

Minutes – CEC Meeting – Via Webex and Cotton Town Hall December 3, 2021

Present: Jim Takala, Mark Baumann, Frank Jewell, Keith Nelson, Nancy Nilsen (virtual), Gary Rantala (virtual).
Others: Mary Tennis (virtual), Jim Gottschald, Keri Cavitt, Troy Salzer, Bob Olen, Nicole Baxton.

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. Roll call was taken. Agenda was approved. Minutes from the October 20, 2021 meeting were not ready to be approved.

County Commissioner Update: Frank Jewell & Keith Nelson

- Budget is complete, with a final vote happening December 14th. Everything is status quo with Extension.
- Jim T asks about the elk population and where that's at. Keith responds that the intent of the Fon du Lac Ojibwe is to accelerate the elk herd. They took out the Cloquet River Valley and adjusted the plan. DNR in Kittson County cut licenses down to the bare minimum. The plan is to trap and transfer animals here.
 - There is evidence of CWD and TB in other states. Carlton County beef producers haven't been as vocal. Board did not support going into the Cloquet River Valley. Moratorium on servant farms. DNR reversed their position – big money in deer farms – estimates in \$300 million range to buy out industry.
 - University is developing tests. There is a team of professors working on a field test for CWD and have a positive agenda. Peter Larson worked with Troy to develop a test to identify liver flukes in cows. CWD – like yonase in cattle – and can be transferred through feces/urine. There is a 10-year minimum of allowing no animals on a farm, which is economically devastating.
- Frank states we're close to getting the meat processing plant done at NERCC, which will have smoking lockers, meat lockers, freezing areas, and an office for a USDA inspector. It should be operational sometime this winter. There have been many stops to look at designs and to reconfigure to meet the needs of what we want.

Feature Program Presentation – Agriculture (Troy Salzer) and Horticulture (Bob Olen)

Troy's program presentation

- Troy shared Extension Committee reports with the group – July-September and September-November
- Over the course of the COVID process, Troy struggled because he enjoys and does his best work when he can work directly with people.
- Pumpkin varietal trial meeting with Doug Hoffbauer. Marissa Schuh put together a handout looking at the aspects of how to control weeds in pumpkins.
- Gathered at the Arboretum – several farmers brought in varieties that people had tried out.
- Worked with folks in St. Louis County on flea beetle, broccoli, and other crops in St. Louis County. Marissa put together a flow chart on controlling weeds.
- Forage and Grassland Council meeting occurred in September. Folks engaged in discussion around growing forages and how to work through drought.
- In-person meetings in Cherry, and around the State, on how to implement processes to help farmers through the drought. At Brodeen's beef workshop, the primary focus was to plan for drought.
- Troy put together a spreadsheet to look at inventories – both of livestock and of forages and feeds – and utilized technology (with farmers request) to input their info and create practical, applied, and focused on their needs.
- Gardening from the Ground Up Webinar Series – February 22-25, 2022
 - Focus on building soils and the impact of drought on nutrients availability; creating soils that are more resilient for gardening.
- Sarah Westerberg has been helping with posts for Facebook.

- Karen & Pat Brodeen have encouraged Troy to put together a newsletter to share information. Option to send out an electronic newsletter.
- Troy, Keri, Nathan, & Bob – future programming ideas (if time allows) in the areas of ag food and natural resources. Seems to be a lack of knowledge in agriculture in the Duluth area. An opportunity for informing visitors coming through the area.
 - Family north of Duluth transitioned due to health and economics – going from 40-50 beef cows down to 15 and fixing up their barn to host weddings.
 - Farmers capitalizing on – carbon credits, forestry, and forage?
 - A publication would be good to highlight farmers in SLC and could help promote ag and natural resources.
 - Jim T says exploring these venues and opportunities have to start with an economic analysis and there has to be a return for time.
 - Troy agrees and figuring out that return on investment is very important. There is a lady in Proctor that grows high quality wool and is great at marketing – just using a webpage. Her wool generates enough income to cover her entire feed cost. Her lamb sales are pure profit.
 - Frank thinks the publication is replicated around the country. Franks recommends Bowser Newsletter that comes out monthly – with one topic – and showcases work around Minnesota. Highlights one particular activity and includes a really nice picture. Design gets his attention.
 - Keith mentions that there is a magazine up here called Sisters, a quarterly magazine. Could be a place to submit articles.
- Wolf kills this year:
 - Usually about 3-4 per week, one week there were 33 (an accumulation). Wolf Predation Grant through MDA and application is right after the first of the year. Sarah will put information on the Facebook page when it's closer to that time.

