# SOLANO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC) MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON February 13, 2008

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:

Donald Johnson, Craig Leathers, Russell Lester, Susan Lippstreu, John Mangels, Betty Mason, Mary Helen Seeger.

## Others Present:

Jearl D. Howard Agricultural Commissioner
Carole Paterson UC Cooperative Extension
Birgitta Corsello Resource Management

Kathy Barnes-Jones CAO

Sabine Goerke-Shrode Aide to Supervisor Spering (District 3)

Mike Yankovich Resource Management Ken Solomon Resource Management Ron Lanza Wooden Valley Winery

#### Item 1 Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting began at 3:05. A quorum was not 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 pointed out by Mr. Howard that the minutes for approval should be January 9, 2008, not December 12, 2007. Other than this correction, there were no changes to the agenda offered. A quorum was not present for approval of the agenda.

## Item 4 Review/Approval of the Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2008

A quorum was not present. Approval of the January 9, 2008 minutes will be carried over to the March 12 agenda.

#### **Item 5 New Business**

(a) Report on Board of Supervisors Meetings – Board Topics Related to the Subject Matter of the AAC – Birgitta Corsello

The Board considered and approved two items since the last AAC meeting. Resource Management did a status report on implementation of the green business program. Phase 1 was targeted at small businesses subject to county permits that generate hazardous waste or handle hazardous materials. There are nine nearly completed with certification; the Board wanted 10 in the que before allowing movement to the next phase. The Board has now authorized staff to begin working on Phase 2, which involves businesses that are not subject to county permit but are interested in becoming certified green. About 12 companies have contacted Resource Management. By June or July there will be a series of businesses certified under the

green business program out of the Bay area who will be allowed to display the seal. The Board wants to do a formal presentation to roll that program out.

The subject of illegal dumping was another item. An overview of some of the best management practice ideas that came out of a state-integrated waste management board study that was given to the Board. The Board has directed Resource management to develop whatever ordinances are necessary to put in place an enforcement program including investigative procedures to help the property owner ascertain who did the dumping, the consequences of which could result in up to a citation. However, before this type of ordinance goes into place, it will come back to this Committee for review. The Board has said enough of voluntary clean-up; it's time to go after the sources of illegal dumping.

A grant application for the waste tire amnesty program went before the Board. In the working phase of this application, the county was approached by the seven cities, who were interested in a joint effort. There will be six or seven events during the year. If the funds are granted, the kick off will be in July and would be widely advertised. Coupled with this, the State will no longer be responsible for inspecting waste tire facilities. Effective July 1, this responsibility will move to the counties. This will be done by existing hazardous materials inspectors who are already going to most gas stations and service centers to check how oil, waste oil and other waste products are being handled. In addition, they will now verify that there are appropriate disposal plans and that haulers are being used to haul and legitimately dispose of wastes, as well as providing verification of where the tires were disposed of. The State will provide some funding

Ms. Corsello stated that they went to the Board with the recommendations out of the Ag Study and Suisun Valley Study with regard to new positions. The Board has approved these positions, and it is now in the hands of Human Resources to develop position specifications and salary. One position will be added into the Agriculture Department to provide marketing, technical assistance, and ag expertise into the land use and permitting process and to be a part of the community ag liaison program. A position will be added to Resource Management to provide customer service, permit streamlining and help with developing the area plans coming under the General Plan as well as working with the agricultural community to deal with the special development plans for various valleys and regions as part of a combined effort between the two. The Board also supported the ongoing efforts of UC Coop Extension in grants, market development and technical assistance. This was approved by the Board without discussion.

Human Resources is hopeful that job classifications and salaries will be in place by the end of April, and it is possible that the positions may be filled by late June or early July. Supervisor Vasquez put this idea before the Board last year; however, there was no funding at the time to move forward.

### **(b)** Zoning Project Update-Michael Yankovich

The Committee was provided with the draft of the zoning ordinance as it affects agriculture. From the various committee meetings, Resource Management was able to gather comments from those involved in agriculture and try to assimilate this as part of the General Plan and to also incorporate some of those comments into the existing ordinance as it stands; although there are some limitations. The draft General Plan is adopted by the Board in July, after which it goes on the ballot. More changes are anticipated at that time.

