

**SOLANO COUNTY  
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON  
May 9, 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, Barbara Comfort, Alan Freese, Donald Johnson, Craig Leathers, Russell Lester, Susan Lippstreu, John Mangels, Betty Mason, Mary Helen Seeger.

**Others Present:**

Jearl Howard	Agricultural Commissioner
Birgitta Corsello	Director, Resource Management
Kathy Gibson	County Administrator's Office
Sabine Goerke-Schrode	Aide to Supervisor Spring
Mario Moratorio	UC Cooperative Extension
Mike Yankovich	Resource Management
Kurt Richter	UCD Ag Issues Center

**Item 1 Call to Order/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 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**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Item 4 Review/Approval of the Meeting Minutes of April 11, 2007**

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2007 meeting as presented. The motion was 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 – Mike Yankovich
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See Item 6(d)

**Item 6 Continuing Business**

(a) U C Davis Ag Futures Project Update – Kurt Richter
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Mr. Richter said he will be meeting with Assessor's Office in the next few days. He is writing the main component of the report that is due in October, and needs input from the agricultural community if the report is to be complete. He wants to provide the best product, and stated that

he is willing to share the draft report if members of the AAC would like to review it and give him with feedback. A member asked if the draft could be e-mailed to AAC, and concern was expressed with regard to that being a potential violation of the Brown Act. It was stated that this would not be a problem as long as committee members don't e-mail each other.

Mr. Freese invited Mr. Richter to come and ride with him for a day and get feedback from him that way rather than Mr. Freese reading the report and writing comments. Mr. Richter said he would be willing to do this with any of the AAC members. Ms. Corsello also felt this would be a good option for committee members. One member stated that what Mr. Richter is doing is very important. He has an obvious passion for the agricultural community and wants to help.

Ms. Corsello suggested that perhaps a working group could be formed, or more time be scheduled during the regular AAC meetings to discuss the report in more depth, and provide feedback.

**(b) Discussion of County Fee Process – Jerry Howard/Birgitta Corsello**

Jerry Howard stated that the Committee had specifically requested this item to be scheduled for further discussion. He reported that the Board of Supervisors adopted the fees for FY 2007/08 on May 1, and indicated there was no public comment for or against the department's proposed fees.

It was moved and seconded to support the fees for the Agriculture Department as adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Howard called attention to a pie chart showing the portion of general fund portion, fees portion, and state revenues and reimbursements for the department's budget. The yellow segment points out amount of general fund support contributed by county. The fees are a fairly small part of the Agricultural Department's total revenue. The lion's share of local fees comes from three sources: Weights & Measures fees, (very small portion come from agriculture, they are mostly collected from commercial facilities such as gas stations), export certification charges, and the certified seed process of walking fields, etc. A very small amount of actual dollars comes from the long list of activities on the fee schedule. Jerry apologized for leaving the pie chart out of last month's discussion. The Board is aware that fees overall are a concern to agriculture. Future discussion could include whether or not some fees are appropriate.

Some discussion followed with the statement being made that it all boils down to the fact that these increases are the cost of doing business in Agriculture. It was suggested that future discussions about fees should involve a review of what fees should be charged and/or not charged to the agricultural community should take place early enough to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

The motion was approved on a vote of eight in favor and one opposed.

**(c) Discussion of Compatible & Incompatible Land Uses in Agricultural Zones – Birgitta Corsello**

Ms. Corsello provided the committee with two draft tables; Agricultural Activities Analysis and Agricultural Land Use Analysis. She stated it would be beneficial to look at agricultural activities that the County will be reviewing during the General Plan Update process in general terms as well as in more specific terms.

She explained that the first table contained specific categories and activities. For example, a school next to an orchard or vineyard would not be a good thing. Rather than saying that's the end of the ability to produce agriculturally, what are things you could live with? The second table is an attempt to identify things that, in the event a change was made in the zoning ordinance,

would make it easier for the farmers to do a certain activity and streamline the process. Right now rules say, for example: agricultural processing requires a use permit, which involves looking at a lot of different things before the use permit is issued. If changes are made in the zoning ordinance, that list might be shortened, thereby streamlining the process before having to go through the analysis. Mr. Johnson asked if it would be a matter of scale? For example, a commercial cheese processing plant versus small cheese processing business. Different permits for different sizes of businesses?

