

**SOLANO COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON
February 14, 2007**

The meeting of the Solano County Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) was held at the Department of Agriculture and UC Cooperative Extension Building, Downstairs Conference Room, 501 Texas Street, Fairfield, CA.

Members Present:

Bruce Brazelton, Jeff Dittmer, Alan Freese, Donald Johnson, Craig Leathers, Russell Lester, Susan Lippstreu, John Mangels, Betty Mason, Albert Medvitz, and Mary Helen Seeger.

Others Present:

Jearl Howard	Agricultural Commissioner
Carole Paterson	Director, UCCE
Sabine Goeke-Shrode	Aide to Supervisor Spering
Terry Schmidtbauer	Resource Management
Jeffrey Bell	Resource Management
Cliff Covey	Resource Management
Nick Burton	Resource Management
Mario Maratorio	UCCE
Ester Armstrong	Dixon May Fair
Janet Jessen	Department of Agriculture
Sheila Holmes	Dixon May Fair
Brett Atkinson	
Don Pippo	

Item 1 Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m., a quorum was present.

Item 2 Introductions of Members and Guests

Members and Guests in attendance introduced themselves.

Item 3 Changes and Approval of the Agenda

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was carried on a unanimous vote of the members present.

Item 4 Review/Approval of the Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2007.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Minutes of the January 10, 2007 meeting as presented. The motion carried on a unanimous vote of the members present.

Item 5 New Business

(a) Report on Board of Supervisors Meetings – Board Topics Related to the Subject Matter of the AAC – Jerry Howard/Cliff Covey

Mr. Howard and Mr. Covey reported on recent Board actions relating to the General Plan Process and the Citizen’s Advisory Committee.

Mr. Covey reported on a recent action by the Board of Supervisors involving land acquired by the Solano Land Trust that is not in the Williamson Act. It was noted that the issue of public access is an issue that should be discussed at a future AAC meeting.

Mr. Howard reported that the Board approved an Assistant Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer position on February 15th. He reported that a recruitment to fill the newly authorized position will commence soon.

(b) “Salute Solano Project”, 2007 Dixon May Fair – Ester Armstrong

Ms. Armstrong introduced Sheila Holmes who will be coordinating the “Salute Solano Agriculture” Project. She stated the focus will be on showcasing Solano County’s million dollar crops. She said that District Agricultural Fairs have a duty to showcase agriculture.

Ms. Armstrong said she has dedicated a pole barn to the “Salute Solano” Project and is very close to securing a sponsor for the project. In addition to agricultural displays, she hopes to have Sunnyside Farms Dairy provide ice cream. She will provide free booth space for agricultural organizations in the building. They will also have a wool show. Ms. Armstrong encouraged the AAC members to call her or Sheila with any ideas or suggestions.

(c) Yolo Report on Bio-Solid Land Applications in Solano County – Terry Schmidtbauer

Mr. Schmidtbauer reported that 11,700 dry tons of bio-solids were applied to approximately 18,000 acres of land in Solano County in 2006. He stated that the majority of the bio-solids applied were from the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City with only 7,000 dry tons coming from sources other than Fairfield and Suisun City. He stated that the use of bio-solids on agricultural land has decreased over time due to population growth around Rio Vista.

Mr. Schmidtbauer reported that bio-solids are applied primarily to dry pasture and grain crops. He stated that applications are made on a three year rotation. He further stated that the bio-solids are applied in the summer months and incorporated into the soil immediately to reduce odors. Livestock is excluded from treated fields until regrowth of grass occurs in the fall.

Mr. Schmidtbauer informed the AAC that the bio-solids are monitored for metals. Water sampling is done, and no positive samples were seen, which indicate no offsite movement. He noted that soil samples showed only minimal changes in bacterial level after 30 days following application. Mr. Schmidtbauer reported that the University of Mississippi conducted some tests on plants after applications and found little or no uptake by plants. He further reported that the Environmental Health/Hazmat folks did some crude testing for radiation with negative results. He did note that some pharmaceuticals are present in the bio-solids tested.

Mr. Schmidtbauer stated there were 18 complaints received during the 2006 application season, most of which were related to odor. He stated that overall, the program is working well. He said the Chapter 25 of the County Code (Bio-solid Ordinances) will expire October 15, 2007 unless reauthorized by the Board of Supervisors. He noted that his department will be taking the matter to the Board in July for direction and would like to have further discussion with the AAC prior to that time.

