



Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition Inc.

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Virtual/Remote Meeting

9:15 am **Directors Business Meeting**

In attendance: Brian Kemp, Lorenzo Whitcomb, John Roberts, Sarah Audet, Eric Clifford, Jeff Carter, Kirsten Workman, George Foster, Ray Brands, Marie Audet

Call to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

- Review and approve September meeting minutes (attached)
Motion to approve September minutes: Eric
Second: Lorenzo
Discussion: none
Approved (6/0/0)
- One new member application –

Supporting Business Member – Peter Appleton, Earth Wise Global (Northfield, VT & Cornwall, ON)

Motion to approve Earth Wise Global as a member: Eric
Second: David
Discussion:
Passed (6/0/0)

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

- Jeff review September financial reports, balance sheet and profit & loss
Motion to approve treasurer's report: George:
Second: Marie
Discussion: next grant payment (\$40K) with semi-annual nov. report
Passed (6/0/0/0)

Executive Director Report

John Roberts

- Addison county won't qualify as a drought disaster because we didn't reach 40% loss threshold.
 - Many producers still significantly impacted
- BOTF grant was awarded, with some modification. \$8323 (NEDP will pay for/deliver some of the training to make up the difference)
 - Exciting, nervous
 - CRWFA
 - Will be looking to CVFC members to participate
- Has now contacted all members (not all have responded) to urge applications to COVID relief programs – spent a lot of time on that last month. Now deadline extended to Nov. 15th. Two week hiatus to change application.
 - \$11 million and change sent out now.
 - 352 farms – 29 LFO, 82 MFOs, 143 CSFO, 73 SFO

- Not even half the money
- Dairy water collaborative, wanted us to manage a grant they are trying to get
- Legislature out of session, but need to plan for January
 - Wetlands will be important, connecting with Harvey
 - Brian Campion (Brattleboro) – animal welfare

Communications Plan/Budget

John Roberts & Sarah Audet

Sarah will share the draft communications plan and budget. Please review materials ahead of meeting.

You can view materials [here](#)...or I have attached a PDF document as well.

Sarah shared the

Communications Plan

- Audience types and personas, crafting and honing message
 - Public: advocate, farmer fan, concerned neighbor, friend of the environment
 - Legislators

Dig up...story boarding from our work with ECHO and video project

- Communication methods to members

Budget (to support comm. Plan)

- Grant funded and organization funded
- Digital advertising, sponsor/exhibitor, photocopies, photography, postage, advertising, print marketing, promotional products, radio, subscriptions, website
- Jeff recommended the organization –

Motion to approve budget as presented: David

Second: ERic

Discussion:

Passed (6/0/0)

Website Outline

- Who we are
 - Organization
 - Board
 - Staff
 - Impact
 - Press
- What we do
 - Sustainable AG Practices
 - Farmer Education
 - Agvocacy
- How you can help
 - Learn about sustainable ag
 - Be an advocate
 - Become a member

- donate
- Events
- News
- Contact
- Members Only

Discussion:

Ambitious

Impression of time commitment – build, but maintain

Incorporated into existing proposal for development.

Maintenance – look at weekly, make sure its current/functional, train John, managing content without going overboard, meshing it with social media,

Domain name might need to look at a new domain name that is easier,

Next steps:

- Board of directors need bios – 3 or 4 sentences, why its
- If you already have head shot send that
- Get a basic website/landing page first and then add in the rest of the content
- Once that is up, we can start social media

GENERAL MEETING – All Members + Guests are invited

Additional Attendees: Terry Norris, Darren Ujinowiz, Allen Wilder

10:00 – University of Vermont College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Leadership

We will be joined by the following guests for a conversation about how farmer organizations and UVM ag programs can both utilize each other as resources and partner with each other better to move agriculture forward in Vermont. The new CALS Dean and Interim Extension Director, Leslie Parise will introduce herself and share some details about CALS and then we will have an open discussion.

Leslie Parise – CALS Dean, Interim Extension Director (Leslie.Parise@uvm.edu)

Ernesto Mendez – Chair, Plant & Soil Science Department (Ernesto.Mendez@uvm.edu)

Jane Kolodinsky – Chair, Community Development & Applied Economics (Jane.Kolodinsky@uvm.edu)

Leslie Parise shared a presentation about CALS and UVM Extension:

- Extension Director search was just launched
- Shared her history
- Background in heart and cancer medicine, enjoying learning about agriculture
- Lots to clear up in the research in the health effects of dairy and dairy products,
- 1400 undergrads, 120 graduates, 6 departments
- Life Science, Social Science, Environment, Food & Health
 - Eric Testroet – fatty liver disease in cows
 - Sabrina Greenwood – milk proteins (900+), grazing and supplements effect on milk protein and quality
 - CREAM – introduces students to dairy science
 - Nutrition/Food Science, Listeria/Salmonella, food security, cheese making
- Farms: Morgan Horse Farm, HREC, Proctor Maple Research, Miller Farm

- Internships: practice and application, always looking for opportunities to work in the real world
- Alumni: Shelburne farms, Jasper Hill, Bob Foster, Diane Bothfeld, Louise Calderwood,
- More than one path CALS – start at UVM, CCV > UVM, VTC > UVM (2+2), transfer students
- UVM Extension
 - 143 employees, 32 programs, 12 offices

John: gaps with potential for UVM to help agriculture?

Food supply chain disruption, opportunities as a result; climate change, food safety, consumer drives the marketplace (eg. airline industry); better marketing of what Vermont has to offer; it is its own brand;

Are you confident that relationship with VTC will continue?