Ms. Corsello stated that scalability may be one way to determine what type of permit is required. These tables are a first attempt to try to capture information in order to make such an assessment. If we had the ability to say this should go here or that should go there, what would you like to see where? With AAC's input, we could begin to plan for and direct change. Ms. Corsello asked the committee to look at the uses to see what works in the chart and what doesn't and get them back to her. Ms. Corsello said to think about activities that are more compatible with other activities and what types of uses are incompatible with certain activities.

It was stated that that the AAC opposed a proposed cemetery in Vaca Valley several years ago due to compatibility issues. Ms. Corsello said that this process would give opportunity to provide the rationale for not allowing a cemetery in a particular place.

Ms. Corsello asked that the AAC members keep two things in mind as they read through and complete the tables. First, from an activity standpoint, what else should be considered, and secondly, are there any concerns? She left a blank column for comments and asked the AAC members to consider activities that would work with agriculture, and what wouldn't work with agriculture. Mr. Howard will send the forms electronically to all members with e-mail. This will be considered homework to be completed by next meeting.

<b>(d) General Plan Update – Mike Yankovich</b>
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Mr. Yankovich stated that the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has been meeting since January 2007. They are now looking at policy issues.

For the next four to five weeks there will be community workshops held at four locations. The workshops for three of these locations (Middle Green Valley-Solano Community College, Suisun Valley-Solano Community College, and Collinsville-Rio Vista Library), will be held on Tuesday nights. The fourth location (Old Town Cordelia-Cordelia Fire Hall) will hold their community workshops on Thursday nights. The focus will be to go to areas and get input from those attending the meetings for these Special Study Areas. Suggested alternatives will be brought back from the subcommittee to whole CAC. In July the CAC will be looking at land use proposals from property owners. About 50 General Plan areas as well as policy statements will be considered. Ms. Corsello added that the chair of the CAC recently appointed an agricultural subcommittee. Meetings will be set up within the next couple of weeks throughout the county to gather additional input regarding agricultural issues.

Ms. Corsello said that Larry Clement, Chair of the Agricultural Sub-Committee, feels there are areas that need to be explored aside from those being addressed by the agricultural studies. He is trying to identify and define those areas by holding a series of meetings with the agricultural community. Ms. Corsello said that \$170,000 was spent in consultant agreements to look specifically at agriculture for the studies by American Farmland Trust and the University of California.

Mr. Richter said that through the U.C. Study, they are trying to figure out what is going on where, and how a specific agricultural area is tied into an economic area. For example, there is basically

no processing in Solano County (only one tomato plant). He stated that different areas in Solano are involved in different economic systems, and the main tool has been zoning. He said it would be good to look at what other areas in California have done with zoning. Different counties have done different things with success and/or failure. A body of information is imperative for the County to make an informed decision.

The question was raised as to whether there should be programs that compensate landowners to keep a larger acreage format. A member asked about zoning and whether we should be rezoning the map or doing something proactive county-wide as agricultural land is converted to non-productive ag land. Agriculture mitigation is on the list of issues for the Citizens Advisory Committee to consider. Ms. Corsello stated that the General plan update has agricultural components scheduled starting in the fall. She felt the County has laid out the process in a way that the AAC will have input.

Ms. Corsello stated that all issues are linked, which makes the process difficult. The Board of Supervisors has said unlink them and deal with each issue. Hopefully, the agricultural study will give good information when it comes out. A suggestion was made to include a plan for agricultural mitigation in the general policy.

Ms. Corsello raised the question how do you balance agriculture with the farmer wanting to sell a piece of their land to pay off debt? Zoning takes care of Williamson Act and Proposition 13.

**(e) Dixon Downs Project Status-Mike Yankovich**

It was decided to drop this subject from future agendas unless the issue emerges again.

