

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Constitution Hall
Atrium Level, Con-Con Conference Room
525 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933

MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 6, 2013

PRESENT:

Bob Kennedy, Chairperson, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Diane Hanson, Vice Chairperson, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Don Coe, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Fred Walcott, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Jamie Clover Adams, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

ABSENT (EXCUSED):

Trever Meachum, Secretary, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson Kennedy called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 9:06 a.m. on November 6, 2013. Commissioner Hanson called the roll with Commissioners Coe, Hanson, Kennedy, and Walcott, and Chief Deputy Director Wenk present. Commissioner Meachum was absent and excused from the meeting. Director Clover Adams joined the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: COMMISSIONER HANSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 6, 2013. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WALCOTT. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2013, MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 18, 2013, MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WALCOTT. MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting will be held on December 13, 2013, at the Michigan State University Northwest Michigan Horticulture Center in Traverse City.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL

Commissioner Coe attended an Immigration Reform meeting in Grand Rapids on October 10, which was a public meeting organized by Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB), with various agriculture sectors participating. That group again communicated a plea to

the federal government for passage of immigration reform legislation; however, members of the Congress with agriculture interests are not optimistic that immigration reform will move forward during the current political stalemate. On November 1, he participated in a dinner at the Detroit Eastern Market with major donors who are working on a program to open the market's incubator kitchen. He attended the November 4 Climate Trends meeting organized by the Michigan Agri-Business Association, where participants included Senator Stabenow and a senator from Oregon. Climate trends of note for the state are that Michigan is becoming wetter and warmer, both of which affect agriculture production in the state. Also, on September 23, he attended the Regional Water Strategy meeting held in the Traverse City area and he encouraged Commissioners to attend a session in their region. He had the opportunity to host attendees of the Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture (COSDA) annual conference, which appeared to be a most successful national conference.

The Traverse City region is wet, which is creating harvesting difficulties for the wine grape industry. As they wait for the sugars to develop, the moisture is causing some degrading of the fruit.

Commissioner Walcott thanked Commissioner Coe for attending the Immigration Reform meetings, adding that producers in his area are extremely frustrated. Now that they have jumped all of the hurdles, they want to know why they are not able to obtain labor needed to harvest their crops. He asked what type of crowd attended the Regional Water Strategy meeting. Commissioner Coe advised it was a mixture, including good representation from the agriculture sector. Chief Deputy Director Wenk advised representation at the ten regional sessions was very broad, with a good cross section of various stakeholders.

Commissioner Walcott reported crops are very good in his area this year. Some of the vegetable growers are having a difficult time harvesting their remaining crops due to the wet weather. Corn and soybeans, although wetter than desired, are producing above average yields. Overall, most of the farmers are very pleased.

Commissioner Hanson advised she was able to ride with Farm Bureau to Lansing, and, therefore, has no travel expenses this month. On October 9, she attended the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) meeting in Iron Mountain, during which she was able to meet with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to emphasize the problem with an over-abundant deer population in the Upper Peninsula (UP), as well as deer management issues in the fruit growing areas of the state. She participated in the October 28 Farm Bureau Annual meeting, during which concerns were expressed with replacement of UP State Veterinarian Dr. Mike Brunner following his retirement in April, because producers feel it is important to have a State Veterinarian dedicated exclusively to the UP. On October 30, she attended a retirement reception for Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Agent Warren Shauer. She also attended the November 4 MSU Extension meeting held in Iron Mountain, which focused on future strategy discussions with stakeholders.

Weather has been wet and cool in the UP, with very little sunshine; therefore, the corn harvest is progressing slowly. The kidney and turtle bean production on the Garden

Peninsula is very poor this year. Some dairy farmers were fortunate to have a fourth cutting of hay. Potato harvest is complete and it was an excellent crop with prices higher than last year. Deer damage to all crops in the UP has been considerable this year.

Commissioner Coe advised there will be discussions regarding deer damage during the December Commission meeting and he encouraged Commissioners to bring forward during that meeting any facts they may have on deer damage to crops in their region.

