

Lancaster County Ag Council  
Thursday, April 23, 2020  
12:30 PM  
VIA CONFERENCE CALL

**Roll Call:** Scott Sheely, Mike Peachey, George Cook, Scott Bailey, Lisa Graybeal, Mary Henry, Loren Hershey, Andy Bollinger, Chuck Hooper, Lonnie Kauffman, Dale Hershey, Stephanie Shirk, Phil Good, Ron Frederick, Steve Hershey, Jayne Sebright, Rob Barley, Commissioner D'Agostino, Jedd Moncavage, Don Hoover, Greg Kirkham, Mark Lowery, Jack Coleman, Dan Heller, Scott Augsburger

**Contractor:** Shelly Dehoff

**Roll Call by The Secretary:** Jedd took roll call as best as possible since it was a conference call, and people joined the call later.

**Reading and Approval of Minutes** The March meeting minutes were noted. *Motion made by Dale Hershey, seconded by Scott Bailey to approve the March 26, 2020 minutes. Motion passed.*

**Nominations to the Ag Council Board**

The list of Board positions and ending dates was included in the email for today's meeting. Nominations to include on the Council are Lonnie Kauffman, Kauffman's Fruit Farm, and Chris Herr (or his designee) from PennAg in ex-officio positions.

*Loren Hershey moved to accept both nominations. Lisa Graybeal seconded. Scott Bailey and Mary Henry vote affirmatively for Lonnie Kauffman, but will abstain from voting for Chris Herr or a PennAg designee since both are on the PennAg Board. Motion approved.*

**Review of Monthly Financial Reports:** Dale Hershey reported a current balance of \$27,172 in the checkbook with all bills paid. Some of that money is from Family Farm Days (FFD) sponsorships, but since FFD has been cancelled, those numbers may change. Due to the cancellation of FFD, the Exec Comm gave the sponsors 3 options—a full refund; put the money toward a future Oregon Dairy/Ag Council event (most likely next year's FFD); or change it to a straight donation to the Ag Council. \$2,800 worth of refunds have been requested so far. \$35,00 worth of sponsorships are saying to hang on to it for a future events, or to put it toward Ag Council where needed. Scott S. is working with Acuity to be sure to show it with transparency, creating a record-keeping method to show how it's being tracked. This will have some impact on the budget. The budget will be re-drafted, and expect to have a new one for consideration by the Board next month.

**FFD Cancellation**

FFD had to be cancelled. An email was received earlier this month notifying the Ag Council. The Exec Comm discussed if the Ag Council should try to do something to replace that event. A virtual FFD possibly, just to keep it on people's minds. If something is done, it would only pull from resources we already have, not put much new effort into it. General feedback seemed to be that some people are tired of everything virtual, but others are looking for new virtual opportunities. The Center for Dairy Excellence, and the dairy industry has been working with other entities to get videos out. Look for those, and other animal sector videos. Considering building a virtual experience center on the Ag Council website.

**Report of the Executive Director:** Scott Sheely has been working to update the website. He is working to be more aggressive with Facebook and Instagram. He is also planning to increase our mailing list through Constant Contact. He is working on an integrated strategy. Scott asked the Ag Council members to "like" or "follow" and share Ag Council social media as much as you can.

Scott is working to keep building relationships with North Museum and other educational entities (4-H, Farm Bureau) to help fill an ag education gap since FFD was cancelled.

### **Reports of Committees:**

Still re-organizing the committees.

- Education/PR— Lisa G and Stephanie S.— upcoming meeting soon
- Economic Development—
- Legislative/ Environmental— Jedd didn't have much to update. SCC/DEP still expecting permitting details to come in on time; HB1822; tremendous lack of funds everywhere; proposed cuts puts pressure on the Governor to open up the economy again.
- Ag Week—initial planning meeting was held recently. Ag Week will be October 3- 10, 2020. Planning to partner with Central Market again for Harvest Breakfast. Jack Coleman is willing to bring the "Ask A Farmer" display. A farmer breakfast focused on direct marketing is also a good idea. We will probably hold it on Tuesday, Oct 6<sup>th</sup> since Monday's aren't always the best time. Binkley & Hurst is willing to host it. Denim & Pearls is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct 7<sup>th</sup>, but a venue hasn't been chosen yet. Concerns were expressed with the overall status of the ag economy and a potential decrease in sponsorships. All of these items are subject to change or cancellation based on Dept of Health recommendations in the Fall.

### **Unfinished Business:**

- Farm Credit Foundation has expanded grant opportunities, and the Ag Council Exec Comm is still working on submitting an application, for community education projects. Mary Henry reminded that there are two waves of funding, in June and then late in 2020.

### **New Business:**

- Expect revised yearly budget next month probably.
- Ag Statistics: an infograph and statistics were attached to the email for today's meeting. They provide a snapshot of Lancaster Co Ag. There is updated data on ag/food industry, ag production, food manufacturing compared to 2012 numbers. This data can drive Ag Council strategic planning. They are comparisons between 2012 and 2017 numbers. Lancaster Co ag production increased during that time while commodity prices decreased.
- When young people sign letters of intent for sports in college, they get recognition. Can Ag Council do something that recognizes students who have finished their high school and FFA careers, and are headed back to the family farm??

### **Reminders/For the good of the order:**

- Commissioner D'Agostino said thank you to everyone for what they are doing, recognizing the essential nature of our business. The County is working remotely primarily, but services are still being provided. He recognized the Emergency Management Agency and their important role in information distribution, and the Information Technology Dept for being very helpful. The County is closely monitoring the public health situation. They are looking at being able to open the economy slowly as we get in to May, following health recommendations. County has received \$95M of CARES Act funding, now looking how to best deploy these funds. County website has COVID-19 resources, links, County's response, etc.
- Lisa Riggs was asking for a broader strategy related to ag needs. What needs do you have? Workforce impacts? Short and long term? Email her if you have input.
- Lisa G. asked if there is anything that can be done locally with excess milk. Scott S reported that Joe Arthur from Central PA Food Bank said they are OK right now, but Central PA Food Bank is also

interested in helping distribute milk to other places in need. Short discussion on the food distribution mess right now. Still trying to celebrate positive stories in light of all this frustration in the ag community and food distribution right now.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:12 PM.

NEXT MEETING is Thursday, May 28, 2020 at 12:30 PM. Location or virtual media to be decided.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly Dehoff  
Lancaster County Conservation District