

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Constitution Hall – Atrium Level
Con-Con Conference Room
525 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan

Option to Join via Remote Technology
Dial: 1-248-509-0316; Conf. ID: 172 999 0#

MEETING MINUTES November 6, 2024

PRESENT:

Monica Wyant, Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dr. Felicia Wu, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Kathrine Garthe, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Andy Chae, Vice Chair, 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 9:00 a.m. on November 6, 2024. Chair Wyant called the roll with Commissioners Wyant, Chae, Wu, Williams, Garthe, and Director Boring present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

COMMISSIONER GARTHE MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 6, 2024. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WU MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2024, MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER CHAE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL

Commissioner Garthe finished apples and pears on her farm in northern Michigan. She expressed concern for the disastrous sweet cherry season with the extreme rainy weather, which caused fungus.

Commissioner Chae is wrapping up his CSA distribution season at his farm in the city of Detroit. He is now working on projects before winter. He expressed how great of a season it was for his farm.

Chair Wyant had no update-for the commission.

Commissioner Wu recently traveled to Ethiopia related to her project on milk consumption that affects children's health. She will be leaving for Portugal in the coming days to serve on

the World Health Organization Dietary Guidelines Committee, where they plan to set dietary guidelines that are sustainable, achievable and reasonable.

Commission Williams attended Soy Connect, an international marketing conference in San Francisco by the US Soybean Export Council. He also attended the MDARD All Staff Meeting and Awards program the week prior.

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Boring highlighted the All Staff Meeting at the Lansing Center. This was the first event in almost a decade that brought all employees of MDARD together to highlight professional development and enrichment activities for the staff. The next day, MDARD hosted the Annual Employee Awards Event, recognizing employees with time of service and individuals who go above and beyond to make MDARD a great place to work.

The Director and the department have done a lot of traveling in the last few weeks. The director had been in Sparta to discuss labor issues and then in Traverse City talking about the Sweet Cherry Disaster response. Michigan also welcomed Undersecretary of Agriculture, Alexis Taylor, on exports and Women in Agriculture. In the recent weeks, USDA announced HPAI was found in a pig in Oregon. This raises concerns for the disease due to the human health risk.

Most recently, the department has welcomed Dr. Laura Johnson, as the Chief Science Officer for MDARD. She was the former director of the National Water Quality Research Center, at Heidelberg University. Dr. Johnson introduced herself to the commission and expressed excitement to be part of the department. The director also gave the commission an update on the Farm to Family program, which will show the importance of specialty crops and how food moves from farm to Michigan tables.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Bee Friedlander, representing the Animal Law Section of the State Bar, testified before the commission.

PROPOSED 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE:

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER GARTHE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

INTERTRIBAL AGRICULTURE COUNCIL PRESENTATION:

Abby Buraglio, Great Lakes Region Technical Assistance Specialist, for the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC), gave a presentation on the tribal and sovereignty work being done in the state of Michigan. She explained the programs the IAC provides, including American Indian Foods which helps with exports, making a connection and trademarks products that are made/produced, as well as programs to support the youth in livestock and home gardening.

Ms. Buraglio explained upcoming initiatives IAC is working on, including the Meat and Poultry Processing Technical Assistance that will help support applicants expand into processing facilities. Another initiative is the National Intertribal Food Business Centers

which will lend assistance for Tribal Food Businesses. Currently, Michigan State University is leading the initiative in Michigan.

Director Boring asked where IAC is seeing opportunities for more capacity in meat processing for different species, beef, poultry or venison. Ms. Buraglio said IAC is seeing interest in mobile processing especially in the poultry space and bison, which will become a multi species facility, including venison.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND REQUEST:

Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Agriculture Development Bureau Director, introduced Richard Raffaelli from Peterson Brands, LLC. Peterson Farms was founded in 1984 processing tart cherries. Today, they are the leading marketer of frozen fruits in the United States and specializing in fresh-cut apples. In 2024, they purchased King Brands, which supplies shelf-stable juices. The grant request is to relocate the juice production from Florida to Michigan, which will produce 430 million juice cups and 101 million juice pouches. The Investment fund request is for \$250,000.

Mr. Raffaelli informed the commission they are the largest apple slicer in the United State, primarily to schools. This new investment would help them be the top producer of apple juice cups to the school market. The new production will reduce water usage by 336% and reduce energy by 112%, and all cups are 100% recyclable. Mr. Raffaelli also stated that they purchase 97% of their product from Michigan family farms.