Commissioner Kennedy met with U.S. Representative Dale Kildee last week while touring grain elevators and discussing agriculture in general. It was encouraging to have someone from Washington take an interest in Michigan agriculture; and, although very supportive of the Farm Bill, the representative admitted it is treading water at this point. On behalf of his company, Commissioner Kennedy attended the recent MSU Career Fair. There are many promising young people coming into agriculture, but still not at the numbers needed. A huge opportunity exists in agriculture for young people. He attended an agronomy-based sales meeting, during which newer technology was introduced that should assist some of the issues encountered with custom field applications. The effort is to map everything through broadband with more sophisticated technology.

Harvest in the Saginaw Valley area is approximately 85 percent complete with soybeans and almost 50 percent with corn. Average yields are anticipated on both crops.

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

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chief Deputy Director Wenk noted the Employee Awards Ceremony will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, November 19, offering a good opportunity to express appreciation to employees for their dedication and outstanding efforts. He invited Commissioners to participate, and to advise Cheri Ayers if they are able to join the event.

The Michigan Food Policy Council (MFPC) was created in 2005 and tasked with identifying statewide needs relative to food policy issues. Their recommendations have moved forward through the work of various spin-off organizations, such as local food policy councils, the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, and the Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems. The department is supporting regional food systems through its Food System and Value Added Grant Program. At this point, it appears prudent to move the policy portion of MFPC to the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, and simultaneously, consider the state agency role through a sub group of the Interagency Collaborative Committee (ICC). The Council is in favor of moving in this direction, agreeing it will provide new energy and focus toward food policy across the state.

Regarding Conservation Districts and funding through the Groundwater Program for accomplishing some of the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) work, the department has been working closely with NRCS. As a result of shifting dollars within the department on behalf of the State Legislature and frugal operations in other areas of the department, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) was able to obtain enough resources to maintain the program for another year. A more detailed discussion will be held next week with the Conservation District partners to determine this year's program focus, and most importantly, to discuss future funding for the program. The discussion with NRCS and the Conservation District partners should result in a stronger, more effective program.

After reviewing the 76 proposals submitted for the first Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) grant cycle, the Joint Review Committee recommendations will be considered next week. SGI is a \$3 million funding partnership between MDARD and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

The department's 2015 budget submissions focused on its priorities. Over the last few years, focus has been on programs with actual deficiencies, and thanks to the Director's leadership, the department has been able to initially address those areas in MAEAP and the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division (PPPMD). Because Michigan's agriculture industry could not survive a major food disaster, food safety is a primary focus for the department. As MDARD reviews its scorecard and compliance rates, 56 percent of facilities are in compliance; however, once educated by inspectors on what needs to be accomplished, they become over 90 percent compliant. The number of inspectors needs to be increased to provide that positive interaction with food businesses to raise the overall compliance rate. Another area of focus is information technology to upgrade inspectors from hand-written forms to electronic reporting capabilities and update our data systems, which will dramatically increase efficiencies and allow the department to easily share information across the department, as well as with other agencies. With MDARD assuming the Qualified Forest Program on June 1 of this year, forestry is another area of focus. Because funding was not received until October 1, program staff is working very hard to ensure requests are handled expeditiously. In a few years, the hope is the program will become self-funding, but will require general funds until that point. Ms. Tyszkiewicz will provide additional budget details during her report later in the meeting.

DIRECTOR'S TRAVEL

Director Clover Adams has no out-of-state travel planned in the near future.

PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

There was no public comment relative to agenda items.

PROPOSED 2014 MEETING SCHEDULE

The proposed dates for next year's meetings were discussed.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WALCOTT MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2014 MEETING SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HANSON. MOTION CARRIED.

