

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: 878 418 624#

Meeting Minutes January 22, 2025

PRESENT:

Monica Wyant, Chair, 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

ABSENT/EXCUSED:

Dr. Felicia Wu, Secretary, Michigan Commission 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 January 22, 2025. Chair Wyant called the roll with Commissioners Wyant, Chae, Williams, Garthe, and Director Boring present. Commissioner Wu was absent and excused.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR JANUARY 22, 2025. COMMISSIONER GARTHE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 5, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024, MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER GARTHE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Chair Wyant announced the next scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, March 12, 2025, in Constitution Hall.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL

Commissioner Chae finished up planting and seeds are ordered for the 2025 season at his farm. Due to the lack of sunlight, harvesting has been on hold, but his family has plans for a few family trips and MSU Extension meetings.

Commissioner Garthe attended the Great Lakes Expo in Grand Rapids in December and the Research Stations Horticulture Program in January. Commissioner Garthe will be

traveling to California to visit a former MSU professor that started an organic program for Cal Poly University. Currently, on Commissioner Garthe's farm they are working to plant trees and prepare for spring.

Commissioner Williams traveled to Arkansas to visit a friend's farm which was unique in the Midwest, especially with their water quality practices. After, he traveled to St. Louis Missouri to the United States Soybean Export Council meeting. On his farm, they continue to haul corn and are prepping for spring.

Commission Wyant attended the Great Lakes Fruit and Vegetable Expo and is working with local producers who are ready for retail.

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

COMMISSIONER ISSUES

Chair Wyant explained that new officers needed to be elected pursuant to the Commission Policy's.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WYANT MOVED TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER GARTHE AS CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION FOR 2025. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Wyant passed the gavel over to Chair Garthe.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHAE MOVED TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS AS VICE-CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION FOR 2025. COMMISSIONER WYANT SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER WYANT AS SECRETARY OF THE COMMISSION FOR 2025. COMMISSIONER CHAE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Garthe invited Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Bureau Director for the Food and Agriculture Development Bureau, and Michael Gregg to come forward to recognize Mr. Gregg on his retirement. Commissioner Wyant highlighted the retirement resolution honoring Mr. Gregg on his 45 years of service to the department. Mr. Gregg gave highlights of the Intercounty Drain program. Ms. Zmitko-Somers thanked Mr. Gregg for his service as the Intercounty Drain Program Manager and assisting with agriculture thrive and helping with economic development.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER GARTHE MOVED TO ADOPT THE RETIREMENT RESOLUTION OF MICHAEL GREGG. COMMISSIONER WYANT SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Boring recognized State Representative Jerry Neyer and invited him to introduce himself and his staff to the commission and those in attendance. Representative Neyer expressed interest in the commission attending a House of Representatives Agriculture Committee meeting. Director Boring thanked Representative Neyer's for his assistance with the HPAI response.

Director Boring gave an overview of a few department programs. The Farm to Family program continues to be developed, with interviews currently being conducted. Yesterday, the department announced grant opportunities for Farm Stops and Food Hubs throughout Michigan.

Director Boring mentioned that the Regenerative Agriculture program has finalized thirty-seven Conservation District grants to the conservation technicians and staff to continue efforts with Regen Ag and MEAEP programs. The Regenerative Agriculture program held a Soil Health Training for Conservation Districts and have distributed soil health kits to local offices. In October, the program welcomed three new staff and who continue to work on the Regenerative Agriculture Demonstration Farm Climate Corp. Working Lands Grant at the National VFW Home in Eaton Rapids.

Director Boring informed the commission that the 6th floor would be under construction in the coming months as the office space was redesigned into a more modern and efficient workspace. The director introduced Lynsey Mukomel, Executive Director of Communications, who had joined the staff this week. The director congratulated long-time staff member Jen Holton on her move to the position of Chief Emergency Communications Officer in the department. With the increase in emergency response and animal disease, the director explained this would give the department more capacity to handle these events as they arise.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

No public comment

UPDATE FROM THE STATE VETERINARIAN

Dr. Nora Wineland, State Veterinarian, gave an update on her role and the current status of animal disease in our state. Dr. Wineland explained why having reportable diseases is important in our state, and what categories of reportable disease we currently use. Dr. Wineland explained that all species have secured food supply plans in case an emergency disease is found in the United States.

Dr. Wineland gave an update on Bovine Tuberculosis (TB). She explained Michigan's split state status and how the disease has been transmitted through wildlife deer. Dr. Wineland explained that a newly infected herd has been found in Alcona County, making it the 83rd cattle herd identified since 1998. She also described Chronic Wasting Disease that we monitor in farmed cervid. Dr. Wineland went on to explain Highly Pathogenetic Avian Influenza (HPAI), and the strains that are affecting poultry and cattle across the state. Dr. Wineland explained the National Milk Testing Strategy being conducted with USDA. Director Boring highlighted why science is so important in the department, and why it is a priority in the work the department does daily, and thanked Dr. Wineland for her leadership on the HPAI response in the last year.

Commissioner Wyant asked Dr. Wineland how attracting talent has been going inside the department on these important issues. Dr. Wineland explained that attracting talent is still a work in progress, but the Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program and the USDA funding to attract private veterinarians has been helpful. Dr. Wineland noted the department continues to work with the university for new ideas and is always happy for new suggestions.

Commissioner Williams asked if the department was seeing a difference in outbreaks between free range, cage-free, backyard, or contained poultry. Dr. Wineland explained that

they are not seeing any group more susceptible than another due to the virus being respiratory and any animals kept in close quarters have been infected.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mikaylah Heffernan, Legislative Liaison for the department, gave a legislative update. Mikaylah stated that any legislation not passed in the past legislation, will have to be reintroduced. Ms. Heffernan alerted the commission that Governor Witmer would deliver the State of State Address on February 26th to highlight the governor's priorities.

Commissioner Garthe asked if any legislation that was stopped is a priority in the new session. Ms. Heffernan explained the Food Law updates the department and stakeholders were working on prior to the new year, have will be the top priority in the new year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURN

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

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:04 A.M.

Attachments:

- A) Agenda
- B) Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes November 5, 2024
- C) Retirement Resolution: Michael Gregg
- D) Update from State Veterinarian, Dr. Nora Wineland, Presentation.