

# **MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Constitution Hall – Atrium Level  
Lee Walker Conference Room  
525 West Allegan Street  
Lansing, Michigan

Option to Join via Remote Technology  
Dial: 1-248-509-0316; Conf. ID 585 749 565#

## **MEETING MINUTES May 15, 2024**

### **PRESENT:**

Monica Wyant, Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Andy Chae, Vice Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Kathrine Garthe, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Dr. Felicia Wu, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
David Williams, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Dr. Tim Boring, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

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

Chair Wyant called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 10:00 a.m. on May 15, 2024. Chair Wyant called the roll with Commissioners Wyant, Chae, Wu, Williams, Garthe, and Director Boring present.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE REVISED MEETING AGENDA FOR MAY 15, 2024. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **APPROVAL OF MARCH 13, 2024, MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARTHE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 13, 2024, MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The next scheduled commission meeting is July 24, 2024.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL**

Commissioner Williams continues to plant corn and soybeans on his family farm. The planting season has been delayed due to continuous rain.

Commissioner Chae continues to plant produce as weather allows, though his farm feels behind due to warm weather, they continue to stay the course. Farm sales have been good for their spring produce and have made new hires with experience, which has been helpful.

Chair Wyant informed the commission Meijer opened a new store in Hillsdale, Michigan the day before their meeting. She shared it was exciting to see Michigan product highlighted at

the opening. Meijer is currently promoting asparagus season by visiting farms throughout Michigan.

Commissioner Wu traveled to South Africa through her work at Michigan State University where they have a grant to study caregiving and nutrition for vulnerable or orphaned children. She also had traveled to Norway in her role as President for the Society for Risk Analysis. The University of Stavanger in Norway has the top Risk Analyst program in the world. Commission Wu is excited to bring their expertise back to the United States and MSU.

Commissioner Garthe had attended an Agritourism Summit in the Traverse City area, where Chief of Staff Angerer spoke. Their farm is currently in full bloom. The early freeze was a concern, but crop looks to be normal, and two weeks early.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **COMMISSIONER ISSUES**

Chairman Wyant highlighted retirement resolutions honoring Tim Kellam and Michael Zupin for their service with the department. Commissioners expressed their appreciation and congratulations to Mr. Kellam and Mr. Zupin

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO APPROVE THE RETIREMENT RESOLUTIONS FOR TIM KELLAM AND MICHAEL ZUPIN. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Boring highlighted the department's response to HPAI would be discussed later in the agenda. However, day-to-day operations continue in the department alongside the response. The department was continuing budget season with the Revenue Estimating Conference coming later in the week. This meeting helps set targets within the state departments before the budget is finalized. The department has had positive discussions with Senate and House committee leadership on proposed budgets. Budget is expected to be finished in the coming month.

The director highlighted that the Regenerative Agriculture and Western Lake Erie Basin work continues within the department. Discussion continues as to how these programs will enact change in program areas. The USDA Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grants (RFSI) for a more diverse food system was announced on May 8. MDARD has built new grant reporting structures for those applying for new grants with this funding. Also, later this week, will be the Michigan Healthy Climate Conference. Together with EGLE, the department will be able to highlight how both are advancing climate opportunities.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

There was no public comment.

### **HIGH PATH AVIAN FLU UPDATE**

Director Tim Boring shared an update on the High Path Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak in the state of Michigan. In March 2024, HPAI was detected in a dairy herd in Texas. Dairy

cows in a Michigan herd, that had received a shipment of animals from Texas, became symptomatic soon after arrival and tested as non-negative for HPAI. Since this detection, fourteen dairy herds have been infected and seven commercial poultry facilities, in a total of ten counties. The department has been working with USDA in an Incident Management System for 47 days. These teams have included over 125 MDARD Staff and 110 USDA Staff based in Constitution Hall and on impacted poultry sites.

The director highlighted the Federal and State Dairy Action related to testing and transportation requirements. The director also confirmed that pasteurization is an effective step in killing the virus in the milk supply. The department continues to connect with multiple partners across the nation and state to continue collaboration in stopping the spread of HPAI. The director highlighted that the department will continue to work to ensure the safety of the food supply as we continue to work to mitigate the disease.