BUDGET UPDATE: Maria Tyszkiewicz, Budget Officer

Ms. Tyszkiewicz reported the department has been submitting budget information to the Governor in preparation for his budget proposal, and Chief Deputy Director Wenk touched on three of the six major areas in MDARD's budget. Other areas include building operations and equipment for the Laboratory. Because those facilities are not supported by the Department of Management and Budget as are other buildings, much of the Laboratory's operating budget is utilized for maintenance and repairs. The department is also requesting continuation funding for two other items, to maintain current PPPMD program levels and for SGI. Currently SGI is a partnership with MEDC, and the department is requesting that funding be consolidated into MDARD for the program's administration from 2015 going forward.

The Governor has met with each department to individually review their budget requests. He will compare those to revenue available and develop his budget proposal based on his priorities and agency needs. The department is hoping to be successful with its 2015 budget requests.

The Director noted that during the Quality of Life (QOL) group hearing with the Governor, the group presented a proposal for an Invasive Species Initiative that would involve all three agencies in addressing aquatic, as well as terrestrial invasive species. Because this was a unique cross-agency request, it will be interesting to see if the initiative is funded in the 2015 budget.

MICHIGAN FIBER INDUSTRY COALITION: Sheila Miller, Ad Hoc President, Michigan Fiber Industry Coalition; and Tamara Miller, President, MI-Alpaca

Ms. Sheila Miller, a llama farmer from Eaton County and Ms. Tamara Miller, an alpaca farmer from Kent County noted they are among the 2,400 fiber farmers in Michigan. The Michigan Fiber Industry Coalition includes a diverse representation of the industry and has received help from various state agencies, including Dr. Richard Ehrhardt, MSU Extension Program Manager for Ruminants. The Coalition is working with a prominent sheep shearer toward developing a "made in Michigan" product, which they hope to achieve within the next year or two.

The Coalition is appreciative of assistance from Dr. James Averill and for the department's providing staff to assist in formation of the Coalition, as well as their recognition of the purpose of the group and the value of all fiber animals. Coalition members are proud to contribute to Michigan's economy, many of whom have become MAEAP certified.

The Coalition's membership reflects the diversity of fiber and textile stakeholders in Michigan. Its mission is to promote the growth and profitability of the family farm by developing a market for fleece and fiber production in Michigan, with a vision of Michigan becoming established as the fine fiber (soft with low micron count) capitol of the U.S.

Goals to realize this vision include 1) encourage and increase the number of small family farms interested in growing fiber animals; 2) establish a fiber cooperative; 3) establish a pilot project – Fiber Hub; and 4) increase awareness of available fiber products in

Michigan. A visual depiction of the envisioned Fiber Hub was discussed, noting it will develop an economic program to facilitate new ideas and innovations that directly support and improve Michigan's textile supply chain by bringing fiber and the textile community together.

Activities successfully organized during 2012 included various grant applications, a wool handling school, a loom purchasing exercise, and a survey of Michigan growers. The survey revealed 92 percent of the growers reinvested their profits into their farms, growers are not receiving a fair market price for their fiber, and every fiber farmer would love to see a product made in Michigan from their fiber.

During 2013, activities included a positive networking experience through the May Fleece to Fiber to Fashion Mixer event, the June 22 fiber trail open houses held on 14 farms, the Michigan Garment Industry Council Speed Networking and Michigan Fiber Expo events in October, and the upcoming December 7 Holiday Fiber Trail event to be held on 16 different farms that will feature holiday gifts crafted from Michigan livestock.

Future strategies include a fiber industry summit that will provide outreach to growers, educational opportunities, and sessions on industry standards. The future vision includes expanding Michigan-grown wool and fiber, a processing facility, and developing a value-added product in Michigan.

In response to questions from Commissioner Coe, the speakers advised some of the farms have been told they need a license to operate a small store on their property in order to market their own products; however, as long as 70 percent of products in the store are from that particular farm, that operation should be allowed. Through the MAEAP process, their members are well aware of good management practices, and that type of information can be more widely shared during the planned fiber industry summit. Deer can be a concern, because they carry the meningeal worm, which can be deadly to alpaca, llama, and sheep, requiring a very rigid worm protocol.

