SOLANO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC) MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON October 10, 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:

Barbara Comfort, Jeff Dittmer, Alan Freese, Donald Johnson, Craig Leathers, Russell Lester, John Mangels, Betty Mason.

Others Present:

Jearl Howard Agricultural Commissioner
Kathy Gibson County Administrator's Office
Fred Zaragoza Aide to Supervisor Reagan
Sabine Goerke-Schrode Aide to Supervisor Spering

Michael Yankovich Planning
Al Sokolow UC Davis

Larry Clement Citizen's Advisory Committee

Morgan Doran UCCE

Kurt Richter UC Davis Ag Issues Center

Item 1 Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by Vice Chair Mangels.

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 July 11, 2007

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2007 meeting. 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 – Michael Yankovich

No items were discussed.

(b) Agricultural Advisory Committee Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors – Jerry Howard – ACTION ITEM

Mr. Howard reviewed the Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors for the AAC with the Committee. He noted that if changes were needed, please identify them so they could be made prior to submitting the report for incorporation into the full Board Report. The Committee attendance record for the last year was reviewed as well.

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

(c) Request by Suisun Valley Fund Advisory Committee to support, endorse and/or adopt the Vision Statement for Suisun Valley – Jerry Howard – ACTION ITEM

Mr. Howard reviewed a letter from the Suisun Valley Fund Advisory Committee (SVFAC) requesting support for the "Vision for Suisun Valley" as adopted by the SVFAC. He stated that the SVFAC was seeking support from the broader agricultural community and have received support from other groups including: Suisun Valley Fruit Growers Assoc., Suisun Valley Grape Growers Assoc., Solano Irrigation District, City of Fairfield and the Solano County Farm Bureau. In a letter, which was provided to each of the AAC members present, Mr. Howard noted the SVFAC was seeking similar support for their vision from the AAC.

It was moved and seconded that the Solano County Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the "Vision for Suisun Valley" as adopted by the Suisun Valley Fund Advisory Committee. The motion carried on a unanimous vote of the members present.

(d) Status Report on Solano County Agricultural Insect Pest Eradication Projects – Jerry Howard

Mr. Howard provided the AAC with an update on the three pest eradication projects that the Agriculture Department is currently involved with: Glassy-winged Sharpshooter, Light Brown Apple Moth and Mediterranean fruit fly.

He reported that if no new Glassy-winged sharpshooters are found between now and October 31, he will be submitting a request to the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture requesting that the pest be declared eradicated and that the quarantine affecting the Vacaville area of Solano County be repealed. He noted that no new Glassy-winged sharpshooters had been found since May 2005.

Mr. Howard reported that the number of Light Brown Apple Moth detections had grown to seven, fortunately all in the City of Vallejo and not affecting the commercial agricultural production areas of the County. He stated that the LBAM Eradication Project is being operated by CDFA and USDA. It was reported that the area under quarantine will be expanded as a result of the recent additional moth finds and that treatment with pheromone impregnated twist ties around the recent finds will be initiated in the near future. Mr. Howard reported that the latest moth find was the first found south of Interstate 80.

Mr. Howard distributed a comprehensive briefing packet used the previous night when he updated the Dixon City Council on the status of the Mediterranean fruit fly infestation. He noted that a total of thirteen wild med flies had been found to date with the last fly find on September 17. He stated if no additional wild med flies are found, the quarantine would most likely end the last week of July or the first week of August 2008.

Item 6 Continuing Business

(a) U C Davis Ag Futures Project Update – Kurt Richter

Mr. Richter discussed the Phase II Report of the Ag Futures Study with the members of the AAC. A highlight included that the market value of agriculture is declining in inflation and adjusted terms, as well as county-wide market values. Mr. Richter stated he compared commodity by commodity, and estimated that each dollar in value of commodity, as it leaves the farm gates, produces an additional .58 cents in value which is relatively low for our area. He believes that it is the reason there is little processing done in Solano County, and very few other value added activities involving crops produced in Solano County. Mr. Richter also stated that there were certain economic benefits, such as energy production and property tax reduction in spite of the price of land being very high in Solano County; agricultural zoning made little or no difference in the way land was being utilized. He stated that many other details were in the report and encouraged the members of the AAC to provide him any relevant feedback. The final two phases of the study will be completed in December, which will also provide information and specific recommendations for consideration by the Board of Supervisors for the General Plan update. There was considerable discussion about Agricultural zoning in relation to growers and agricultural operators.