Commissioner Williams asked why the focus is on the Honeycrisp market. Mr. Raffaelli said Honeycrisp apples give multiple picks throughout the season, and their facility has a need for those later picks throughout the season. Commissioner Garthe asked why only 97% of the apples come from Michigan. Mr. Raffaelli said they are committed to Michigan product but do purchase 3% to stay in the outside market, in case there were a disastrous year, similar to 2012.

Commissioner Garthe recused herself from the vote, due to conflict of interest.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND REQUEST FOR PETERSON BRANDS FOR \$250,000. COMMISSIONER CHAE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

**GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (GAAMPS) –
PROCESS AND INTRODUCTION OF DRAFT 2025 GAAMPS:**

Michael Philip, Bureau of Environment and Sustainability Director and Kyle McCarty, Right to Farm, Conservation Stewardship Division, came forward to review the statutory authority of the commission. Mr. McCarty also reviewed the timeline of the draft 2025 GAAMPS for approval.

Mr. McCarty invited Ryan Coffey Hoag to come forward and introduce himself as the Farm Market GAAMP chair. The commission had no questions for Mr. Coffey Hoag.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARTHE MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2025 GAAMP FOR FARM MARKETS, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. McCarty invited Mr. Gerry May to come forward and introduce himself as the Site Selection GAAMP chair. Mr. May informed the commission that the Site Selection GAAMP went through extensive changes from prior versions. Commissioner Garthe thanked Mr. McCarty for providing all the revisions with plenty of time to review.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2025 GAAMP FOR SITE SELECTION, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER CHAE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. McCarty introduced Dr. Madonna Benjamin, who was joining the commission virtually, as the Care of Farm Animals GAAMP Chair. Dr. Benjamin highlighted revisions on honeybees and addressed concerns about HPAI and COVID. Commissioner Garthe asked Dr. Benjamin why there was no clear care of sick animals in the GAAMP. Commissioner Garthe expressed concerns after HPAI in our state. Dr. Benjamin said the task force can review that concern. The current standards were suggested by organizations specialized for the species.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARTHE MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2025 GAAMP FOR CARE OF FARM ANIMALS, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. McCarty informed the commission that the Pesticide Utilization and Pest Control GAAMP, Nutrient Utilization GAAMP, Manure Management and Utilization GAAMP, Irrigation Water Use GAAMP, and the Cranberry Production GAAMP had no changes in the 2025 draft.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2025 GAAMPS FOR PESTICIDE UTILIZATION AND PEST CONTROL, NUTRIENT UTILIZATION, MANURE MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION, IRRIGATION WATER USE, AND CRANBERRY PRODUCTION, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER GARTHE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

MDARD REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE PROGRAM:

Michael Philip, Bureau of Environment and Sustainability Director, introduced Megan DeLeeuw, Soil, Water, and Climate Section Manager, who gave an overview of the Regenerative Agriculture Program. This program will follow the core principles of understanding the context of the farm operation, minimizing soil disturbance, maximizing diversity, keeping soil covered, maintain living roots year-round and integrating livestock and increasing biodiversity.

Ms. DeLeeuw reviewed the FY 2024-2027 Strategic Plan for the program, which includes educational and training opportunities for farmers. This will include technical assistance to farmers through soil health test, soil health assessments and surveys. Ms. DeLeeuw also highlighted a grant the department received that will create a regenerative agriculture demonstration farm at the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids.

Chair Wyant asked if there were any other key metrics other than acres under regenerative management that would be used. Ms. DeLeeuw said once the soil health and assessments are completed, they will have a better understanding of the data. Commissioner Williams ask if all the programs will be done at the VFW National Home, only. Ms. DeLeeuw explained that is just a part of the program, and the program will be

delivered through a variety of means including through conservation technicians and others.

NURSERY AND RELATED INSPECTION FEES:

Michael Philip, Bureau of Environment and Sustainability Director, introduced Molly Mott, Plant Health Section Manager. Ms. Mott explained how the fee structure works, the basis for the request of a fee increase, including the statutory requirement of the commission.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO APPROVE THE NURSERY AND RELATED INSPECTION FEES. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURN

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

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:29 A.M.

Attachments:

- A) Agenda
- B) Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes September 11, 2024
- C) 2025 Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development Meeting Schedule
- D) Intertribal Agriculture Council Presentation
- E) Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Request – Peterson Brand LLC.
- F) Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPS) 2025 Drafts and Public Comment
- G) Regenerative Agriculture Presentation
- H) Nursery and Related Inspection Fee Increase Request