Bob's program presentation

- On the commercial side, consumers don't see these aspects - small producers having a tough time producing, frozen days in May and June, and the drought and feeding animals.
- Huge interest in gardening because of COVID. The industry has been slow in supplying seed due to shortages.
- 3,000-4,000 e-mail, phone, and on site inquiries answered

St. Louis County Master Gardener Program

- Don't have to recruit volunteers – there's a long waiting list every year and it's very selective.
- Volunteer hours have to be significant contributions in education, applied research, and community outreach.
- 16 new Master Gardener applicants; most will get their 50-hour commitment.
- New project areas for volunteers:
 - Pepper trial in Ely, Cherry, and Rice Lake area. Cherry Greenhouse looking for what varieties we can grow and able to make pepper recommendations.
 - Clara's Nature Trail – Make a Wish Foundation request of a nature trail. Initially Master Gardeners planned to do a sensory garden, but it expanded to a bigger trail at 400 yards. It's wheelchair accessible. All done with volunteer hours on weekends. Trail will be open to the public, but is owner's property right now and is invite only at this time. Adam, Clara's father, wants to set aside an area for tent camping, for them and others.
 - This should be publicized in newspaper articles, etc. to promote the image and value of Extension.

- o Bumps in the road – clarifying property lines
- o Designed by professional architect
- o Conscious of safety perspective – could fill classes on chainsaw safety
- o Research component – sensory gardens, native gardens, and applied research – where to get native plants, how to establish, etc.
- o Plan is for educational piece on annual basis
- Need sustainable projects to last a lifetime
 - o Spent 1 year waiting to get labels for Enger signs/approval for Enger Tower Project
 - Hard to do projects on public land
 - o Family interested in doing a story – through Extension staff or Dana?
 - Mary is happy to help Bob promote this trail however he decides and whatever channels he chooses to support the story.
 - Concern about privacy
 - Include what carpenter's union is doing to help
 - Don't forget to include Make a Wish Foundation people
 - Story belongs to the child who approached the Make a Wish Foundation.

Administrative Update, County Extension Budget & 2022-2024 MOA: Jim Gottschald & Mary Tennis

Jim is pleased with the submitted budget and it was approved at first pass. The MOA has been signed by all parties and is currently in the Attorney's office for final steps. Met with Steve Popowitz at Camp Esquagama to build synergies between us. Planning for:

- Youth leadership days at Camp Esquagama
- Weekend (or week) camps during off-season
- Potential venue for art, photography, theater, Ojibwe immersion camp

Mary notes it was an inspiring meeting and Steve is a great partner. In-roads have been made with 4-H and Camp E for a summer mentor program.

The YIA Make a Difference Conference will be held in February 2022 at the new ITMEC facility in Virginia. Letters were sent out and donations have already started coming in.

Regional Director Update: Keri Cavitt

- March – Rural Stress Task Force in St. Louis County
 - o State-wide effort dealing with the impacts of COVID
 - o Conversation and group work from 16-24 community members
- Mary T and Keri are working with Mary Jo Katras – in Family Development
 - o Ways to strengthen work already happening
 - o Trauma-informed – train the trainer
 - o Family stress and families

Business Items

- CEC Terms and Appointments
 - o County Board votes to extend – Jim T and Richard P terms are up – does Richard P want to return? Keri will check and follow up with Jim.
- 2022 Meeting dates and times
 - o Many meetings were cancelled due to no quorum. Quarterly or 6 per year suggested.
 - o Programs of value should be considered.
 - o Large County with lots of driving limits the ability to get together. Frank suggests 6 per year might make sense if there is a solid agenda. Groups might consider virtual for some, as virtual meetings can be powerful and effective.

- o Jim T asks for a proposed schedule and agenda for all meetings in January.
- o Site visits should be purposeful and highlight what is happening through a visit.
- o Different Wednesday, or possibly Thursday, suggested. Clean Water Council and Clean Water Board conflicts for Frank and Keith.
- o Wednesday morning conflict for Jim G and Auditor Nilsen. Board committee assignments determined in January – group would have better idea of schedule then.
- o Some prefer the virtual option to allow participation.
- o Keri will send out a doodle poll and asked that all members participate to find a meeting date that works for the majority.

Input to Performance Reviews

Employees do self-evaluations, but CEC members' contributions and suggestions are very valuable. Critical and suggestive input is very valuable.

- Would like self-evaluations to come back to the CEC committee to complete performance reviews in January.
- Due to COVID, the committee would like more time to complete.

Next meeting... TBD

Meeting adjourned at 2:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Baxton