



Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition Inc.

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Virtual/Remote Meeting

ZOOM LOCATION:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uvmextension.zoom.us/j/7672674868> (Meeting ID: 767 267 4868; Dial in by phone: 1-646-876-9923)

Directors & Membership Business Meeting

In attendance: Kirsten Workman, Brian Kemp, John Roberts, Marie Audet, Jonathan Chamberlin, Tim Kayhart, Jeff Carter, Matthew Biette, Loren Wood, Cary Giguere, Ray Brands, Eric Clifford, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Sarah Audet, Ross Conrad, Gerard Vorsteveld, George Foster, Rachel Reed, Laura Hardie, Jed Davis, Jed Rubin, Brad Lawes, Susan Smiley, John Corcoran,

9:30 Call to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

- House and Senate Ag Meet & Greet – went well, good to meet new members
- Met with Jon Winsten, Payment for Ecosystem Services – would like to share
- Joint farmer watershed meeting – 120+ folks – legislature glad to hear about cooperation

Election Results

Kirsten Workman

Annual Meeting recording available here: <https://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/crVTFE977B>

Results from the Director Elections on January 6, 2021

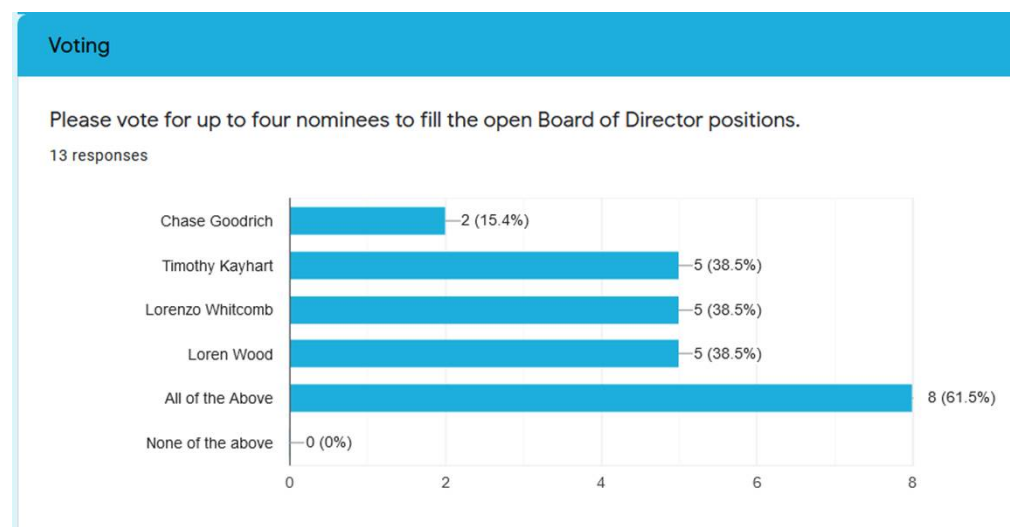
13 total voters

13 votes for: Tim, Lorenzo, and Loren

10 votes for: Chase

Of those votes, 8 were “All of the Above” and 5 voted individually for each member.

Two additional people went to the form, but were not voting members. They answered No to the first question and did not cast votes.



Elect Officers

Kirsten Workman

CVFC Directors will nominate and elect the following positions:

President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary

Motion to nominate Brian Kemp as President, Marie Audet as Vice President, Jeff Carter as Treasurer, and Kirsten Workman as Secretary: Loren Wood

Second: Ray Brands

Discussion: none

Passed (7/0/0)

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

- Review and approve December and January meeting minutes (*attached*)

Motion to approve December & January meeting minutes: Ray Brands

Second: Eric Clifford

Discussion: minutes will be posted on the website once approved

Approved (10/0/0)

- Approve Membership applications
 - Crooked Brook Farm, Jackie Folsom (Cabot, Vt.) – Class 1 – Vermont Farmer.