Discussion by the AAC included:

- Livestock allowed back on treated fields after 60 days when fecal coli form is at its highest level.
- Only monitor for fecal coliform, no monitoring is done for e-coli H-157.
- Should broaden the scope of monitoring to include e-coli monitoring.
- Should consult with FDA on what monitoring should be performed.
- There needs to be solid science to support the adequacy of the current grazing restrictions.
- Suggested to bring the matter back to the AAC for further discussion prior to taking it to the B.O.S. in July.

(d) CARB's Proposed Regulation for In-Use Off-Road Diesel Vehicles – Jerry Howard

Mr. Howard distributed information on the proposed regulation to the AAC as an information item. It was noted that diesel engines used in agricultural operations are exempt. More information can be found on the Air Resources Board website: <http://arb.ca.gov/msprog/ordiesel/ordiesel.htm>

(e) "Leafy Greens" Marketing Order – Jerry Howard

Mr. Howard distributed information on the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement that was certified by the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on February 7, 2007. He also provided information about the Advisory Board for the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement and copy of the Draft Marketing Agreement. He explained that the Marketing Agreement was the industry's response to the latest e-coli outbreak that had been traced back to the leafy greens industry. Howard said the agreement is specific to California at this time and that it has the potential to negatively impact some growers in Solano County.

Concern was expressed by members of the AAC that small farmers and organic farmers are likely to be hardest hit because of the potential expense involved in meeting the strict standards of the agreement. Of particular concern is the expense involved in excluding

wildlife from production areas and the potential requirement for buffer zones around production areas.

It was noted the irradiation might be an alternative treatment for e-coli. It was pointed out that irradiated is not allowed on organically grown products and that it is not feasible on many other food crops. It was also noted that the general public is not accepting of the idea of irradiation food.

Howard stated that the County Agricultural Commissioners have expressed concern that the Department of Health Services and the Food and Drug Administration have not weighed in on the Marketing Agreement. He also said that it appears that inspection agencies are assuming a great deal of liability should any future e-coli outbreaks be traced back to an inspected field. He noted that Senator Flores has introduced three bills; S.B. 200, 201, and 202 that create a regulatory program to insure the safety of leafy greens. He further noted that expert's estimate that it will take up to three years to get a regulatory program in place and that the industry simply can not wait that long for a solution.

It was moved and seconded that the AAC sends a letter to the "Leafy Greens" Marketing Agreement Advisory Board of Directors expressing concern for the impact that the Marketing Agreement is likely to have on small and organic producers. The motion carried on a vote of 10 in favor and 1 in opposition.

Note: Letter to be signed by the Chair of the AAC.

Item 6 Continuing Business

(a) Work Group Report on "Draft Grading Ordinance" and Possible Action – Nick Burton

Mr. Burton provided a brief overview of the necessity to regulate grading activities and storm water runoff in order to comply with applicable state and federal requirements.

Comments from the Work Group to the AAC included the following:

- Overall, recent amendments have made the draft ordinance much better.
- Agriculture is exempt from the ordinance with respect to installation of underground irrigation systems.
- It was noted that the 50 cubic yard limitation does not apply to agricultural operations except for first time conversion of rangeland to more intensive agricultural practices in which case a grading permit is required.

It was noted that the Solano County Farm Bureau has requested a separate ordinance for agriculture to better clarify when the ordinance applies to agricultural operations and when a permit for specific activities is required.

It was noted that certain language in the ordinance lacks clarity, especially with respect to agricultural exemptions. Mr. Covey agreed and said there were issues that merit further discussion. A comment was offered that the California Department of Fish and Game doesn't require a permit unless the County requires one. Fish and Game requirements

can be quite onerous and costly, so the ordinance should be quite clear as to when a grading permit is required.

Mr. Burton noted that grading permits are not required for agricultural activities except for land leveling. He further explained that current practices are exempt, new practices; conversion from one use to another is the only time a grading permit is required for agriculture. A comment was made that this issue needs to have a very narrow focus and that a threshold level should be established to trigger the need for a permit. It was suggested that Section 31-22 (e) needs to be clarified with respect to the reference to the term “production.”