Mr. Yankovich stated that the Citizens Advisory Committee met for the last time on February 4. They finished with the land use circulation chapters of the General Plan. The preliminary draft General Plan will be reviewed by the Planning commission on March 13, followed by the Board's review on Tuesday, March 18. If the draft is approved by the Board, it will be submitted for public review.

In that General Plan there are a number of issues that were addressed in the realm of agriculture. Mr. Yankovich stated at this point they are trying to incorporate as much as they can from the comments of the

meetings into the General Plan. Ken Solomon has been doing the bulk of the work on the zoning ordinance revisions.

Mr. Yankovich went over the summary of the changes. In regard to secondary dwellings, each legal parcel is allowed a second dwelling by right. Up to this point it has been regulated by acreage. The acreage for all ag parcels is being increased with regard to secondary dwellings to 1800 square feet. Ag employee housing is allowed by use permit; there is opportunity for ag employee dwellings beyond the two allowed by right.

Wineries have been divided into two categories; small and large, based on the number of gallons produced. At least 25% of the grapes must be grown on the property itself, and processing would be based on the amount of grapes crushed. 20,000 gallons would be the threshold used (allowed by right). Special events such as weddings would be permitted by use permit.

Roadside stands: a maximum size of 1,000 square feet for roadside stands was suggested for the Committee's comment. The stand would be for retail sale only for crops grown on the property. As with grapes, at least 25% of produce sold must be grown on your property, or property that you are leasing. Also, perhaps the raw product could be converted to value-added by processing or packaging then be sold at the roadside stand. There was a great deal of discussion on this subject, and Ms. Corsello stated that guidance was welcomed to figure out what would work best. The Committee seemed to feel that 25% grown on your property (or leased property) in Solano County was reasonable, but it should be decided how it should be quantified. The remaining 75% could include produce from another county as well as various other products. The suggestion was made that a "spot check" might be done during the season to make sure that the standards were being adhered to.

Mr. Yankovich said that discussion with the Agricultural Commissioner on how to deal with the 25% issue might be necessary. Ms.Corsello pointed out that suggestions were welcomed from the Committee. She said that the struggle is that it should be something reasonable because the idea is to help the farmer to do something with their produce other than sell wholesale or pay to sell it at a farmers market; the concept is to help the farmer.

Ms. Corsello stated that the challenge is that today you can only sell what you are producing on site in your stand; it's being relaxed a little in that you can sell what you grow on site and also what you have produced elsewhere. The desire is to make that a little easier by bringing in goods from other areas. However, the purpose is to keep the ag land in production in Solano County. Ms. Corsello asked if there was a group that information could be obtained from. A Committee member suggested talking to people who sell at the farmers markets who have tried to keep it local. Ms. Corsello asked if the suggestion by the Committee was that it would be reasonable to require some percentage of "grown in Solano" whether it's on that property or adjacent, and quantifying this would need to be worked through. Discussion ensued regarding fruit stands, and a question was asked if there were means of enforcement as to percentages of what was sold at the fruit stands. Ms. Corsello said that there was.

It was noted that there has been much discussion about fruit stands without any representatives of these fruit stands present, and it may be a good idea to talk to fruit stand owners and let them know what is in the works and to perhaps get their input. Mr. Howard asked Mr. Lanza if the Suisun Valley group had ever formally submitted their proposal. Mr. Lanza said that they did submit a proposal to the CAC, but he felt it was much more complicated than what the AAC was looking at. Mr. Howard suggested that the Suisun Valley group might have some input and comments that might be helpful. Mr. Lanza said that the Committee could get a good consensus from the Suisun Valley group. He suggested that the Committee contact Bob Hansen.

**Agricultural home stay**: County Counsel has advised that bed and breakfasts are more of a commercial venture. However, agricultural home stay could be built in where you can have six or fewer guest rooms with a 15-guest maximum. Mr. Howard asked if there was any thought as to putting another tier in some of

these such as an administrative use permit rather than a full conditional use permit. Mr. Yankovich stated that the agricultural home stay is allowed by right, with no permit. Mr. Howard stated there was a great advantage to having an administrative use permit. Mr. Yankovich stated that this is as far as we could go with the present General Plan, and the bed and breakfast idea could be addressed in a new General Plan.

