

**--DRAFT PENDING SUB-COMMITTEE APPROVAL--**

**WISCONSIN DAIRY TASK FORCE 2.0  
SUB-COMMITTEE ON DAIRY AND RURAL COMMUNITY VITALITY  
MINUTES**

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**February 12, 2019**

The Dairy and Rural Community Vitality sub-committee of the Wisconsin Dairy Task Force 2.0 met on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 beginning at 1:00 p.m. via teleconference, based at DATCP, 2811 Agriculture Drive, Madison, WI 53708 in Room 456.

**Call to Order**

Chair Elizabeth Wells called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

**Members Present**

Members present included: Darin Von Ruden, John Schmidt, Dennis Bangart, Elizabeth Wells, Janet Clark, Don Hamm, Melissa Haag, Michael DeLong, Dave Buholzer, and Jerry Schroeder. DATCP staff Ashley Andre and Assistant Deputy Secretary Angela James also attended.

**Minutes**

*Approve minutes of last meeting*

Chair Wells asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Darin Von Ruden made a motion. John Schmidt seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

*Consider draft recommendations*

Chair Wells asked Dennis Bangart to explain draft recommendation #5, need to study the impact dairy and ag infrastructures have on a community, county or an area. He shared the goal to bring statewide economic studies and indices to the awareness of local communities and their local contributions of the dairy and ag sector.

Before Chair Wells took a motion to move the recommendation forward, she shared an update from Dairy Task Force 2.0 Chair Mark Stephenson that he will be reviewing and editing all recommendations after approval. He will keep the intent of each recommendation while ensuring they all have a similar format and come from one voice. After the recommendations are edited, they will be sent out the group by email for final approval before the March 15 meeting.

Janet Clark moved to approve the recommendation. Melissa Haag seconded. The group agreed to move recommendation #5 forward.

Mr. Bangart gave an overview of recommendation #8, connecting ag resources in local communities. He shared examples of how some local chamber of commerce have an ag committee for promotion and business development. This recommendation encourages local communities to consider how they can enhance the agriculture infrastructure, educate consumers, promote ag careers, and improve the vitality of Wisconsin's rural heritage.

Mr. Schmidt moved to approve. Mr. Von Ruden seconded. The group agreed to move recommendation #8 forward.

Don Hamm and Jerry Schroeder presented recommendation #10 on local roads funding. They emphasized that a mandate set a percent of the total state transportation budget go to local roads.

Dave Buholzer shared his experience speaking with Senator Howard Marklein about transportation. He also shared that Green County just implemented a wheel tax to generate revenue that goes strictly for county roads. He said that it is added to your license registration, and the state takes a small amount of the money to administer it.

Mr. Bangart agreed that the funds designated for local roads need to get back to the local communities. The group discussed licensing for large trucks that are used for hauling feed and manure. Mr. Buholzer mentioned that some people may not mind paying a little more for licenses or certain taxes if they know the money will get back to the right place. Mr. Hamm shared his experience as town chair that to fix a county road to today's standards costs about \$300,000 a mile.

Chair Wells asked if we should consider these local road funding ideas as a package or separately. Mr. Hamm sees it as a package. Mr. Bangart asked about how money can possibly be kept in a separate pool with boundaries that preserves it from being used for other purposes rather than town roads. Mr. Hamm shared his experience how towns at times need to take turns accessing funds. A wheel tax goes back to the town or village that implements it.

Mr. Schroeder emphasized that these are recommendations that will need legislative changes. Mr. Schmidt added that we can leave it together to pass it as a recommendation, and at the conclusion of the Task Force 2.0, legislators can act on the pieces that make the most sense.

Mr. Schmidt also asked if there were controls in place before to protect local road funding, and if there were, why did they fail? Mr. Hamm explained that in the past both parties have raided funds. He sees it that the controls are only as good as the laws in place, and that rules are always meant to be changed and improved. Mr. Schroeder shared a concern that local road funding will be used to build toll roads.

Mr. Von Ruden made a motion to move recommendation #10, local roads funding, forward to the full Task Force 2.0. Mr. Schmidt seconded. Mr. Bangart emphasized that the intent is that any raise in taxes or revenue generated must be used as intended for local roads. The group approved to move the recommendation #10 forward.

Ms. Clark presented recommendation #11 to develop educational programming. She mirrored it after a program PDPW has in place, the Agricultural Community Engagement® (ACE) Education Seminar.

Mr. Schroeder asked if courses could be offered online. Ms. Clark replied that from her experience the on-farm training is very valuable and generates more interaction. Mr. Schroeder said that he brought it up after speaking to a producer who was having difficulties completing his taxes this year, and it made him realize how important that financial management training is. Ms. Clark clarified that this educational programming is for non-farm professionals to understand agriculture. Ashley Andre shared that the Generational Succession and Transition sub-committee are working on recommendations to emphasize the need for resources for farmer education on business planning, farm succession, and transition.

Mr. Hamm added his support for the recommendation that many who he serves with in his town are not familiar with agriculture. Chair Wells asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Hamm seconded. Recommendation #11 will move forward.

