

FARM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Grafton County Commissioners' Office
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
January 18, 2011

Present: Mike Lunak, Gary Peters, Donnie Kimball, Jim Oakes, Denis Ward, David Falkenham, Heather Bryant, Paul Collins, Director Julie Clough, Commissioner Ahern, Glenn Libby, Commissioner Burton and Secretary Jeri Martino

D. Ward asked that everyone introduce themselves since there was a new Commissioner at the meeting.

D. Ward then went over items that he thought would be on the agenda for the meeting which included

- Report of the Farm
- Farm Business Plan
- Replacement of D. Paronto
- Replacement of J. Laflamme
- Woodlands update

D. Ward then asked if there should be an election of officers, in particular the Chair position as he has been Chair for a year now. It was the consensus of the committee that he remain as Chairman and he agreed.

D. Kimball began with the report of the Farmstand and passed out a written report *(attached). \$61,368 was received as actual revenue for the Farm from the Farmstand. Sales to other entities belonging to the County and values were also accounted for separately.

G. Peters said that was pretty good income but noted that no expenses were shown.

G. Peters asked if the Farmstand interfered with Paul Collins stand and Collins replied that it does have some affect but vegetable sales are not their main income. He said that his wife didn't care for the Farm dropping their squash prices so low but it wasn't serious.

There was a tremendous crop of potatoes this year and D. Ward asked if the County was going to plant the same amount next year. D. Kimball said he hoped to and that a huge amount was sold to Northeast Agriculture. He said the pollination of bees helped a lot.

P. Collins suggested selling the potatoes by weight. There was a discussion about whether or not any potatoes were kept for seed potatoes and H. Bryant said that it wouldn't have been safe to do that last year because of the blight but would have probably been okay this year. D. Kimball said they did not keep any potatoes for seed and P. Collins said they could have saved money by doing that.

D. Kimball said they are milking 70 cows and have 20 piglets left. 10 are bred for spring. The hens have slowed down some in the winter but eggs are still being sold to be resold retail.

G. Peters suggested trying Blue Seal food and said that the hens will lay if they eat that food.

D. Kimball said that he should have the business plan done by the next meeting.

D. Ward explained to Commissioner Ahern that the Farm Advisory Committee was established in order to make recommendations to the Commissioners. He said that there were goals set for the Farm and the members take an active role.

G. Peters said that D. Kimball was asked to do an inventory of everything on the Farm from grain to tractors and thought that would be eye opening to the Delegation in terms of the amount of money that was tied up in the Farm.

D. Ward asked how the inmates were doing working at the Farmstand. G. Libby said they are invaluable to the stand and noted that as far as Sgt. Paronto is concerned, his position should have no bearing on the Farm and that the position will be filled as Inmate Labor Coordinator and D. Kimball will have to rely on his paid help once Sgt. Paronto is gone.

D. Ward said Donnie will be losing a considerable amount of help and G. Libby stated that D. Kimball is the only one who works with the vegetables. He said that Sgt. Paronto donated a lot of time and expertise to do a lot of the work on the Farm and he really didn't have to. He said that H. Bryant has been very helpful in improving the growth of the produce.

G. Libby said that there will be a lot of educational programs that will include food for the Farm at the new Jail.

D. Kimball said his herdsman will probably be retiring in October so he's not sure what his plans are for replacing him either. He noted that 170 head of cattle take most of the land in order to feed.

J. Clough said that D. Kimball will need to consider replacement of the herdsman when preparing the Farm budget.

D. Ward asked D. Kimball what he was going to do with all the turkey corn and he said he will be chopping it up for feed.

D. Falkenham reviewed the timber plan and said that he started marking trees for a timber sale and discussed a boundary issue that came up. He said about 1/3 of the property will be cut and the hope is to have the cut in the summer and to have it carry over a year but stop during hunting season. There was a discussion about how the trees along the railroad track area could be removed.

D. Ward said that he had spoken to J. Laflamme and that he does still want to remain on the committee and there was a discussion about whether there should be any more members.

D. Ward asked if anyone knew anything about the Coos County Farm and M. Lunak said that the Farm has \$20K to the end of June and then it will be shut down but there is also talk about adding 30 cows. He said that the price to do what they're considering would be substantial.

D. Ward asked why the Farm is even open and M. Lunak said it might be political.

Commissioner Ahern said he would like the County to consider biodiesel and he has heard from constituents that the County shouldn't be considering biomass. He said he hopes that algae can be grown from the sewage on the campus or there is a possibility that it could come from seed oil, adding that he wasn't sure how much could actually be grown here.

He said that biodiesel could heat facilities and can be produced right on the campus. Commissioner Ahern said that Dr. Farag from UNH is scheduled to come to the County and speak with the Board of Commissioners about the prospect. He didn't think that biodiesel would compete with the local farmers. He said he would look to Grafton County as a proving ground for new innovations.

P. Collins said he had an interest in that and said that he had read in an article that the only true value of agriculture is energy.

D. Ward said he wished the Farm could work more with UNH and do more research projects.

M. Lunak said there may be a large initial investment to harvest the fields for seed oil.

Commissioner Burton said that diversity is always in the wind and we have to be imaginative and whatever it takes to get off the fuel from the Middle East he is in favor of. He said that change is coming.

He also stated that he supports inmate labor and recognizes that it helps to run the Farm.

Commissioner Ahern said that he appreciated everyone's time for attending these meetings.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2011 at 1:00 PM

2:30 PM Meeting adjourned.