

# Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, May 7th  
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm  
UVM Extension - Middlebury  
23 Pond Lane, Suite 300  
Middlebury, VT 05753



## BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

*Meeting called to order at 12:10 pm*

### **Review and Approve March Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept April minutes: Loren Wood

Second: Ted Foster

Discussion: none

*Passed without abstention or dissention*

**Jeff Carter/Kirsten Workman**

### **Treasurer Report**

*Kirsten gave the report as Jeff was late returning from a meeting*

Motion to accept Treasurers report: Ben Dykema

Second: Ted Foster

Discussion: none

*Passed without abstention or dissention*

**Jeff Carter**

### **President's Report**

*Looking for funding: NE Feed Dealers (potentially \$2500 towards movie with potential for more)*

*Bruce Lisman meeting (Campaign for Vermont...grass roots org started ~3 years ago, a conversation about the politics in VT, outreach to groups, <http://www.campaignforvermont.org/index.php>*

*Membership: send applications to all members to hand out.*

**Eric Clifford**

### **Membership Application Approvals**

*Rachel & Bill Orr, Orr Family Farm*

Motion to accept Membership Applications: Ted Foster

Second: Loren Wood

Discussion: none

*Passed without abstention or dissention*

**Kirsten Workman**

### **Project/Policy Updates**

**Guest: Jane Clifford, Green Mountain Dairy Farmers**

- ED/Lobbyist for Green Mountain Dairy Farms, 3 dairy cooperatives together been around 50 years representing farmers in legislature. 900 dairy farms in state, GMDF cover 875 of them (independents are not dues-paying members)
- Keeps track of legislation in Montpelier. Challenge is lack of understanding and value to dairy farming by legislators. Small, diversified ag is what most folks think of in Montpelier. The story of 'production ag' is not valued as it used to be. Negative feedback about situations the industry is facing (milk checks, regulations, etc).
- Message they are trying to convey that dairy is still 85% of ag in VT, 2 billion dollars of economic activity...big numbers. Trying to align with the business world...production ag is the third largest industry in the state
- This year's challenges....raw milk, GMOs – we were very vocal against and didn't amount to much...frustrating
- Important to have a voice, face and identify with what CVFC is doing for water quality
- HB 586....came out of House F & W, got tacked to the wall, maybe was a little early. ANR & VAAFM communicating what was coming down from EPA/TMDL. Small farm certification, livestock fencing, NMPs (ag work group) recommendations hit a road block...small farms can't do that. The bill ended up dying, but we

made good strides and respect by being at the table and being part of the solution. The first time House F & W took production ag seriously in wanting to be part of the conversation. The naysayers were seen differently.

- The more opportunities that CVFC Members to talk to their legislators...Will Smith, etc. REACH OUT....invite representatives and senators to meetings. In Chittenden Co...Ginny Lyons and Diane Snelling and get your message about a clean lake and how farmers can do a better job and help folks get there....farmers talking to farmers. It has power.
- Changing the ban on winter spreading? Part of HB 586, exemptions to allocate appropriate sites. The conversations on the legislative levels were very good. We need to be part of the dialogue. That part of the bill is gone.
- HB 586 came down to funding. That's where it got hung up. They weren't ready to set anything in stone. No actual cost was associated with the law. Farm Bill was unknown.
- Governor will have a proposal
- Do you see a new version coming next year? Yes. It will depend on what EPA comes up with from a TMDL
- GMO vote: bill started last year in the house and got some traction (not a lot of publicity), passed the house, went to the senate ag committee, Sen. Star tried to hold on to it. Rural Vermont, VPIRG, VT Bus. For Soc. Sust spent \$3 million getting it passed this year. VPIRG & Castleton Polls (vague, general questions about wanting to know what's in your food). House had a trigger on it (3 other states or date specific), senate took the trigger out - July 1, 2015. Senator Sears. No trigger, exemption for fluid milk, study to determine if exemption is appropriate, goes into effect July 1, 2015. Confusion...thought all dairy was exempt. Governor....Thursday at 2:30 will sign during a Ben & Jerry's ice cream party. Senate Vote was 28 – 2 for it. House vote had only 30 votes against it....lots of pressure from party to vote for it (both parties). Challenge from UVM-CDAE, first with BST and should be first with GMO. St. Albans...push from B & J to feed non-GMO corn to cows. New York is looking at a bill. National movement to prevent what happened in VT...hodgepodge of laws from state to state. The lawsuit will be filed 30 days after bill is signed....food industry (grocers, specialty foods, etc). Who writes the rule??? Most other states have triggers related to other states.
- Meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup>...B&Js, AgriMark, how to source non-gmo milk
- Ed...Seed industry does not test for GMO...all seed has at least 5% GMO. Trying to come up with explanation: GMO, GE, Organic, etc. Need to make a determination on thresholds....open pollinated crops are 'impossible' to guarantee GMO free.
- Urge you to have a presence at the State House. One-on-one conversations (phone, person) with the legislators. It is huge when you create those relationships.

