

# MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## Meeting Held via Remote Technology

### MEETING MINUTES JULY 15, 2020

#### **PRESENT:**

Brian Pridgeon, Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Dru Montri, Vice Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Charlie Meintz, Secretary, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Patricia Bergdahl, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Tim Boring, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Gary McDowell, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

#### **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Pridgeon advised today's meeting is being conducted via remote technology to protect the health of Commission members, the state, and the public due to the Coronavirus by limiting the number of people at public gatherings. He announced that all decisions today will be made by roll call vote and shared details on how the public comment period would be conducted.

Chairperson Pridgeon called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 9:00 a.m. on July 15, 2020, and called the roll with Commissioners Bergdahl, Boring, Meintz, Montri, and Pridgeon, and Director McDowell present.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MEINTZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA FOR JULY 15, 2020. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BERGDAHL. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

#### **APPROVAL OF JUNE 9, 2020, MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MONTRI MOVED TO APPROVE THE JUNE 9, 2020, MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MEINTZ. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

#### **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is September 16, 2020, location to be determined.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL**

Commissioners shared information relative to agriculture in their respective areas, including growing conditions and production, as well as changes in the marketplace due to COVID-19. There was no travel submitted for approval.

#### **COMMISSIONER ISSUES**

Commissioner Pridgeon reviewed a retirement resolution honoring Carol M. Kirvan, a 30-year employee with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MEINTZ MOVED THE RESOLUTION HONORING CAROL M. KIRVAN BE ADOPTED WITH BEST WISHES FOR HER LONG AND HEALTHY RETIREMENT. COMMISSIONER BORING SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director McDowell shared details of various meetings he has convened remotely over the last few months, including the Ag Housing Workgroup, Food and Agriculture Stakeholder calls, and Midwest Agriculture Directors meetings. In August, he will be conducting virtual staff meetings, which will include a mental health presentation.

He shared details of the first ever Food and Agriculture Virtual Job Fair held on June 24, which the department hosted in conjunction with the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. He noted Governor Whitmer will be hosting several virtual meetings with state employees who have done exceptional work throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

The department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan kicked off in late June. The plan will be implemented through continued awareness and educational and engagement activities throughout the department.

In response to Governor's Executive Order 2020-137 on migrant housing, MDARD inspectors are working quickly to visit each housing facility to protect the health of our migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families. He detailed the requirements for housing owners and operators listed within that order.

In response to inquiries from Commissioner Meintz, the Director advised the department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) did consult with MDARD when developing their manure management plans, which are currently in litigation. Implementation of the new procedures for migrant labor housing has been well received and most operations were already doing the right things.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Matt Channing**, from the **Kent County Health Department**, expressed his appreciation for MDARD's partnership with the counties relative to the migrant labor efforts around COVID-19. The Director advised the department also appreciates the local health departments, who have been doing a phenomenal job with this very difficult issue.

### **MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM (MAEAP) STANDARDS INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED REVISIONS: Jim Johnson, Division Director, and Joe Kelpinski, MAEAP Program Manager, Environmental Stewardship Division**

Mr. Johnson noted the Commission has the statutory responsibility to annually approve the MAEAP Standards, changes for which are being introduced today. The resultant newly proposed standards represent many hours of work by the dedicated committees.

Mr. Kelpinski advised the MAEAP Standards binders are organized by Risk A\*Syst Tools, with proposed changes being the first document for each section and explained organization of and purpose for the various other documents. The standards are being introduced today and most represent only minor changes for clarification purposes. He reviewed two items changed to improve assessment of historical sites and noted proposed changes to the Livestock Section were made in coordination with the 2020 Site Selection Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices.

The Commission will have the next two months to review and formulate any questions for discussion during the September Commission meeting. Any questions in the meantime can be directed to Mr. Kelpinski.

Commissioner Montri asked if the program has seen growth in any of the different systems, or interest overall in the standards. Mr. Kelpinski advised the Cropping System continues to be the strongest system, followed closely by the Farmstead System, with uniform growth seen across all systems.

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY (EGLE)  
HIGH WATER SUMMIT: Josh Neyhart, Senior Environmental Policy Advisor, Michigan  
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development**

Mr. Neyhart advised a task force was established by EGLE with several other pertinent state agencies that is looking broadly and holistically at the high water level problem in Michigan. The key focus has been the Great Lakes, where the remarkably high levels have caused serious problems because of massive erosion. EGLE initiated a website with numerous resources available for all Michigan lakes. To further assist producers, MDARD continually updates its webpage and is developing a tool that illustrates river and lake levels. The inter-agency group continues to monitor the situation, discuss how to best share resources, and assist lake-side communities.

Earlier this year, a High Water Summit was conducted which brought together every aspect from the state and national levels. The National Weather Service was predicting more rainfall this spring than last. Fortunately, that did not happen, and farmers are having a healthier crop this year. As more information becomes available, it will be shared with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Meintz inquired regarding the logging industry relative to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources preventing construction of roads across certain low-lying areas, which stops producers from reaching some parcels of land. Mr. Neyhart advised he will bring that issue to the next meeting of the task force.

Commissioner Montri asked if there were predictions of when the lake levels might begin to recede. Mr. Neyhart advised forecasters are not expecting levels to come down within the next year. Because of numerous variables, it remains a forecasting challenge.