A comment was made that the definition of “Agriculture” as it is currently written is problematic in that an argument could be made that a number of non-agricultural activities could qualify for an agricultural exemptions. It was suggested that the definition needs to reference “commercial” agriculture. It was suggested to research definitions used in the Food and Agricultural Code, Resource Code and/or the Williamson Act (Government Code). It was noted that the U.S. Ag Census define “Commercial” Agriculture as the sale of \$1,000 or more in agricultural products.

Mr. Pippo stated that the Farm Bureau was concerned about the 50 cubic yard requirements, but stated that as long as there is an agricultural exemption, that concern is alleviated. Mr. Pippo asked Mr. Howard to distribute a letter from the Solano County Farm Bureau regarding the organizations position on the “Draft Grading Ordinance.”

Mr. Atkinson asked if movement of soil includes gravel added to existing roads? Mr. Burton responded that such activities are exempt for improvement of existing roads. Mr. Burton also stated that the exemptions for agriculture are activated if any one or more of the criteria are met. It was suggested that the exemption language could be written more clearly.

Mr. Covey stated that submissions of the Grading Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors for consideration could be delayed until March 13th if the Work Group wanted to continue its work with Resource Management Staff on the ordinance.

It was moved and seconded to have the Work Group to continue to meet with Resource Management Staff to improve and further clarify the “Draft Grading Ordinance” and Move the March AAC meeting from Wednesday, March 14 to Monday March 12th at 3:00 p.m. for further discussion and a possible recommendation prior to the Board of Supervisors Meeting on March 13, 2007. The motion carried on a unanimous vote of the members present.

(b) U.C. Davis Ag Futures Project Update – Carole Paterson

In view of the length of prior discussions, Mrs. Paterson gave an abbreviated status report noting that the Phase I Report is available on the UCCE website and that Phase II and Phase III of the study are moving forward simultaneously.

(c) AFT Suisun Valley Study Update – Jerry Howard

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Mr. Howard reported that a “draft” report had been submitted to the Project Oversight Committee for review and comment and that the final report is due on or about March 1st.

(d) SAREP Project Update – Carole Paterson

Mrs. Paterson discussed the workshops that are being conducted as part of the SAREP Project. She noted that four workshops were scheduled with two completed. She encouraged the AAC members to attend the remaining workshops on February 27 to learn what other counties are doing to promote agriculture and on March 15 to hear from some local agricultural entrepreneurs.

(e) General Plan Update – Mike Yankovich

No report was given.

There was a comment regarding the Citizen’s Advisory Committee that asking a group of citizens volunteers to look at planning issues for the entire County is too much.

(f) Dixon Down (Racetrack) Project Status – Mike Yankovich

No report was given.

It was noted that the issue will go to a vote of the people of the City of Dixon on April 18, 2007.

(g) Agricultural Pesticide/Hazardous Material Waste Disposal Day Update – Janet Jessen

Mrs. Jessen reported that she will be working with staff from Resource Management to organize and co-ordinate a collection day. She requested input from the AAC as to the best timing and location. It was recommended that it be held in August or September in Dixon if possible and that the event be limited to Commercial Agricultural Operations. Mrs. Jessen will keep the AAC updated on her progress.

Item 7 Identify and Clarify Future Agenda Topics and Timing of Discussion

- a. Items from Board of Supervisors on Subject Matter of the AAC – Ongoing
- b. Dixon Downs (Racetrack) Project Status – Ongoing
- c. Trails – Update on Regional Project Status – Ongoing
- d. Horse Facilities/Farming Operations Update – February
- e. Agricultural Pesticide/Hazardous Materials Waste Disposal Day – Ongoing
- f. Large Animal Carcass Catastrophe/Carcass Disposal Plan – Fall/Winter
- g. Agricultural Center
- h. Antiquated Maps

Item 8 Public Comments/Announcements/Correspondence

This is the opportunity to address the committee on a matter not listed on the agenda, but within the subject jurisdiction of the Committee.

(a) Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

(b) Announcements

There were no announcements.

(c) Correspondence

There were no correspondences.

Item 9 Next Meeting Date

Monday March 12, 2007 at 3:00 p.m., first floor conference room, 501 Texas Street, Fairfield.

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE from March 14, 2007.

Item 10 Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.