Motion to approve member applications as presented: Brian Kemp

Second: Eric Clifford

Discussion: none

Approved (8/0/0)

Membership renewals rolling in, 50-60 unpaid so

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

- Review February financial reports
95,000 in checking, going to move a large chunk into savings if ok
12,000+ in savings
Membership dues is above last years
Sponsorships coming in for Farm24VT
Consulting and payroll biggest expense
Still waiting for next grant \$\$ dispersal
Net income positive, but only because some staff left
Submitting federal and state taxes

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report: George Foster

Second: Brian Kemp

Discussion: 2020 tax filing was disappointing. They filed late, didn't respond to IRS, \$1800 penalty, being disputed

Approved (8/0/0)

Executive Director Report

John Roberts

- Soil Health Policy Network, he and Paul Doton (CRVFWA) have joined to lend a voice from farmers' perspective...independent group, not associated with agencies/gov't
- Gil Livingston – Farming voices project, will continue to participate and help when possible

- Met with Matt Whitten (AC Riverwatch Collaborative), now meeting monthly
- Repliculture, Patrick Lawrence – interesting concepts, may ask him to talk to us soon
- Climate Economy Action Council – GHG report for Addison County now has an intern, he made a connection with Melissa Carabeau, Anson Tebbetts is head of subcommittee Vermont Climate Council, and asked John to join
- Senate and House AG multiple meetings – introductions, milk pricing, and more
- Attended grazing conference (online), you can go back and review. Grazing practices, water quality, processing availability,
- Diane Bothfeld – 636 dairy farms (down from xxx in Jan 2020)
 - 133,000 – 122,000 cows (2013 – now)
 - 2.6 billion pounds of milk annually stays consistent
 - Organic 205 – 169 (since 2005)
- Spot checks of manure samples – VAAFAM meeting,

Joint Farmer Watershed Meeting - Report *John/Jeff/Brian/all*

CVFC, FWA and CRFWA hosted a joint meeting on January 27th. You can find a recording of the meeting here: <https://youtu.be/Tnl-nXKC9c>

So much information...almost overwhelming. Watershed group updates were great to see what other folks are doing. Great ideas...CRWFA has a 'farmer forum'. Hoping to do something similar.

Pesticide Conversation

- Frame the conversation – LCBP CAC meeting, legislative agenda, others
 - There is one bill, with no other supporters, to ban glyphosate in the legislature
 - "Quarter of all pesticides used on corn", less use overall in state, but more in corn
 - Roundup from 0 – 30,000 lbs/year
 - Atrazine also went up
 - Add Pesticides
- Roundtable: Where are we at from Farmers/Applicators/Agency
 - Brad Lawes (Lawes Ag),
 - Annual reports should be available
 - Sell more glyphosate than 15 years ago
 - Sell a lot less atrazine...2 lbs + 2 lbs simazine in first year corn old school
 - Direct correlation between cover crops and glyphosate (spring termination)
 - Don't report glyphosate use in Vermont...because it is not restricted product
 - A lot that goes out the door to non-farmers (landscapers, homeowners, deer plots)
 - Jonathan Chamberlin (Bourdeau Bros. Middlebury),
 - Early 2000s when RR crops were introduced, 80% of corn, but glyphosate didn't increase accordingly (only 10% as a rescue program)
 - Once cover crop and reduced tillage started happening, then glyphosate increased. Almost 300% of 2010. Atrazine has gone down 40%
 - Roundup has given us the ability to control perennials
 - Inactive compared to atrazine and other residuals
 - Reporting....mixes vs. single use might get misinterpreted – make sure we are comparing apples to apples
 - Cary Giguere (VAAFAM),