**RECESS AND RECONVENE**

Chairperson Pridgeon recessed the meeting at 9:50 a.m. for a brief break. He reconvened the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

**ANIMAL INDUSTRY ACT CHANGES AND IMPACT: Nora Wineland, State Veterinarian and Division Director, Animal Industry Division**

Dr. Wineland advised the goal in updating the Animal Industry Act was to provide the ability to more effectively address disease emergencies and to clarify and streamline organization of the act, which became effective February 19, 2020.

She reviewed details of the changes, including extraordinary emergencies, alignment with USDA requirements, communication with impacted industries, and scientifically based orders. She also reviewed changes specific to fairs and exhibitions, gestating sows, egg laying hens, CVI (Certificate of Veterinary Inspection) requirements, authority on livestock-related issues, and requirements related to privately-owned cervids.

In response to inquiries from Commissioner Meintz, Dr. Wineland advised animals are required to have a health certificate when coming into the state and this applies to dogs as well. MDARD's ability to regulate occurs when a certificate from the state of origin is submitted and is reviewed to see if it was a legal movement. Certificates are obtained when a dog visits a veterinarian. Dog breeders of a certain size are required to obtain a state license and must meet dog importation requirements. Privately-owned cervid operations bear the costs for required testing of their animals. The new requirements for participation in the herd certification program will not disproportionately impact smaller facilities as the testing requirements are for testing animals that die, and smaller facilities will lose fewer animals.

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
DEPLOYMENT SUPPORTING MICHIGAN'S RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS AND  
EMERGENCY PLANS FOR FAIRS: Brad Deacon, Director, Legal Affairs and Emergency  
Management; Elizabeth Weir, Emergency Management Training, Exercise, and Planning  
Coordinator; April Hunt, Manager, Emergency Response and Enforcement Unit, Food  
and Dairy Division; and Stevie Glaspie, Animal Feed Program Specialist, Pesticide and  
Plant Management Division**

Mr. Deacon advised MDARD had a unique opportunity to support the COVID-19 response in Michigan through its existing emergency management plans and utilizing the nationally recognized Incident Command System (ICS). The need for temporary care hospitals became evident and Chief Deputy Director McFarlane assisted with management and organization of that effort at Novi. The Michigan State Police Emergency Homeland Security Division sent a request for state employees with advanced ICS experience to serve on teams to establish and manage field hospital facilities in Detroit and Novi. MDARD was ultimately able to deploy 15 staff to those sites, as well as four laboratory employees who supported the state health laboratory.

Ms. Weir and Ms. Glaspie shared specifics and their personal experiences around the field hospital created at the Suburban Collection Place in Novi, including construction and design, ICS team deployment, partner organizations, training, operation of the facility, and the partial demobilization process. MDARD's investment in ICS made this possible; the system works, and the structure and processes can be applied to manage any hazard or emergency event. Each staff person serving made a huge personal commitment and agrees this was an incredible opportunity to apply their training. The partial demobilization provides for the facility to stand ready for reactivation should there be a surge in COVID-19 cases.

Ms. Hunt shared similar details around her deployment to the field hospital created at TFC in Detroit. The MDARD team was deployed to an operational hospital facility as support for planning and logistics needs. ICS demonstrated how well different partner teams can come together, effectively apply those principles, and manage a facility.

All expressed appreciation to the Commission and MDARD for their commitment to train staff in ICS, which made this tremendous opportunity possible. The link to a video created by MDARD Communications highlighting the team deployments will be shared with the Commissioners.

Mr. Deacon advised the experience demonstrated the department has many dedicated people willing to step up and accomplish amazing things to support the state during very challenging times. The Commission expressed their great appreciation for the expertise of MDARD staff and their willingness to assist during this crisis.

Mr. Deacon advised updated information on emergency planning for fairs is available on MDARD's website. It includes a guide focusing on county fairs, as well as a document with several exercise scenarios, with flexibility from internal to coordination with other local and state agencies.

**BUDGET UPDATE: Maria Tyszkiewicz, Chief Budget/Financial Officer**

Ms. Tyszkiewicz reviewed changes to the MDARD Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget and the FY 2021 Governor's recommended budget. As a result of the pandemic, the state budget has experienced extraordinary strain, with estimated deficits being \$2-3 billion for both fiscal years. General Fund reductions are being negotiated, the FY 2020 budget will be finalized when the Legislature returns later this month, a Special Revenue Estimating Conference will be held in August, and the final FY 2021 budget is expected early in the fall.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Nathan Kark, Legislative Liaison**

Mr. Kark referred to the MDARD Legislative Update provided to the Commissioners and discussed the status around bills of interest to the department, noting MDARD continues to work with legislators to improve those bills not supported by the department or needing further clarification to improve effectiveness.

Commissioner Meintz asked what the total extra revenue required would be relative to the proposed increase in funding in the Drains Code legislation. Mr. Kark advised he has not yet seen the figures in that regard, will obtain updated numbers, and share with the Commission.

**ADJOURN**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER BERGDAHL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER MONTRI SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *June 9, 2020, meeting minutes*
- C) *Retirement Resolution for Carol M. Kirvan*
- D) *Director's Update – July 15, 2020*
- E) *MAEAP Standards Proposed Revisions*
- F) *Animal Industry Act Changes Presentation*
- G) *Incident Management Team Presentation*
- H) *Fairgrounds Emergency Plans*
- I) *Fairgrounds Emergency Exercise Scenarios*
- J) *MDARD Budget Report – July 15, 2020*
- K) *MDARD Legislative Update – June 30, 2020*