(b) Report of Agriculture Sub-Committee of CAC – Larry Clement

Mr. Clement states that the Agriculture Sub-Committee of CAC has been discussing issues related to agricultural land use issues since June 2007. There have been 12 meetings around the County with a 29% participation ratio. Three questions have been asked to stimulate conversation:

- 1. What has the County done to impede county agricultural profitability?
- 2. What has the County done to enhance your agricultural profitability?
- 3. What do you think about agricultural value adding?

Mr. Clement stated that several farmers felt that receiving \$.58 cents from added value in Solano County is embarrassing when the state averages \$2.00. Some wanted to be treated like business men and several wanted more regulation of open space and public access in relation to farming. The majority gave strong support for the Williamson Act. Discussions regarding permit fees, transportation, road hazards, and communication between Farmers and the Solano County Government were a major impediment to agriculture. Mr. Clement stated that farmers want to be notified about issues in Solano County that affect them. They also want better, more open communication with the County and the ability to influence local policy decisions. He stated there was strong support for County involvement in the marketing and promotion of local agricultural

commodities. Mr. Clement stated that the next Citizens Advisory Committee meeting will be held on October 29, 2007 at 6:00 pm and encouraged AAC members to attend.

(c) General Plan Update – Michael Yankovich.

Mr. Yankovich provided the committee with an update on the General Plan process and encouraged them to utilize the General Plan website to access up-to-date information. He also stated that the Department of Conservation will be holding a Williamson Act Workshop for Northern California County planning staff in Solano County. The workshop is scheduled for Friday, October 12, 2007 from 10-3. Mr. Yankovich stated that on October 30, 2007, the Board of Supervisors is scheduled to discuss Public Sewage Treatment Systems. He noted there will also be two other meetings; October 13th and 25th at which the Board of Supervisors will discuss issues related to the General Plan. He stated that information about these meetings as well as other information can be found on the website at www.solanocountygeneralplan.net.

(d) Prioritization of AFT Suisun Valley Study Recommendations – Jerry Howard

Mr. Howard stated that due to time constraints, discussion of this item would be deferred to the next meeting. He encouraged AAC members who had not completed the prioritization questionnaire to please do so for the next meeting. He advised the committee that the Board of Supervisors is quite interested in hearing from the agricultural community in regards to which of the recommendations contained in the Suisun Valley Study are viewed as the highest priorities from a county-wide perspective.

(e) Selection Process Update for New Pomologist Position – Morgan Doran

Mr. Doran stated that interviews were conducted in early September for the new Pomologist position, and that an offer has been made to which a response is still pending. The new position, Pomology Advisor, would begin mid-December and provide service to both Solano and Yolo County growers. This position would serve growers of crops such as walnuts, prunes, almonds, stone fruits.

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

Mr. Howard solicited AAC member input on revisions to the list of future topics and timing of discussions. The following input was provided: 1) UC Davis Ag Futures Project; 2) Compatible and Incompatible Land Uses; and 3) Farm/Agriculture Education Tour. The revised Future Agenda Topics and Timing of Discussion are as follows:

- a. Items from Board of Supervisors on Subject Matter of the AAC Ongoing
- b. UC Davis Ag Futures Project-Ongoing
- c. Compatible/Incompatible Land Uses-Fall/Winter
- d. Horse Facilities/Farming Operations Update December
- e. Farm/Agriculture Education Tour-Ongoing
- f. Large Animal Catastrophe/Carcass Disposal Plan Fall/Winter
- g. Trails Update on Regional Project Status TBA
- h. Antiquated Maps TBA
- i. Agricultural Center TBA

<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 comments from the public.

(b) Announcements

Mr. Howard announced that effective December 28, 2007, he would be retiring.

(c) Correspondence

There were no correspondences.

Item 9 Next Meeting Date

Wednesday, November 14, 2007 at 3:00 p.m., first floor conference room, 501 Texas Street, Fairfield.

Item 10 Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.