- Chlorpyrifos, glyphosate, atrazine billin house natural resources (not really their jurisdiction)
 - Chlorpyrifos not registered in Vermont anymore (insecticide)
 - Glyphosate information in that bill is incorrect (probable carcinogen classification)
 - Atrazine -
- Monitor for atrazine in ground water – data in a spreadsheet instead of database
 - Atrazine, metolachlor do show up (right after planting)
 - Range of concentrations are low, usually under the reference value
 - C lock value – 10-day average, you would need to mitigate, never come close,
 - Jewett brook highest detection and concentration
- Clothianidin – neonic seed treatment is another detection we see. (Jewett Brook)
- Soil erosion reduction benefits other agricultural chemical losses
- Most other parts of state (beyond Jewett Brook), have few detections and low concentrations. Soils are helpful (high OM, different rotations)
- VT is one of the only states that tracks USE data (we don't audit, but do tally it)
- Pounds of active ingredient vs. ounces of AI – if we don't talk about toxicity vs application rates
- Mid-late 90's mesotrione, atrazine , metolachlor were popular (Lumax),
- Ground water monitoring wells – since mid-80's, testing wells near/@ farms for corn herbicides. Mesotrione just added (no detections); the list changes over the years, driven by pesticide use data, Jeff Comstock started and Patty Casey continues, the biggest groundwater contaminant is Nitrate; glyphosate since 2007, but ramped up (1000+ samples so far), first detection in a surface water.
- Ross Conrad (Dancing Bee Gardens)
 - Pesticides can be helpful, but are indiscriminate
 - Problem for beekeepers since the 1800s, but now more powerful and prevalent
 - No meaningful regulation (really anywhere), we don't know what they do.
 - LD50 – is the main thing that is looked, but little else
 - Glyphosate is less toxic, but in formulation with adjuvants ('inert') can be more toxic
 - A lot of testing is done by the chemical companies themselves (or at least funded by them) – independent studies show the most concerning effects.
 - Need to look the chemicals how they are 'really used'
 - Not all organisms are analyzed for impacts (at different levels of maturity)
 - History is littered with approved 'safe' pesticides that were found to be detrimental
 - Mid-2000s, use of treated seeds (neonic) went up significantly, coincides with the troubles with beehives (mite damage, fertility, immune function, navigation)
 - Beyond just bees – lots of pollinators...butterflies, birds, bats – extension rates are high – pesticides playing a role, but also climate change
 - Treated seeds using them prophylactically – persistent in the environment and not being held to an IPM strategy
 - IPM needs improvement
 - How do we accomplish what pesticides do without chemicals? Management is key? Using lots of different strategies. Not a lot of coordination in VT.

- Education for farmers could be important. They don't know exactly what is being used, especially when they don't apply them.
 - Farmers appreciate bees and beekeepers appreciate farms – Champlain valley is one of the best places in New England the best place to keep bees. All in this together. Hope the conversation continues. Mutually beneficial solutions will be key.
- Discussion –
 - Is there something CVFC can do to help with the conversation at the legislature...it should be heard in Ag (not natural resources)
 - IPM strategies being used and how/what
 - History of treated seeds, etc, more practical options for VT
 - Know what you want and ask for it, Jonathan/Brad can push it up to suppliers
 - Removing a tool, creates a vacuum – we don't want to use rocks as tools.
 - Real world usage here in VT, trends connection to conservation practices
 - Weak points, areas for improvement, how to better focus on IPM
 - Seed treatment while prophylactic, did replace more (human) toxic pesticide boxes on planters
 - We don't know long-term, unknown impacts.
 - Jonathan: using the least amount as possible, riding the line as applicators, bring attention to what we are doing
 - Messaging...what are we doing already for IPM
 - Brian...doing research this winter on transitioning his organic land to grow annuals with less tillage. So much mechanical tillage (5x more than a conventional farm). Feeling like a hypocrite. 2022 project – to use cover crops and reduce tillage, control weeds. Rick Clark, Gabe Brown, 3 out of 5 years.
 - Pollinator Program in CSP (NRCS) – in the buffers
 - George – 12 years of no-till, our chemical use is less because of our rotation, acreages are smaller for monocrops, seed treatment concentrations are much lower, lower pest pressure. Crimping as a tool has been helpful. We aren't seeing damage to the corn as we have transitioned...bugs eating rye?
 - Jeff: pesticide applicator trainings used to have 100 farmers, now maybe 10...commercial applicators and VAAFM are under scrutiny. Burden has been shifted to fewer people, but they are more informed and better trained. More control before, 'when everyone had a sprayer'. We should support them with better use of the materials we are using.
 - Brad: 35 years, never had a lot farmers other than in box insecticide, 8-12 lbs/acre, come a long way in safety and application
 - Story of improvement may not cut it
 - IPM – it is happening; armyworm the whole county isn't getting sprayed. Does take effort to be proactive. Mite in beans....you need threshold,
 - Connect the data to the individual community members
 - CVFC talking points, being cognizant of representing ALL members
 - The message can't be....it's all legal, its ok. We do need fact-based information.
 - We do hear from farmers who have been able to reduce their use (Rick Clark), able to save money...can we make that work here?
 - What level of risk are we willing to take? None or All is where we are at now.
 - Emotion and Fear vs. Facts and Data –