**(f) Agricultural Pesticide/Hazardous Material Waste Disposal Day Update-Janet Jessen**

Last month Ms. Jessen described a program for conditionally exempt small quantity generators which has some significant costs associated with it. Janet reported that if you are a resident of Solano County you can participate in the Household Hazardous Waste Program at no cost. She stated there is a limit of 15 gallons or 125 pounds per trip, with no limit on the number of trips one can make in a day, and you must have proof of residency in Solano County. The Resource Management website is a good source of information about the program and collection sites. There is a list of who runs the program in each area of the County, what can be disposed of, and what days the service is available. Ms. Corsello pointed out that this information is also in the phonebook under the yellow pages. The Household Waste Program is funded through a variety of fees: garbage fees, tipping fees, and grants. This service includes everyone who resides in unincorporated area of the County.

A member asked if materials that weren't being used could be passed along to someone who is in need of them, rather than disposing of them. It would seem that if you have proof that you have transferred it, you should be able to give it to someone who can use it. Ms. Corsello stated that Resource Management's issue is that they need to know what is in storage, not how the used or got rid of materials. They don't track whether you put it on your property or move it off. She suggested that the committee work with Mr. Howard in getting legal, unwanted product transferred to someone who can use it. She also suggested that perhaps the Agriculture Department could create a form to be used to document what is transferred.

Ms. Jessen then described the Small Generator Program. There is a limit of 27 gallons per month. This is less than twice what can be brought in one trip under the Household Hazardous Waste Program, and it costs \$7-\$10 per gallon in disposal fees. Ms. Corsello stated that the process is very streamlined and can be done online. A member asked if these programs accept banned

pesticides. Ms. Jessen said yes, that basic tests can be done. Mr. Howard stated that the government agencies have come to the realization that if they keep telling people no, these materials simply disappear, so they are becoming smarter about providing ways for people to dispose of it properly. If you have these products, the free program is slightly more than half of what the charging program is at any one time. It may mean more trips, but there is no limit on trips per day, and it's free. Ms. Corsello thought that some facilities may require an appointment. Vacaville is twice a month. Name and address is required so agencies know who is paying. If you want to go beyond these programs that are offered (having a collection day as offered in 1999), the garbage companies have first right of refusal before any planning to go to bib can take place.

Mr. Howard inquired if the committee wanted to do a hazard materials disposal day or see how the existing structure works. One member stated that they thought if the agricultural community was informed about the Household Hazardous Waste Program they would take advantage of it. An informational brochure at permit issuance time might be a good way to inform growers of this service. Although Resource Management's budget will not allow them to do the printing, they could provide a brochure to be printed for distribution to the growers by the Agriculture Department. Ms. Corsello restated that this information is provided in the phone book under the yellow pages. Mr. Johnson stated that we should work with existing structure and if it doesn't work, revisit the issue.

It was moved and seconded to keep present means of disposing of hazardous waste materials as it currently stands through existing structure, and that the Agricultural Department will notify growers of hazardous waste information upon permits being issued. The motion carried on a unanimous vote of the members.

#### **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 – TBA
- c. Trails – Update on Regional Project Status – TBA
- d. Agricultural Pesticide/Hazardous Waste Disposal Day – Drop
- e. Antiquated Maps - TBA
- f. Horse Facilities/Farming Operations Update – June
- g. Large Animal Carcass Catastrophe/Carcass Disposal Plan – Fall/Winter
- h. Agricultural Center - TBA
- i. Bio-Solids Ordinance – May/June

#### **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.

<b>(a) Public Comments</b>
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There were no comments from the public.

<b>(b) Announcements</b>
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Opening of Lynch Canyon on Saturday, May 12.

LBAM Technical Working Group in San Jose May 16-18. LBAM has infested eight counties (all coastal). Recently it has been found in Oakley and Dublin. It appears to be in the nursery trade,

and SoCal nursery seems to be the epicenter (1300 trapped). To date it has not been found in Solano. USDA is lead agency on the LBAM issue.

(c) Correspondence

There were no correspondences.

**Item 9 Next Meeting Date**

Wednesday, June 13, 2007 at 3:00 p.m., first floor conference room, 501 Texas Street, Fairfield.

**Item 10 Adjourn Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.