Ms. Haag presented recommendation #14 on the importance of agritourism. She shared her experience speaking with farms involved in or considering agritourism to identify what was needed. Mr. Schmidt shared an example he had heard about how farms can protect themselves from liability when hosting tours.

Ms. Haag mentioned how it would be nice to have a centralized location for marketing, whether websites or brochures. Ms. Andre shared some resources that exist to try to connect with consumers including DATCP's *Something Special* from *Wisconsin*<sup>TM</sup> in the Division of Ag Development or the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association that may be able to help with that.

Ms. Haag shared that one of the biggest concern she heard about was dairy-free beverages competing for cooler space with dairy beverages. Ms. Andre shared that the Consumer Perception and Confidence sub-committee was also touching on the importance of honesty in food labeling and enforcement of standards.

Mr. Bangart moved to move the recommendation #14 forward. Mr. Buholzer seconded. The group approved moving it forward.

Ms. Clark presented recommendation #15 on the importance of broadband to the agricultural industry, especially when trying to utilize new technologies. She shared how it is a complex issue, and she had the opportunity to talk to her local representative about the issue. The representative emphasized that funding has continued to increase for broadband expansion and it is expected to continue.

Mr. Von Ruden moved to approve. Mr. Schmidt seconded. The group approved to move recommendation #15 forward.

Ms. Haag presented recommendation #16 on animal official identification. She added that this was not a topic discussed at the last sub-committee meeting, but something that she has discussed with other veterinarians. Animal diseases have the potential to impact dairy farm and rural community vitality.

Ms. Haag shared that the recommendation seeks to be proactive rather than reactive. She shared her experience working over the past several months with the dairy farms impacted by the bovine tuberculosis investigation in Dane County.

Ms. Haag added that some farms already use official identification while others do not. The cost of a tag varies, depending on if it is RFID or not.

Mr. Von Ruden shared his experience with identification on his own farm and understand the value to trace back to the farm. He did emphasize that his state farm organization does not agree with the mandate of animal official identification. The biggest opposition is the cost to the farmer, especially in our current economic situation. Should the cost be covered by the farmers or by the general public? Should there be a way for the state to fund this so farmers don't have to pay for tags and paperwork?

Ms. Haag agreed that animal official identification is a benefit to the farm and public health. In the current bovine TB investigation, she has seen how the animal disease situation can be very costly to individual farms.

Mr. Buholzer added that some people are already doing official identification. If there is state funding for animal identification, the state would have to cover everyone, including those herds already using it. He added that he believes that animal official identification is a way for farmers to take care of their own herd.

Mr. Schroeder added that many mandates come down on farm-related businesses, like milk haulers, that are not funded and that have to be covered independently.

Mr. Hamm noted that he and his organization support animal official identification. He uses identification on his own farm for every animal except bull calves, and he could implement that easy enough. The action of not doing something is way more than the cost of tags. He thinks it makes good business sense, and it shows the general public that farmers care about food safety and traceability. One issue he has questioned is the liability back to the farm if there is a recall on hamburger, for example, even if the contamination didn't happen until after the animal has left that farm. That would be his only caution.

Mr. Bangart shared an example from his local area about how many cattle are coming into Wisconsin from other states to be sold. He also shared an example of a neighbor bringing in animals from another state and wondering if they had the official identification and paperwork required.

Ms. Haag added that animals moving across state lines do need to have official identification, unless they are going directly to slaughter. If you have a question about someone following these

laws, you can report it and the state may investigate. Mr. Bangart added that the heavy movement of cattle does pose a risk of exposure.

Mr. Schmidt noted that he could see both sides. Consumers do want to know the source of their food supply. We want consumers to feel secure, comfortable and confident in their food choices. Farmers want to get their animals to market in a safe and efficient manner. Animal official identification is another step to brand the industry as a quality food source. It makes sense.

Chair Wells added that it is important to protect Wisconsin's dairy supply chain and Wisconsin's success in the future. It may be a natural progression for Wisconsin to continue to be a leader.

Chair Wells asked for any other comments. Mr. Hamm moved to advance recommendation #16 to the full Task Force 2.0 for consideration. Mr. Buholzer seconded. The group approved.

Chair Wells asked for any other discussion on any other topics that had been previously discussed at other meetings, including TIF districts, levys, AEAs, local involvement, and community capital. There were no additional recommendations at this time.

Chair Wells posed a question if we feel like we have covered the need support services such as UW-Extension, the Farm Center, or Ag Development Division for rural communities. Ms. Andre shared that the Generational Succession and Transition sub-committee is developing a recommendation on support for these types of services for farmers.

Chair Wells encouraged members to read the transportation background information from Mr. Hamm and asked that the full Task Force 2.0 have the opportunity to review it. Ms. Andre will share it.

#### *Identify next steps*

Chair Wells asked if there was a need for another meeting or teleconference. The group agreed that it is not necessary at this time. Ms. Andre will continue to email items for review when available.

#### **Adjournment**

Chair Wells and Ms. Andre thanked members for their work.

The sub-committee adjourned at approximately 2:35 p.m.

Minutes drafted by Ashley Andre.

*Please note that an additional teleconference will be scheduled and noticed in early March to approve the final recommendations from this sub-committee that will advance to the full Dairy Task Force 2.0 for consideration on March 15.*