- Laura Hardie: As we're building our messages, let's keep top of mind that emotion/fear and a perceived threat makes this difficult to respond to with JUST data. How can we frame this as less of a single-minded/black and white focus to more about tradeoffs? We know farmers want to do the right thing. Acknowledge that there is still room for improvement in the use and toxicity profile of pesticides etc. Farmers are also making more food with less land, water & erosion. Talking about how we are driving toward meeting GHG reduction goals and safely feeding people using some fairly non-toxic tools.

Questions

- *What is glyphosate application rate: 1-2 quarts per acre, depends on weed pressure – 1 lb active ingredient. Smaller the weeds, the less you need accordingly.*
- *Decline in RR crops....no, has not changed, we have seen more soybeans (which are RR).*
- *Acres Brad...corn/bean acreage = 20,000 – 25,000 acres; Johnathan similar*
- *% of material applied by you vs farmer – most farms do not do their own.*
- *Glyphosate usage tracking...we don't get sales, but do get commercial applicator use. We don't get reporting of private applicators – not capturing*
- *What's driving glyphosate GMO vs. cover crop – CC and conservation tillage*
- *How many states are talking about limiting products? Many are...*
- *Strong opposition to chemicals and cancer...findings often get attributed to WHO which is incorrect, it was IARC. European food safety authority, US EPA, Health Canada, Japan and others do not classify it carcinogenic to humans. Same data was used, but picked out individual studies, group 2B category is possibly carcinogenic. Things in 1 and 2A – processed meats, working the third shift, red meat, chemicals and activities*
 - *Ross...100's of cases (leukemia), not winning in courts*

Other Updates:

All

- Addison County Regional Planning Commission as new Clean Water Service Provider *Jeff Carter/all*
 - *Coming to effect now. Public comment period – through Feb. 19th. There is a meeting tonight.*
 - *\$ that normally go to NRCDs and municipalities*
 - *Non-ag water quality projects will be put through ACRPC for funding*
- East Creek – met double the goal of P reductions for NRCS watershed planning, Vicky Drew shared results at TAC
- Highlights of Vermont Clean Water Initiative Performance Report *Marie/John*
https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/2021-01-15_CleanWaterPerformanceReport_SFY2020-FINA-PDF-A.pdf
 farmers had 65% of reductions for the whole state – or is it 96%?
 26.7 metric tons
 We also have spent less per lb of P reduced
 Why doesn't this get more press? We need to push it out more.
- Brad – 20 years of soil samples show soil test levels going down
 2001 39% low/medium, 21% good 39%high, very high
 2020 61% low/medium, 12% 27% high, very high
 Similar in potassium
 1:1:1 > 8:1:4 (N:P:K)
 BSF – OM is increasing too!
 Ross Conrad – we should get a good baseline of results
- Northeast cover crop council conference: <http://northeastcovercrops.com/2021-conference/>
- Legislative Updates – ejc Consulting and Jane Clifford is retiring from being a legislative liaison. Where will that gap get filled? Vermont Farm Bureau, others? Before March meeting, hopefully we'll have another alternative option. Maybe with Jackie Folsom as member, she can help us out.
- Jon Winsten, CIG 'Soil Health Investment Trust' *Brian*

12:16 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: Brian Kemp
Second: Marie Audet

Next Meeting...March 3rd, 2021