

Meeting Summary

Agribusiness Incubator Project

July 8, 2005

Attendance: Jackie Matthiae, Denise Severt, Paul Daigle, Paul Nehring, Eric Hurley, Wendy Galbraith, and Tom Cadwallader

1. Meeting began at approximately 11:15 AM
2. Mentoring Network Development and Grant
 - Cadwallader reported that the USDA Dairy Revitalization grant funds to support the development of a mentoring network had finally cleared all of the county, state and federal hurdles. The Lincoln County Extension Office has worked with the Lincoln County Finance Department to establish the fund accounts and develop a process to properly account for all travel and miscellaneous expenses associated with the project. The total grant is \$13,695.
 - Although there is about \$3000 for committee communication and perhaps a newsletter, a majority of the funds will be used to cover travel costs for committee members to visit other farmer mentoring networks in the country and to bring in speakers for local seminars.
 - There was some discussion about which agency staff would like to keep actively involved in the mentoring network development. Paul Daigle, Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning, said that he wants to take part as much as possible but has to blend it in with other responsibilities with the grazing network and departmental responsibilities. Denise Severt, Farm Service Agency, wants to be to stay engaged but doesn't have much in the way of funds for travel. She said that FSA has tried to do some work in mentoring development and she will share whatever she can find out. Eric Hurley, Northcentral Technical College, said his role at NTC is still being developed but either he or Vickie Pietz would like to stay involved. Jackie Matthiae, the Wausau Region Chamber, would like to keep up with what is going on but will have to blend it in with her broader PPA activities. Cadwallader will be coordinating all of the mentoring network development committee activities.
 - Although other farmers are welcome to attend mentoring network development committee meetings, the project has the funds need to cover the travel costs for 6 farmers, or perhaps 7, farmers. The farmers who have agreed to serve on the committee so far are:
 - Joe Tomandl, Senior
 - Joe Tomandl, Junior
 - Mike Braunel
 - Wendy Galbraith
 - Lyle Guralski
 - Ron Riehle

- It would be good to find another younger/new farmer to be a part of the committee.
- Cadwallader was asked what he saw as being the outcome of this effort. At this point the goal is fairly general: Develop a community based mentoring network that can provide new farmers with the advice and support they need to help improve their chances of success. The form that it eventually takes will be the job of the committee.
- It was suggested that the initial meeting of the group begin around September 15th and wrap up around April 1st.

3. Ag Education Task Force Meeting

- Eric Hurley gave a brief update on the status of the Ag Education Task Force efforts in creating a dairy/agriculture education center.
- The Task Force has met several times, developed a mission/vision statement and a set of goals.
- The needs assessment work group has met and developed a needs assessment tool that they have piloted with several young farmers in the area. They will be meeting in the next week to review the survey tool and prepare it for use at the Lincoln County, Langlade County and Wisconsin Valley Fairs.
- Task Force chairman, Bob Prahl, took the information about the effort to Washington, D.C. and presented it to Senator Kohl and his staff.

4. Progress on setting up incubator farms

- Financial assessments: Cadwallader reported that he was able to use Finpack for doing initial financial assessment of the farms who are involved in the initial incubator farms. In the process of developing those budgets he also had to develop a spreadsheet that could help establish fair rental values for buildings and farm land. Alex Crockford and Wendy Galbraith also developed a set of spreadsheets to help establish an equitable way of sharing income and expenses in a sharemilking arrangement. All of these tools will be further developed and be made available.
- Operating agreements: The law firm of Ruder, Ware has developed a couple of different farm operating agreements. One is a farm lease arrangement and the other is an LLC arrangement. The two different arrangements can actually be used in conjunction with each other. Although there will be details to work out under both arrangements a majority of the work is done. Funds for this part of the project are coming from the first year of the Kohl Dairy Revitalization grant.
- Physical assessments: Daigle reported that it has been difficult for him to devote the time to get the physical assessments done. There have been several changes in his department which has spread him pretty thin. He asked if it would be appropriate to have Eric Hurley be contracted through the grant to take on this part of the project since he could devote the time to the effort this summer. The group agreed that it would be fit the scope of the grant to use some of the funds to cover Hurley's costs in doing the physical assessments of the current farms involved in the incubator project.

5. Website Progress

- Matthiae distributed a revised directory list for the website. There were a few changes that were made in order to be consistent with a similar directory that the Chamber is developing for its members. The letter asking for local businesses to list in the directory will be going out later this fall with the goal of having the directory operational by January 2006.
- Nehring said that by the end of July he will be able to devote more time to getting the website up and running.
- Although the development of the website has been delayed, the site will be coming online as the incubator project farms come into being.

6. December 10th Regional Beginning Farmer Workshop

- Cadwallader said that one of the WDATCP regional beginning farmer workshops will be held in Wausau on Saturday, December 10th. The Agribusiness Incubator Project will work with Gwen Garvey from WDATCP and Joy Kirkpatrick from the Center for Dairy Profitability in setting up the agenda for the workshop.
- Eric Hurley will check to see if the workshop can be held at NTC that day.

7. Meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Tom Cadwallader