Commissioner Kennedy inquired about producing fine fiber and where Michigan stands in this industry. Ms. Tamara Miller advised it is accomplished through breeding and feeding practices. Again, this is where the summit would be helpful in educating breeders in desirable practices. As a state, Michigan is ahead of the curve with the concepts being promoted by the Coalition.

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM UPDATE: Nancy Nyquist, Market Development Specialist, Office of Agriculture Development

Ms. Nyquist distributed a summary report on the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) Program, noting MDARD received 39 proposals in 2012, requesting \$2,068,035.00. The 21 proposals recommended for award totaled \$1,078,713.00. This year, the department received 45 proposals, requesting \$2,451,696.28, with a matching funds requirement of \$325,039.00. The proposals were finalized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in September and 18 proposals were recommended to be awarded for a total of \$1,052,986.00. The increase in proposals submitted this year indicates a growth in interest and has generated greater competition in the program.

SCBG is a maximum \$75,000 per award program for the grants and a summary was distributed with details on each of the awarded projects with whom the department will be working over the next 18 months. Also in process are two active cycles of grants, with final reports being prepared on one. The department's relationship with USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), who oversees the program, has improved greatly over the past year.

The department hopes to announce a Request for Proposals for the next SCBG Program in February; however, funding is dependent upon the future of the Farm Bill, which funds the program. SCBG an excellent program and there always is a wide diversity of projects represented in the proposals. The department is excited to work with each project as it moves forward.

Relative to SGI, staff is working to summarize recommendations from the evaluation committee. There were 76 proposals submitted, requesting over \$19 million, which again depicts the amount of interest in the agriculture industry. Recommendations will be reviewed with the Director next week.

The first year of the Food System and Value Added Grant Program is nearing a close. The Request for Proposals for new projects was published Monday, with applications due on January 10, 2014, 3:00 p.m. EST.

In response to question from Commissioner Coe, Ms. Nyquist advised that Farm Bill extensions have continued funding of the SCBG Program up to this point. Through the amount of support the Michigan Congressional Delegation in Washington gives to this program, they are hopeful it will continue in the future through either another extension or passage of a new Farm Bill.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

Chairperson Kennedy recessed the meeting at 10:05 a.m. for a brief break. He reconvened the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

NURSERY INSPECTION FEES: Jeffrey Zimmer, Deputy Division Director, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division

Mr. Zimmer advised PPPMD inspects plants and plant products, certifying they meet the phytosanitary requirements of Michigan and destination states and countries. For this service, the division charges per-acre or per-hour inspection fees. The department is requesting the Commission approve some slight increases in those fees.

The Insect Pest and Plant Disease Act, P.A. 189 of 1931, authorizes the division to conduct the inspections, charge inspection fees, annually evaluate the cost of conducting inspections, and propose new inspections fees as necessary to cover those costs. Proposed fee increases are subject to Commission approval.

Prior to 2012, the department was able to adjust inspection fees by as much as 50 percent, given Commission approval. Because this could be quite dramatic to the industry, the department actually operated without increases for long periods of time.

Act 189, Section 6(6), was amended in 2012 to increase inspection fees annually by no more than an amount determined by the State Treasurer to reflect the annual percentage change in the Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint Consumer Price Index (CPI). It further limits inspection fee increases to no more than five percent in a one-year period. The Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) and MFB supported those amendments to Act 189.

PPPMD evaluates the cost of conducting plant and plant produce inspections at the end of each fiscal year and compares it to the inspection fees it charges. This evaluation found the inspection fees collected in fiscal year 2013 did not cover the cost of the inspection programs, and general funding was still strongly required to support the program.

The State Treasurer notified MDARD the CPI rose 1.9 percent in fiscal year 2013 compared to the previous year. Based on its annual evaluation of inspection costs and the change in the CPI, PPPMD proposes the following inspection fee schedule: from \$56/hour to \$57/hour; from \$51/acre to \$52/first acre; and because amounts are rounded to the nearest whole dollar, the rate of \$31/additional acre to remain unchanged. Mileage fees associated with inspections will not be increased. If approved by the Commission, the fee adjustments are estimated to increase revenue by approximately \$10,000.

