

THURSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

McLane Building Conference Room
5033 Harrison Ave NW, Olympia, WA 98502

Minutes for January 28, 2016

Members Present: EJ Zita (Chair), Robert McIntosh (Vice-Chair), Chery Sullivan, Mary DiMatteo, Pat Labine, Kevin Jensen, Chris Groen, Richard Mankamyer, Eric Johnson, and ~~EJ Zita (Chair), Doug Wiseman~~, Eric Johnson

Ex Officio Member: Dave Nygard

Staff Present: Charissa Waters, and Samantha Woolstrum

~~Guests Present: Lucia Wyss~~

Members Excused~~Absent~~: Doug Wiseman

The meeting was called to order at 7:05~~8~~ by ~~Robert McIntosh~~ EJ Zita followed by round-table introductions of the members and staff.

Approval of agenda – The agenda was discussed, changes were suggested, and it was approved as amended.

News sharing - Mary DiMatteo volunteered to be the county's representative for this year's Conservation Futures Program. Applications are now being accepted for the 2016 Conservation Futures funding cycle. Applications are due by 5:00PM on Monday, February 29th.

Approval of previous meeting minutes -The minutes from the January 28th meeting were reviewed, corrected and approved by consensus with amendments.

Public Comment – There were no additional public comments on the meeting.

Discussion of the Green Sheets Presents - There were no green sheets presented.

News Sharing – The committee was generally impressed with the presentation by Joy Beckerman on industrial hemp. The committee agreed not to make any recommendations at this time concerning industrial hemp.

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EJ Zita discussed The Food Safety Modernization Act - According to the FDA's website:

- ***Raw Manure:** The FDA is conducting a risk assessment and extensive research on the number of days needed between the applications of raw manure as a soil amendment and harvesting to minimize the risk of contamination. (A soil amendment is a material, including manure, which is intentionally added to the soil to improve its chemical or physical condition for growing plants or to improve its capacity to hold water.)*
 - *At this time, the FDA does not object to farmers complying with the USDA's National Organic Program standards, which call for a 120-day interval between the application of raw manure for crops in contact with the soil and 90 days for crops not in contact with the soil. The agency considers adherence to these standards a prudent step toward minimizing the likelihood of contamination while its risk assessment and research is ongoing.*
 - *The final rule requires that untreated biological soil amendments of animal origin, such as raw manure, must be applied in a manner that does not contact covered produce during application and minimizes the potential for contact with covered produce after application.*
- ***Stabilized Compost:** Microbial standards that set limits on detectable amounts of bacteria (including *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella spp.*, fecal coliforms, and *E. coli* 0157:H7) have been established for processes used to treat biological soil amendments, including manure. The rule includes two examples of scientifically valid composting methods that meet those standards. Stabilized compost prepared using either of these methods must be applied in a manner that minimizes the potential for contact with produce during and after application."*

Pat Labine reported on the Mobile Slaughter Unit - Fred Colvin sent out letters to all of the co-op members stating that the mobile slaughter unit will no longer be in business as of the end of March 2016. According to the Puget Sound Meat Producers Cooperative website:

"PSMPC wishes to inform you the cooperative will no longer operate the Mobile Meat Processing Unit (MMPU) after March 31, 2016. PSMPC shall maintain regular slaughter services through the month of March. Direct all inquiries regarding future MMPU operations to Ryan Mello, Executive Director, Pierce Conservation District (253) 845-9770."

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Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) update by Charissa Waters – They now have a contract that is finalized to finish the work plan. The VSP is an alternative approach for counties to protect critical areas on agricultural lands. Instead of enacting further critical areas regulation on agricultural lands, the VSP allows the county to work closely with stakeholders to develop voluntary, site-specific stewardship plans. The mission of the VSP is to create a voluntary stewardship plan which protects critical areas while maintaining and enhancing the viability of agriculture.

Agenda Discussion of the impacts of climate change on farming - Growing seasons are getting longer. Extreme weather such as droughts and wet periods are getting more extreme. New crops such as grapes are thriving in the Pacific North West, when there is enough water. Some committee members feel that changing markets have affected farms more than climate change has. WUS's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources is a good source of information: www.csanr.wsu.edu/climate-change/

| Mary DiMatteo reported on the Washington State Tilt Conference - One of the keynote speakers was Dr. John Reganold from WSU who spoke on "Strengthening of Alternative farming systems". The capnote speaker was Ray deVries of Ralph's Greenhouse.

| Mary DiMatteo reported on the Tilt producers merge - Washington Tilt Producers and Seattle Tilt have merged and absorbed the Cascade Harvest Collation, which houses the Farm Guide, Washington State Farm Link and Puget Sound Fresh. They are now located in one office. Mary also encouraged all Thurston County farmers that might be interested in advertising their farms to consider using the 2016 Farm Guide. Farmers can chose to advertise in the paper guide, use the mobile app, and/or use the website.

EJ Zita discussed Port of Olympia business - Various farmers approached the port in January along with some Farm Bureau members, as well as some members of the Economic Development Council to ask what the Port of Olympia could do for them. The Port is committed to using the Economic Developmental Council along with local farmers to collect data on the contributions of Thurston county farmers and look into the needs of the agriculture community. The Port is wants to know, what opportunities not are not currently being met, and where does agriculture need investment help. Agriculture members offered ideas, such as a grain mill. The Port hopes to have results from the study in a few months.

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Charissa Waters stated that Thurston County has done some work with mapping agriculture they conducted an effort with the voluntary stewardship program to map out agriculture activities as well as agricultural land. They currently have a draft map created that was completed in 2015.

Other business – Committee members drafted and signed a letter to Thurston County Commissioners supporting Zita’s routine reappointment to the Committee.

Motion to adjourn - occurred at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by *Samantha Woolstrum*