Digressing back to the winery issue, but pertinent to the subject of the administrative permit, Committee member Johnson stated that 20,000 gallons is about 8,300 cases. He said he recently put in a winery and that this is the basic minimum to break even. Is there an administrative process that would allow between 8,000 cases and 20,000 cases without going with a full use permit? Mr. Yankovich asked if 20,000 gallons was the threshold that should be used. Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Lanzo what his thoughts were, and Mr. Lanzo stated that if he was putting in the investment and went over 8,000 cases, he would obtain a full use permit. Ms. Corsello asked if you do 50,000 gallons does that involve more equipment than 20,000. Mr. Johnson stated no, although traffic and waste hazards would depend on whether you were processing on your property or somewhere else.

Ms. Corsello then stated that 20,000 is small and allowed by right, and perhaps there should be an intermediate tier, from 20,000 to 50,000 with some sort of an administrative use permit. She stated that presently there were no such tiers, and it is something that needs to be worked on. She asked the Committee what they thought the next logical tier would be in between 20,000 and infinity. Feedback indicated that up to 25,000 would be good for small, and then from 25,000-50,000 would be good for intermediate, and this would be a great use for an administrative use permit. Over 50,000 would then be full use permit. Ms. Corsello said that this would come before the Committee again before it was sent out.

**Nurseries**: Wholesale nurseries are allowed. There are others out there that have some sort of sales. The proposal is to allow some sales of non-nursery items at nurseries. This would entail10% of the display area, and the maximum amount would be 1500 square feet; non-plant material. Resource management staff has inspected every nursery out there. There are a number of complaints and the goal is to figure out what is reasonable, and not trying to penalize anyone out there. What are the accessory things that a nursery might sell? Mary Helen said this was a good idea but would this open the door to people coming along and "popping up" retail nurseries in order to sell?

It was pointed out that the nursery licenses are through CDFA, and the Agriculture Department enforces requirements. This is targeted at the small and medium agricultural grower who is a nursery. If they grow or sell more than \$500 per year, a nursery license is required from the state. \$500 or less requires a fee-exempt license. The fee-exempt license is local. The Resource Management business license form is used to check.

Slaughterhouse: There are smaller operators coming in. If you slaughter your livestock on your property, it is permitted by right. If you bring in livestock that is not yours, a use permit is required. The proposal is that a use permit would be required for any slaughtering activity. Can you get paid to slaughter someone else's livestock? You can't have uninspected meat in a facility where there is inspected meat. It was suggested that Resource management speak to Joe Gates out of Rio Vista for info. His facility is in Vacaville. Mr. Howard suggested that CDFA meat inspection division could be contacted to give guidelines.

Conservation Banks: No use permits required. There have been concerns about this. If you take property out of ag for conservation bank, it increases the value. The proposition is that this should require a use permit. The use permit is not based on the size of the property. A member asked whether or not conservation banks are usually non-profit. Technically there isn't a difference between a conservation bank and conservation easements. What is noted wanted is third-parties coming in and removing ag property from production. This goes to the Ag Study's subject of critical mass.

**Public Open Space Area**: This is geared toward the tri-city area. Looking for language that would allow for use of the property for low-intense use such as hiking, and then medium-intensity use which would be a

larger parking lot and some camping that would be allowed on the property itself. This would occur only on small parcels (ag 20).

Ms. Corsello stressed that this is the first pass through the Committee for these zoning ordinances pertaining to agriculture, as much input as possible is appreciated before they take the document to the Planning Commission. A member asked when the new map will be available, and the Committee was informed that it is posted on the Resource Management website.

**Service uses**: All use permits but not if the use is incidental to the farm involved.

## (c) Prioritize Recommendations from Ag Futures Study-Birgitta Corsello/Jerry Howard

Ms. Corsello asked that we hold this until next time due to time constraints. She and Mr. Howard requested that the Committee review the recommendations that came out of the UC Ag study and put them in order of whatever priority they feel is important.

## (d) Tour of National Clonal Germ Plasm Repository at UC Davis

In response to very high interest from last year's workshop, Ed Stover from this facility came and spoke about the facility and people were anxious to take a tour. The tour will take place on Thursday, March 20. It will be a bus tour. If you are interested, please let Carole know and she will put names on the list. It is the USDA facility at Wolfskill.

The schedule will be available at the next Ag Advisory committee, but Carole thought it would be good in the morning, around 10:00. Mr. Howard said that it is an amazing tour and encouraged members to attend.

## **Item 6 Continuing Business**

## (a) General Plan Update

Mr. Yankovich covered this in Item 5b.