Clients that would be affected by a fee increase are nursery stock growers, nursery stock dealers, exporters of plants and plant products, importers of foreign-source nursery stock, and other special circumstance inspections as requested.

To avoid adjusting fees during peak inspection periods and to provide adequate notification time, it is proposed the adjusted fee schedule, if approved, be implemented January 1, 2014, with an effective period to end December 31, 2014. PPPMD would notify the affected industries in writing with all details of the adjusted inspection fee schedule and concurrently post the information on its website.

In response to inquiry from Commissioner Kennedy, Mr. Zimmer advised inspection fees only cover at best, 30 percent of the actual cost of conducting the inspections. The Director pointed out the request represents a 1.9 percent increase, and the department's increase for operational staff costs was approximately 5.7 percent per employee for this year alone; therefore, the gap between inspection fees and actual inspection costs continues to grow each year.

Commissioner Coe requested in the future, proposed increases be reviewed with all affected industries advising them of the recommendation to be presented to the Commission for approval, and if they have objections, they could speak before the Commission during the meeting at which the fee increases are being considered. Mr. Zimmer advised he would incorporate that step into next year's process.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER COE MOVED THE NURSERY INSPECTION FEE ADJUSTMENTS BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WALCOTT SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Derek Bajema, Legislative Liaison

Mr. Bajema highlighted some of the agricultural-related legislation currently being considered, noting that if Commissioners ever have questions or input relative to any legislation, to please feel free to contact him.

House Bill 4132, which addresses Conservation Districts without a quorum, was recently signed into law. Senate Bill 332 is also expected to be signed soon and gives the very limited phosphorus exemption to natural fertilizers.

Two bills that work in tandem, House Bill 4380 and Senate Bill 481, would deregulate one path for becoming a Qualified Forester, which is the Registered Forester as issued through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). Because some out-of-state foresters participate in Michigan's Qualified Forest Program, the department wanted to ensure a path would still exist for that group to become Qualified Foresters. One of the three remaining paths through MDNR would provide that capability at no cost for the license. Efforts to amend those bills to simply move the licensure from LARA to MDARD are being discouraged by the department. The Director added there is some assumption that MDARD could simply assume that responsibility. But when the department's staff is considered as a machine, that factory is already at capacity and to accomplish that extra margin of cost, a new machine would be required, and the additional money received would not cover that machine's cost. MDARD's staff is already at more than 105 percent of its work capacity and to assume responsibility for this additional licensing would require elimination of something else. Commissioner Coe concurred, noting the department has endured considerable budget reductions.

Mr. Bajema noted there a number of bills being monitored by the department that deal with cats and dogs. One pair in particular – Senate Bill 560 and its companion House Bill 1595 – deal with two issues, large scale breeder regulations and a normalcy of holding times for animal shelters. A person should have a reasonable expectation their dog, if lost, will be held the same amount of time in one area of the state as another. The department is working with the Michigan Humane Society on this bill and will continue to monitor its progress.

House Bill 4622 is currently moving through the Senate. It would change the process for amending drainage district boundaries. It is the product of considerable cooperation between the Michigan Association of Counties, MDARD Intercounty Drain staff, and the Association of County Drain Commissioners. The legislation should bring some equity and cost savings to that process.

He noted that MDARD's Rich Harlow continues to coordinate the Farmland Preservation Program that he proudly improved considerably relative to customer document turnaround times. However, that will begin to diminish because that staff has been reduced due to declining revenue from the program. This will become apparent during tax season in particular and Commissioners may receive comments from the agriculture community in this regard.

In response to inquiry from Commissioner Coe on House Bill 4075, Mr. Bajema advised the legislation would apply exclusively to the downtown district. The Director added it would allow the Downtown Development Authority to market a farmers market, applying only to marketing activities, not production.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES

Commissioner Kennedy noted the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is holding a public hearing December 11, 2013, for comments on proposed revisions to Michigan's Clean Water Program, known as the Michigan Wetlands Program. Written comments will also be accepted until December 18, 2013.

