

**BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
MINUTES**

April 24, 2020

The Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (Board) met via teleconference on **April 24, 2020**. The meeting was preceded by public notice as required by Wis. Stat. § 19.84.

Call to Order

Board Chair Miranda Leis called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Members Present

Miranda Leis, Paul Bauer, Andy Diercks, Patty Edelburg, Kurt Hallstrand, Paul Palmby, Dan Smith and Carla Washington.

Minutes

Motion

A motion was made by Paul Palmby and seconded by Paul Bauer to approve the April 10, 2020 DATCP Board minutes. Motion was approved unanimously.

**ATCP 106 – Price Gouging in an Emergency
Emergency Rule Statement of Scope
Division of Trade and Consumer Protection**

David Woldseth, Policy Analyst from the Division of Trade and Consumer Protection presented the Statement of Scope for Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 106 emergency rule, to the Board. Mr. Woldseth gave a brief overview and requested the Board approve the Statement of Scope for emergency rule ATCP 106.

Motion

A motion was made by Paul Bauer and seconded by Paul Palmby to approve the Statement of Scope for Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 106 emergency rule. Motion was approved unanimously.

Secretary's Office Update

Interim Secretary Randy Romanski stated that the Governor extended the Safer at Home (SAH) order through May 26, 2020. This was not an easy decision because even though progress was made to flatten the curve in the previous SAH order, Wisconsin has not met the conditions needed to start reopening. We know that many of our partners in agriculture, trade, and consumer protection have never stopped working during this pandemic. It is up to all of us to continue to stay home as much as we can so the ag community can continue processing food, moving products through the supply chain, and protect consumers from unfair business practices.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Angela James updated the Board on the Badger Bounce Back (BBB) program. The agriculture community has not stopped working during the pandemic because they are heavily weighted as essential workers. The BBB program mirrors what was released by the President and we are seeing a lot of consistency how states are adopting those procedures. The following needs to happen before the State starts opening up:

1. A 14 consecutive day decline reports of flu like and COVID illness.
2. A 14 day decline of actual positive COVID-19 tests.
3. An establishment of capacity testing for everyone who has COVID-19 symptoms.
4. The hospitals can treat patients without crisis care and there is robust testing programs in place for healthcare workers.
5. A program established for contact tracing.
6. Adequate PPE equipment and supplies for testing and treating patients.

Federal Update – Friday, Secretary Perdue announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). This program will take actions to assist farmers and consumers in response to COVID - 19 and lays out guidelines for a \$19 billion relief program to support farmers, maintain our food supply chain, and ensure we have access to the food we need. There is rulemaking that needs to be done, but checks should be out by the end of May. We appreciate the aid package the Secretary announced and it is in line with what DATCP asked for. We want to get dollars in the hands of agriculture.

USDA – We continue our efforts to connect Wisconsin with food insecure persons. Our contact with industry has had a lot of interest in this program and we will continue those efforts. We understand that one million pounds of cheese will be given to Wisconsin for this program. We are asking for guidance as soon as possible so people know how to apply for assistance and will continue to work with the USDA.

Additional funding – The initial round of program funding through the CARES program is 1.9 million dollars which will be allocated to states for the coronavirus response. Can we use this money and how will that be done? These are questions we are trying to get answers to. We want to get as much funding into the ag community as possible.

Mr. Romanski stated that we will continue to monitor other states plant closures with livestock and meat. There has been one plant closure thus far in Cudahy Wisconsin which caused a ripple effect in the Green Bay area. Even though these plants are federally inspected, we are monitoring how the plants are protecting employees and the community.

Farm Center – On Tuesday the Farm Center had 40 public contacts, with the majority of those calls being ongoing financial casework. In March, we provided the highest number of mental health vouchers. For perspective, so far this year we have had 82 voucher requests, we only had 89 in all of 2018. The resources and funding is available to people even though we had to cancel some outreach due to the pandemic. Our team is here to help.

Board Member Dan Smith asked how are operations going with staff working remotely and are you able to move forward with vacancies? Mr. Romanski stated that DATCP was an early adopter to working remotely and quickly got laptops and cell phones out to staff. Even the TCP hotline workers are working remotely. Operationally we are functioning well by finding new ways to stay in touch with our partners. We are using technology creatively and also doing some agency housekeeping by updating program manuals, etc. As for hiring, we are able to move forward with critical hires and those are moving through the process. We are holding virtual interviews when possible, but the start dates are in question because the building is essentially closed. Our on boarding process is different too due to the virtual environment we are in now.

Adjournment

Motion

A motion to adjourn was made by Carla Washington and seconded by Patty Edelburg, motion approved unanimously. The Board adjourned at approximately 10:30 a.m.

All reports and any associated documents presented during a Board meeting can be accessed by contacting the Office the Secretary, Legal Counsel at (608) 224-5029.