## (b) Report Farm/Agriculture Education Tour Planning Work Group Update – Work Group

The group met today at 2:00. Mr. Leathers said that the group had decided that the date for the tour will be Friday, May 30. There will be a bus tour portion. The group is looking at topics and trying to decide who to invite as participants and thought that a luncheon at the end of the tour would be a good way for people to interact. Ms. Corsello suggested that the policy makers should be invited and that key sites should be chosen to get people out there. The concept is to include only local grown in the luncheon. The Committee will meet again to continue planning. She stated that the Board is extremely interested in what the Committee is doing.

The Work Group will continue to meet to work out the details.

## (c) Exotic Pest Update – Jearl D. Howard

Mr. Howard stated that the Japanese Dodder was removed from the Suisun site last week. Today (February 13) and tomorrow (February 14) will be removed from the Fairfield site, Allan Witt Park. This will be monitored for some time to come.

A 14<sup>th</sup> med fly was discovered on December 12, which extended the proposed lifting of the quarantine to August 17. We are still in the first life cycle after the original find, and as the weather warms up and we

move towards the second life cycle if additional live flies are found it will have a dramatic effect on the proposed lifting of the whether the quarantine is lifted.

Mr. Leathers stated that Campbell's in Dixon had a meeting with USDA and CDFA and brought in their growers in the quarantine area to make sure they had a plan in place. They will be doing four applications of approved sprays 30 days from harvesting and then they can move the tomatoes anywhere without restrictions.

As far as the Light Brown Apple Moth is concerned (LBAM), it is holding at nine moths collected. No moths have been found within the area where the pheromone twist-ties are located. The ninth moth was found on 680, not too far from Benicia but is considered to be an isolated incident. If no further moths found, it will go away. Trapping is ongoing. Money has come available, so a work plan will be in place for the monitoring of traps. The state is doing delimitation trapping in Vallejo. The state is doing that (delimitation). We will continue to trap at nurseries.

Mr. Howard feels that Solano is in good shape, and as other counties treat for LBAM, Solano will not see any more moths.

Mr. Lester shared thoughts on the economic effects of these pests coming into Solano County, and that taxpayers should be informed. Mr. Howard stated that a survey was sent out asking for economic impact figures due to the med fly, and we received a sound response from the tomato growers, and a decent response from the walnut growers. The responses documented about a quarter of a million dollars and he felt this was way below actual costs because there was very little info returned on the projected 2008 season. He felt the realistic figure would be over a million dollars to growers locally. He said that he would estimate that the price of eradication would be in the millions.

Perhaps if the general public were better educated, they would be less likely to bring fruit in. Ms. Corsello stated that information to the public should be in terms that people can understand such as, locally the results of this particular pest resulted in losses to farmers, the state has spent x amount of money, and in addition we are looking at next season's losses, and all of this results in the taxpayer paying more. A Committee member said that it could also be pointed out that produce would be sprayed more due to the infestation, which means more pesticide out there.

Mr. Howard stated that Nigel Walker's message to his folks is that if they want organic fruits, people need to be smarter about what they bring into California.

Overall, it was felt that it would be good to educate the public about bringing produce into California.

## <u>Item 7 Identify and Clarify Future Agenda Topics and Timing of Discussion</u>

The Future Agenda Topics and Timing of Discussion are as follows:

NOTE: Chairman Mangels went over these topics with the Committee, and it was agreed that items "e. Trails-Update on Regional Project Status" as well as "g. Agricultural Center" should be removed from future agendas.

- a. Items from the Board of Supervisors on Subject Matters of the AAC Ongoing
- b. Compatible/Incompatible Land Uses Fall/Winter
- c. Horse Facilities/Farming Operations Update TBA
- d. Large Animal Catastrophe/Carcass Disposal Plan Fall/Winter
- e. Trails Update on Regional Project Status TBA
- f. Antiquated Maps TBA
- g. Agricultural Center TBA

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## <u>Item 8 Public Comments/Announcements/Correspondence</u>

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 public comments.

(b) Announcements

There were no announcements.

(c) Correspondence

There were no correspondences.

# **Item 9 Next Meeting Date**

Wednesday, March 12, 2008 at 3:00 p.m., first floor conference room, 501 Texas Street, Fairfield.

# **Item 10 Adjourn Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.