

Lancaster County Ag Council
Thursday, June 25, 2020
12:30 PM
VIA CONFERENCE CALL

Roll Call: Scott Sheely, George Cook, Ron Frederick, Chuck Hooper, Loren Hershey, Jack Coleman, Mary Henry, Dale Hershey, Josh Scheinberg, Ray D'Agostino, Mike Peachey, Greg Kirkham, Chris Thompson, Steve Hershey, Stephanie Shirk, Jayne Sebright

Contractor: Shelly Dehoff

George called meeting to order at 12:33 PM.

Roll Call by The Secretary: Shelly took roll call via “participants list” on the Zoom software.

Shoutouts: Mike Peachey provided a shout-out regarding Lancaster County’s dairy industry—a recent listing of the top 14 dairy production counties in the United States, shows Lancaster at #12. That is impressive, especially considering the other counties/states on the list for production levels, and the particularly challenging economic times we are in. Mike requested a press release projecting this positive information. Scott Sheely indicated he can immediately get it out on Facebook, and then work on a press release. George C. will forward the link with the article to the Board, so all can share it as they feel appropriate.

Reading and Approval of Minutes The May 28, 2020 meeting minutes were noted. Motion made by Dale Hershey, seconded by Loren Hershey to approve the May 28, 2020 minutes. Motion passed.

Review of Monthly Financial Reports: Dale Hershey reported a net operating income of \$23,039. \$3300 will be carried over in support for FFD in 2021. Dale is planning to take that \$3300 and place it in a separate savings account, so we can more easily track that it’s reserved for 2021. Special projects money is identified on this month’s profit/loss sheet, and will not be used for general operating expenses (also to be moved to special savings account for better tracking). Things look good financially, and Dale commended Scott Sheely on his record-keeping and tracking. Motion to approve the treasurer’s report was passed.

Report of the Executive Director:

- Planning for Lancaster County Ag Week is expected to move forward now that venues are starting to re-open. One of the special projects could be rolled out during Ag Week, which would add a special announcement to Ag Week. Stay tuned. Still need to make a decision as to how much is going to actually happen due to COVID restrictions.
- Ag Council has been distributing PPE to ag and food entities. Many kits have been distributed, but there is still an opportunity to distribute the 15 small kits that remain, so please let Scott S. know of businesses that would benefit from the PPE gear. Scott will deliver.
- Working to expand the Facebook page impacts and outreach. Trying to work new ag statistics from Ag Census on to the page periodically.
- Kudos to Oregon Dairy for the virtual Family Farm Days
- Put in a grant application for the Farm Credit Foundation program for community education—on ag literacy (K-8 grade), using North Museum to market and co-brand it. Thank you to Mary Henry for helping edit the application. Decision date is July 15th, so we should know soon if we receive it or not.
- Also looking to use PDA’s ag literacy campaign for ag careers outreach (got the approval from PDA to utilize their materials)

Priority Business:

- Election of Josh Sheinberg as PDA ex-officio member of the Ag Council: Josh is interested in becoming part of the Lancaster Co Ag Council. Currently Josh is the Eastern Regional Director with PDA. He has an outreach role, to connect with Ag stakeholders and be a liaison with Executive Staff and other ag entities. Motion made by Greg Kirkham and seconded by Mary Henry to place Josh in this Ex-Officio slot. Motion passed. Welcome Josh.
- Future role of Ag Council in planning for the Lancaster County ag economic recovery from COVID-19:
 - Scott S. and George C. met with Lisa Riggs; the initial focus was on getting small business loans out and distributing PPE (which Scott has been doing). Scott noted that Lisa Riggs, et al. are putting together a bigger report noting how all industries has been effected and what can be planned to avoid future continuity of business. The group would like to have Ag Council involved, just haven't fully identified what role(s) that will involve.
 - Is there such as thing of a list of butcher shops and processing plants in the Lancaster County for when people ask? Scott S thinks he would get a list pretty easily. Stephanie S added that the new Farm Market Finder website easily shows where direct-purchase opportunities from local farms or butchers is available. PSU has been looking at how food shopping habits changed during COVID, and what habits were temporary and what will "stick". Might be a good story to tie in with the dairy success story mentioned earlier in the meeting.
 - Do we know names of any producers in the county who had to dispose of excess products during COVID food processing breakdown? Not aware of a list of names, but have anecdotal stories, but not vetted. PSU Extension is trying to get that information. PDA doesn't have official information on that either. Not sure how it's best to find that information, because surveys often aren't well received.
- Scott Bailey is also offering his seat on the Ag Council for anyone else who is interested. This creates existing openings in the agribusiness and producer categories.
- July meeting is traditionally cancelled due to the busy time of year. A few suggestions have been received that since we are virtual, participation might be easier. So, is a July meeting back on the table? Yes, especially in light of the need to update people on Ag Week, and other grant initiatives. Keep the July meeting scheduled, and if we choose to cancel at the last minute, that is OK too.

Reports of Committees:

- Education/PR— Lisa G and Stephanie S.— nothing additional that hasn't already been discussed today
- Economic Development— already discussed earlier today
- Legislative/ Environmental— Mike Peachey, Mary Henry, Stephanie Shirk, Scott Sheely, Rob Barley, Lisa Graybeal and Loren Hershey recently participated in a Round Table call with Sen. Aument among many others; a "take home" that was emphasized was the need for significant funding for clean water efforts with money focused in PA. The significant funding gap was communicated strongly to the Senator, and he seemed to be attentive and responsive. Chris Thompson chimed in that the topic of funding clean water efforts will be a long term message, but also includes money to help farmers implement BPMs to be compliant with law, which will help achieve clean water goals.
- Ag Week— discussed earlier today

Reminders/For the good of the order:

- Barnstormers have opened up the facility for events other than baseball this year. Haven't reached out to the Ag Council lately, but we would like to keep the lines of communication open.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM.

NEXT MEETING is Thursday, July 23, 2020 at 12:30 PM. Anticipated to be held via virtual media.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly Dehoff
Lancaster County Conservation District