Commissioner Garthe asked the director if HPAI has affected the beef cattle industry, or only dairy. The director explained that HPAI has been found in mammary glands in bovine but doesn't seem to be found in the meat or young stock of the species. Commissioner Chae asked if the composting process will eliminate HPAI. The director explained that composting and pasteurization is a well-established process to eliminate the disease.

### **BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS TESTING AREA UPDATE TO BENZIE AND MANISTEE COUNTIES**

Dr. Nora Wineland, State Veterinarian, shared a presentation of the history and complexity of Bovine Tuberculosis in the state. She explained that Michigan has had Split-State Status since 1995 and has continued to test cattle and bison in the TB-infected area since that time. Melinda Cosgrove, Laboratory Manager at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, shared a presentation on the TB testing process for Free-Ranging White-tailed deer. Typical testing occurs in an 11-county area in the northeastern part of the lower peninsula. But in 2023, a deer in Benzie County, on the northwestern part of lower peninsula tested positive for TB on a routine testing for Chronic Wasting Disease in that area.

Dr. Wineland and Ms. Cosgrove explained this this finding has brought them to the conclusion of updating the 2024 Zoning Order to include areas of Benzie and Manistee Counties for all cattle and bison herds. In April, Director Boring proposed these changes to the public and offered public forum on April 25. The public forum was well attended, but no public comment or testimony was offered.

Chair Wyant asked about the expected number of herds to be tested in the testing area. Dr. Wineland estimated about 100 herds and around 3,000 cattle. Commissioner Wu asked if TB can be transmissible to humans and how. Dr. Wineland explained it was, and usually through respiratory, but also unpasteurized milk and undercooked meat. Ms. Cosgrove explained a hunter and a taxidermist were cut while working on a positive deer and were infected.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Jamies Zmitko-Somers introduced Wendy Madzura, from Zimbabwe, and Abigail Luchembe, from Zambia, Fellows visiting the department through the Professional Fellows Program, Advancing Young Women in Agribusiness through Michigan State University. The commission welcomed them to the meeting.

## **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND REQUESTS**

Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Agriculture Development Bureau Director, introduced the grant applicant, Preston Zale, of Popz Beez based in Oakland County. Popz Beez started as a hobby for Mr. Zale but expanded in 2015 offering extraction and mentoring services for other beekeepers in the area. Mr. Zale started renting commercial kitchen facilities to help others extract and bottle for his customers. This grant opportunity is for Popz Beez to construct a 3,200 square-foot, MDARD compliant, honey extraction and bottling facility. Once completed, local beekeepers will be able to process larger amounts of honey which can be sold to a wide range of markets; thereby giving the beekeepers more opportunity to profit from their small-scale operations.

Mr. Zale explained that this facility will be used by those beekeepers that are larger than the current cottage food law. This grant will be used to purchase extraction and bottling equipment for others to use. Commissioner Chae asked how many beekeepers this facility will help in the future. Mr. Zale explained that he is part of a group of over 100 beekeepers, and this facility would be helpful for over half to market their product.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND PERFORMANCE BASED GRANT OF \$55,000 FOR POPZ BEEZ. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

Director Zmitko-Somers introduced the second grant request, Laura Sytsma, from Byron Center Wholesale Meats in Byron Center, Michigan. This project is to construct an 8,900 square-foot cold storage facility, which will hold 400 beef carcasses, creating four jobs.

Mrs. Sytsma explained that Byron Center Wholesale Meats is a multigenerational family business that helps process livestock for meat consumption. This expansion will make their business more efficient and help the farmers move their meat to the market more quickly. Commissioner Williams asked when the project was expected to begin. Ms. Sytsma said the building had been staked out and was hoping to break ground the beginning of June.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO APPROVE A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND PERFORMANCE BASED GRANT OF \$70,000 FOR BYRON CENTER WHOLESALE MEATS. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **ADJOURN**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:28 A.M.

## **Attachments:**

Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development Meeting Minutes  
Drafted on May 20, 2024  
Approved July, 24, 2024  
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- A) *2<sup>nd</sup> Revised Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes March 13, 2024*
- C) *Retirement Resolution for Tim Kellam*
- D) *Retirement Resolution for Michael David Zupin*
- E) *High Path Avian Influenza Presentation*
- F) *Bovine Tuberculosis Testing Area Presentation*
- G) *Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Request –Popz Beez*
- H) *Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Request –Bryron Center Wholesale Meats*