### **Watersheds United Vermont**

**Kirsten**

Invitation to Watershed United Vermont's Meeting of the Waters on May 29<sup>th</sup> is attached. We should select one or two Directors to attend, per discussion at April Meeting

*Invitation is attached*

Dave Conant??

### **Letter of Support...Regional Conservation Partnership Program**

**Kirsten**

CVFC has been approached by the Mississquoi River Basin Association to sign on to a letter of support requesting our national congressional delegation to ask Secretary Vilsak to designate Lake Champlain a Critical Conservation Area under the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program that was just created under the new Farm Bill. This would make the basin eligible for new funding to protect water quality.

*The letter is attached*

- *Can't be bad to have money coming in to the watershed*
- *If we sign on, we could have some say to where the money goes.*
- *Be part of the discussion...wording of the last paragraph*

[Motion to give support to this letter: Brian Kemp](#)

[Second: Loren Wood](#)

[Discussion: none](#)

[Passed without abstention or dissent](#)

## **CVFC Swag**

**Kirsten Workman/Eric Clifford**

Eric and Kirsten will take an informal poll on getting some CVFC swag (t-shirts, patches, stickers) to see what folks think? We can talk about costs, preferences, etc.

- T-Shirts...Ben will get quote from his son
- Signs...tell a story (AgriMark..Burma Shave signs)

## **The Future of CVFC...Executive Director Discussion *continued***

**Jeff Carter/Eric Clifford**

Jeff proposed that Kirsten Workman (current Secretary and UVM Extension Agronomy Outreach Professional) start taking over some of the 'point person' programmatic responsibilities of CVFC. She is familiar with organization, the farmers, the farming practices, outreach and already coordinates membership, etc. Jeff has hired more field technicians for the summer to help free up more of her time to work on CVFC priorities. We will continue to pursue funding for operational support and continue to re-evaluate staffing needs.

Motion to accept this strategy: Ted Foster

Second: ??

Discussion: ??

*Passed without abstention or dissention*

## **Public Outreach Initiative – Update & Next Steps!**

**Gerianne Smart (ECHO Center)/RetroMotion**

Gerianne will recap our brainstorming session and present a draft proposal/budget for a CVFC film that could be viewed at ECHO, online and otherwise. She will introduce the RetroMotion film team, outline the project and review a 'shot list' to get input on locations, omissions, etc.

*Gerianne's notes from our brainstorming session are attached.*

- *Justin, Christian (RetroMotion Media)...can make an end product we will be proud of.*
- *Creative production and full service consulting (media)...produce for web, television, radio, print, theater. Worked with ECHO. Being out in the field working with real people. Have some experience working with ag industry...getting the message out. Work with Smart Waterways and Champlain Basin Program (drinking water). Find the story, tell the story, make the connection with people (get them to 'feel' the importance of the message).*
- *A message at ECHO, but something that resonates far beyond that.*
- *Poised in the perfect position right now to work on this project.*
- *A film just for ECHO will miss potential impact...who else can be reached? Don't want to water down the message to only reach one audience. How do we get the same impact that environmentalists get about the lake, but with a positive note. Channels can be very targeted and cost effective. Need a tight message, and good production, people will want to share it (good press coverage, 'viral')...can be tailored to the specific audience.*
- *A culture, way of life...balance the perception with the phosphorus message. Can be very self-sustaining.*

Kirsten and Christian (RetroMotion) will connect and they will draft a project proposal outlining more details.

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, June 11<sup>th</sup>...weather tentative, possible conference call, be flexible.**

**More info ahead of time.**

*ADJOURN 2:46 PM*