with the farmers in the district to build that personal connection that is so essential. Progress is being made on a grant program with the NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service),

which will be a competitive grant in which counties can participate to promote MAEAP and NRCS programs for technical and financial assistance to farmers.

Ann Louise Budd, representing the **Michigan Horse Council**, advised they are very proud of their 40 years as a council and 30th Anniversary of the Michigan Horse Council International Stallion Exhibition and trade show to be held March 8-10 at the MSU Pavilion. She invited Commissioners to attend that event, which will for the first time include a ranch rodeo. The final program will be sent to the Commission soon.

The Council is very honored and excited to have 18 horses participating in the Presidential Inaugural Parade in Washington, D.C. It is a Michigan multi-jurisdictional drill team and color guard, and will have an international flavor with the inclusion of two Toronto policemen.

No other public comment was requested.

ADJOURN

MOTION: COMMISSIONER MEACHUM MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER HANSON SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes December 12, 2012*
- C) *Director Jamie Clover Adams – Issues of Interest Report*
- D) *2012 Census of Agriculture Presentation*
- E) *ThumbWorks! Illustrations*
- F) *Management of On-Farm Risk to Livestock from Bovine TB in White-Tailed Deer within Deer Management Unit 452: Predictions from a Spatially-Explicit Model*
- G) *Proposed Revisions to Commission Policy Manual*
- H) *2011 and 2012 Commission Agenda Topics Reports*
- I) *Legislative Status – 2011-2012 Final Report*
- J) *Michigan Horse Expo March 8-10, 2013 Brochure*