The Director asked if the Commission, from their position of authority, should comment about the positive aspects of that bill. She shared an outline of suggested points that could be highlighted. Since the written comment period ends December 18, 2013, that would allow for developing a draft comment document to be considered by the Commission during their December 13 meeting.

The Commission was in agreement with the Director's proposal. The Director will develop a draft comment document for distribution to the Commission in their December meeting packets. Additionally, if Commissioners have ideas for any additional points to be included, please let the Director know.

Commissioner Kennedy reviewed a retirement resolution before the Commission recognizing Gerald M. Wirth, who has been with the department for over 30 years.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WALCOTT MOVED THE RESOLUTION FOR GERALD M. WIRTH BE ADOPTED WITH BEST WISHES FOR HIS LONG AND HEALTHY RETIREMENT. COMMISSIONER COE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Randy Zeilinger, Garden City, noted the Fiber Coalition addressed areas, such as the Right to Farm (RTF) Act and township problems, which are similar to what he and others having spoken to the Commission have experienced. The first draft of the 2014 proposed Site Selection Generally Accepted Agriculture Management Practices (GAAMP) not only would affect his operation, but potentially the 2,400 farms involved with the Fiber Coalition group. Some of the items in the proposed governing set of rules seem to be less scientific-based than what he believes the purpose of the GAAMPs committees should be. When they begin including zoning, or social opinions, and changing social values, they are moving away from that fact-based consideration. The implications could be considerable, even affecting downtown authorities and how they operate farmers markets, because they could no longer obtain local food. The consequences don't look promising for anyone who is not a large industrial operation. Small and medium-sized operations are very passionate about what they do; however, many of them are struggling. They want to grow, and they want to do the right thing; but with stumbling blocks being placed in front of them, it makes it very difficult. Agricultural research and education is moving forward; yet, as Commissioner Kennedy noted, there are not enough young people coming into agriculture. That can be promoted at local

levels with small operations as an introduction to the industry. He would like to see anything that threatens any desire to produce agriculture considered very seriously. If regulation is turned over to local rule, there will be enormous confusion that will drive local agendas instead of a statewide program of promoting agriculture in Michigan.

Wendy Banka, President, Michigan Small Farm Council, advised the Michigan Small Farm Council (MSFC) is now one year old and organized largely around issues that arose over the 2012 and 2013 GAAMPs. Like the Fiber Coalition and so many other organizations, she hopes she too can someday thank the Commission for their support of urban agriculture. She, and people like her, have requested again and again that the Commission withdraw the impediments that are being put before those trying to produce agriculture where they live. She asked that the Commission this year ensure MSFC has a place on the various GAAMPs committees. Based on the Commission's encouragement last year, that was requested; however, they were invited to sit on zero committees. Although the Site Selection GAAMP committee is working diligently on issues specific to their group, there has been no representation of their group, or people like them, on that committee. A fair process includes representation by all those concerned with the issues. This year, she will again contact each of the GAAMP committee chairs to request representation on their committees. MSFC not only wants to share its concerns, but wants to learn what in their operations concerns the committees and to engage in a real dialogue to hopefully find amicable solutions.

In response to inquiry from Commissioner Kennedy, Ms. Banka advised, although the Council has yet to make efforts to expand because of its newness, it now has almost 50 members from across the state. She is very proud of the excitement and passion of MSFC members.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes September 18, 2013*
- C) *Director Jamie Clover Adams – Issues of Interest Report*
- D) *Proposed 2014 Meeting Schedule*
- E) *“Growing it in Michigan” – Michigan Fiber Industry Coalition Presentation*
- F) *Specialty Crop Block Grants Report*
- G) *Request for Approval to Increase Inspection Fees*
- H) *Legislative Status – November 2013*
- I) *Discussion Points – EPA Proposed Revisions to Michigan Wetlands Program*
- J) *Retirement Resolution for Gerald M. Wirth*