



Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition Inc.

Wednesday, September 01, 2021

AGENDA

ZOOM LOCATION:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://uvm-edu.zoom.us/j/7672674868>

Dial in by phone: 1 (929) 436-2866 | Meeting ID: 767 267 4868

Directors & Membership Business Meeting

In attendance: Kirsten Workman, Jeff Carter, Matthew Biette, Sarah Audet, John Roberts, Lorenzo Whitcomb, George Foster, Jed Davis

9:30 am **Call to order & President's Report** *Brian Kemp*
Brian was unable to attend

Secretary Report *Kirsten Workman*

- Review and approve August meeting minutes (*attached*)
No quorum, did not approve minutes
- Approve membership applications (*none received*)

Treasurer Report *Jeff Carter*

- Review current financial reports (*attached*)
No quorum, did not approve treasurer's report

Communications Update *Sarah Audet*
August Projects:

- Busy time for farmers, haven't done a profile in a while, working on that
- E-newsletter on 8/25
- Will continue to share the media that came as a result of the ECHO center event
- Next phase of WETK ad campaign – cover crops PSA, on-air interview w/John
- Reviewed Comm plan –
 - New member recruitment has been passive
 - Need to do more about quantifying benefits
 - Good job reaching legislators and policy-makers
 - Reaching the public - #Farm24VT, ad campaigns, field days, print advertising, will revisit the educational component of website
 - Strong media engagement, John has become a resource, will work on improving quick access to farmer members for interviews and a media page on website.
 - Going to do a quick audit of website

How do we figure out why folks don't renew? Reach out to Rob at ACCC.

Executive Director Report

John Roberts

Ag & Ecosystem subcommittee of Climate Council host meeting on evening on September 14th to receive farmer input on suggested climate practices. Farmer Watershed groups, NOFA, RuralVT, etc. There will be breakout sessions. Ways ag can play essential role in carbon storage/sequestration, resilience in food and farm systems, etc. Looking to hear if they are on the right track and take suggestions, priorities, concerns.

Julie Moore sent a six-page letter responding to our outreach/letter. He hasn't read all of it yet, but he will share with the board of directors. He also received a letter from Chip Gianfanga, CAFO permitting process is continuing. Reached out to EPA to confirm if what they are proposing is ok. Have not received answer to the question (of Julie) to share EPA's requirements to change what the CAFO permit has included in it already.

Danone/Horizon dropping NE farmers. John reached out to members who may be affected to offer assistance. Communicated with Diane Bothfeld. They are convening a working group to respond. Hopefully they will have a suite of possibilities, visit individual farmers. Hannah Sessions (Blue Ledge) is interested if any producers near hear they could take their milk.

Participated with David Conant at Leahy ECHO for a panel with Sec. Vilsack (USDA). Dave did a great job. Trying to get our hands on a full recording. Sen. Leahy, Sec. Tebbetts, Sec. Moore, Sec. Vilsack, state climatologist, Dave Conant all talked about the good work that farmers have been doing and endorsement of the funding that has been spent there. Sarah will see if Dave will share his notes/transcript. John wrote an article. He hasn't submitted it yet. Will send to Independent, VTDigger, Seven Days. Jeff asked if he could also send a copy to Steven Maier and local Addison County CEAC and Chris Bray? Yes...he has reached out to Chris and still hasn't heard back yet. However, Ruth Hardy has engaged in some conversations and is hoping to take her to visit a couple of farms. Sarah asked to also attend. Afternoon of 9/17 potentially.

Field Day on October 12 or 13th – Making Pasture Pay. A focus on dairy heifers, hopefully Paul Knox will also come down to talk about the benefits of grazing heifers on a larger scale.

New membership brochure. Jeff and Sarah previewed the new version of the brochure. We will make a short run of copies for the Bourdeau Ag Showcase and then make any final edits for a full run at 802Print.

Taskforce on Revitalizing VT Dairy – last week had testimony from 9 farms (3 each, LFO/MFO/CSFO), next meeting will hear from Organic farmers. More processing needed, some frustration from Reg Chaput with DFA's supply management plan for the northeast only. Ongoing – testimony is online as well as other meeting info (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/committee/detail/2022/366>). No recommendations yet, timeline is the end of the year.

HATS – In addition to t-shirts, would like to have some hats to handout. Roughly \$10/hat....probably in the \$2000 range total.

Dan Baker – Farm Labor Issues & Opportunities

Dr. Dan Baker, Associate Professor of Community Development and Applied Economics will join us for an informative discussion surrounding labor issues, funding for energy efficiency

upgrades in farmworker housing and more. Below is a link to a recent (March 2021) brief on farmworker housing issues.

[Vermont Migrant Dairy Farmworker Housing Brief](#)

- Dave share his high level information and will come back for more in-depth discussion on October 6th
- Has interviewed employers and employees
- Really excited to interact with CVFC
- This fall a 2-year project with Cabot/AgriMark. Dairy Safety Innovation
- Also Dairy Farmworker Housing
- Farm preparedness for COVID
- Spanish-speaking workers prefer to be identified by their country of origin (vs. Latinx, migrant, Hispanic)
 - Concerned about migration issues, not eligible for H2A in dairy work (vs. crop farmers)
 - Language issues
 - Concerns about injury...40% were concerned about being injured, 46% had previously been injured, 75% of those injuries were from cows. WE currently do not have a Spanish-language safety training (like NY or other places do)
 - Being away from friends/family/community
 - Not a concern: density in housing, compensation/hours/job security (ideal hours are actually above 60 hours)
- When asked about housing – most workers do not find housing to be a major stressor, though 11% found it extremely stressful.
 - The data finds that it is not an ‘all housing on all farms’ is an issue, but that in roughly 10% of workers (from about 10% of farms) have situations that were reported as ‘extremely stressful’.
- Work has led to the two projects:
 - \$1.2 million from VHCB for farmworker housing. **Online meeting on 9/9/21 to design program.** How money will be spent, who (groups) will be tapped to help identify farms for funding. Potential for whole house replacement and repairs/renovations...division of funding has not been decided yet.
 - Farm Health & Safety – VAAF/USDA DBIC Cabot/AgriMark, whole-farm approach (not just migrant workers), stakeholder meetings, on-farm and on-line trainings. But HOW best to get feedback...
- For October 6th...would you like more data or a similar approach of big level
 - A good combination of both with some good action items

Other Updates:

All

- October Field Day – Grazing for Profit October 12/13th
- Updates from the floor

11:30 - ADJOURN Meeting - Next Meeting...October 6th, 2021