Many colleges concerned about finances with students deferring enrollment, partnerships will help strengthen both of us, more than just VTC but other colleges too

Allen: Agriculture is served by many departments (PSS, Nutrition, animal science, etc), but not usually in a coordinated way – both for farmers and students. How do we encourage departments work better serve students/farmers?

Just about to begin a CALS strategic planning process (with Extension) that will address this directly. Zoom & Teams has made this easier and meeting more often with department chairs. The SP process

Darren: DO you see a need for help getting students enrolled?

UVM is doing better than most – 5-10% reduction. Hard to predict what next year will look like? But yes, we need help.

Jane Kolodinsky

- Trend in ag econ programs to transition to more diversified programming
- Start out together and then pick a focus (minor) to finish
- Transdisciplinary lens
- Food & Agriculture is main focus:
 - Jane Kolodinsky: Controversial food system policy issues, GMO labels & economics, push towards 'natural' and 'clean', dairy is one of the least processed foods, shorter value chain (direct market/consumer) is a huge area of opportunity, public health issues
 - Dan Baker: action-research methods, profitability of saffron, lowering barriers to healthcare for Latinx farmworkers,
 - David Conner: economics, sustainability and reliance of local and regional food systems. Mostly regional, but now doing work in Puerto Rico, local food production
 - Josh Farley: sustainable, just and efficient food systems, ARS: Soil health for small and medium size farms
 - Steve Kostell: hemp project (KY, VT CO), using hemp fibers for alternative uses, hemp as a transition product
 - Travis Reynolds: small scale farming, technology adoption from small landholders, family decision making in the maple industry (translatable)
 - Trisha Shrum: human behavior re environmental
 - Daniel Tobin: rural sociologist: seed saving, biodiversity
 - Qunghbin Wang; policy analysis of renewable energy from organic waste
 - Asim Zia: computational modeler, mostly international work, lead Public Admin program in CDAE
- Center for Rural Studies: non-profit fee-for-service, address social, economic and resource-based challenges. Current project with Charlotte Land Trust: perceptions of local farms by neighbors. Historical trends of ag indicators, Vermonter poll.
 - Purchase questions on Vermonter poll – Vermont adults over 18 (segmented by demographics)
 - Help us craft questions
 - \$600/question

Allen – will Bob Parsons area be replaced? Quingin Wang is doing some, working with UVM Extension and Sarah Flack to continue to collect data?

Ernesto Mendez – Plant & Soil Science

- Immigrant from El Salvador, farmed sugar cane
- Agroecology, sustainable landscape majors
- MS PhD – PSS, agroecology certificate
- Areas of work: agroecology, crop genetics, ecological and IPM, soil health and ecology, Ecological landscape design, horticulture
- Interact with AG – mostly with vegetables and apples/grapes
- Facilities: HREC & catamount farm, Jeffords labs, greenhouses
- Chair for two years, emphasizing stronger collaboration with UVM Extension, a great bridge between farmers and the university, identify who the PSS faculty might be who could be a resource, participatory research is a focus. Doing research with people and for people – strong collaboration between producer and faculty
- Scott Lewins – works the NW Crops & Soils team and is extension coordinator for the ALC lab.
 - Working with farmers to develop research questions – ie. Leek moth example
 - Finding solutions appropriate to Vermont farms
 - Bringing more students into the process
 - Collaborations between departments is important moving forward
- Terry Bradshaw – directs HREC and is now Asst. Professor, local Vermonter
 - Has an Extension appointment (through PSS), worked hard to bring positions like that back.
- Agroecology & Livelihoods Collaborative (community of practice)
 - Work around the world (VT, Mexico, S. America, Africa)
 - Broad, but maintains focus on working with and for people
 - Growers, organizations,
 - Bringing producer knowledge to the University (not just the other way around)
 - Students are an important part of that
 - Extension connection important
 - Plant Diagnostic Clinic – Ann Hazelrigg
 - Urge questions and comments so we can better

Jeff – Does the leadership feel like we might have state specialists with Extension appointments?

Leslie...She sees a lot of value in that idea, there is so much opportunity

Ernesto...yes, because of the CALS and Extension relationship has changed, hopes it can be easier. He will be asking for new faculty to have Extension components. International work shouldn't be a limitation. From PSS side we will continue to get combined appts.

Jane – Bob was the last joint faculty, not sure we'll get a cow dairy specialist, but maybe something broader could be on the table

John – Very pleased to have all three of you here today. As a former dairy farmer and VAAFM inspector...farmers have huge pressures – economics, being blamed for environmental degradation while being expected to also be the solution. A close relationship between producers and our major university is very important. Look forward to developing a successful and close relationship in the future.

Leslie – please share resources about milk and dairy pricing to better understand it.

Marie – Happy to hear Ernesto talk about the stronger collaboration with Extension. Lots of pressures to meet regulations – extension is the most relevant it has ever been. Things are changing so quickly, Vermont especially on the forefront. WE can be a really relevant force in the future. Embrace the diversity of agriculture in our state.

Jane – food systems research, value of open land and VT agriculture has a huge potential for carbon sequestration, conservation practices,

Ernesto – encouraged by what he is hearing. Most of his work has been with coffee and small landholders. Key way to get work done is through organizations like this one.

Updates:

- Conservation Practice Surveys – above and beyond just EQIP/FAP, how do we frame it for CVFC
- Communications budget expenses can now be done by John.
- No Vermont Farm Show, Dairy Producers TBD will know in November, NTCC
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Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: Marie

Second: Eric

Next Meeting...November 4, 2020