



Mass Dairy Promotion Board Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2019 | 10:30a.m. - 12:30p.m.
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581

In Attendance:

John Lebeaux – Board Chair
Mary Jordan – Chair Designee
Katie Rozenas – MDPB Coordinator
Dave Hanson – Vice Chair
Darryl Williams – Treasurer
Melissa Griffin – Secretary
Lynn Bohan – Board Member
Kathy Herrick – Board Member

James Hunt – Board Member
Ashley Randle - MDAR
Myron Inglis – MDAR
Rebecca Davidson – MDAR
Jessica Dizek – Guest

Not in Attendance:

Warren Shaw – Board Member
Brian McKeon – Board Member

The meeting was called to order at 10:17 AM by Board Chair John Lebeaux.

General Business:

The secretary's report was amended to include Brian McKeon as a board member not in attendance. DH made a motion to accept the report, JH seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: The board took in \$201,191.09 in calendar year 2018 which was a little decline over 2017. There was a bigger decrease from 2016 to 2017. In January 2019 the board took in \$15,815.92.

FY2018:

FY18 Beginning Balance \$217,188.35
FY18 Earned Revenue \$187,853.39
FY18 Revenue \$405,041.74
FY18 Expenses \$211,034.77
FY18 Balance \$194,006.97

FY2019 YTD:

FY19 Revenue \$329,270.07
FY19 Expenses \$129,924.97
FY19 Uncommitted \$123,446.94
FY19 Unexpended \$199,345.10
FY19 Encumbered 2019 \$75,898.16

FY2018 grants have all been closed out. Almost all have been paying. We have sent a letter to Stillman's to try to collect from them. Chase Hill is also past due but they have committed to paying within the month for payments owed for the last 2 years. KR deposited \$15,966.01 in the account this morning for production which will be reflected in the next treasurer's report. Looking at production numbers DH suggested that we might want to grant less than \$200,000 going forward.

DH made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, JH seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Coordinator's Updates:

New Coordinator KR introduced herself to the board. She attended her first event, the MADF/MDPB annual meeting on behalf of the MDPB on 2/15/19 where Jim Hunt presented the MDPB report.

FY19 grants are currently in progress and we will have midterm reports from the awardees at our next board meeting. NEDFC – As of the end of December NEDFC has worked in 21 schools and spent \$64,271, mostly on breakfast and hot chocolate milk programs.

NEDPB – The NEDPB participated in 8 live Zip Trip broadcast segments in July and August reaching 3 million people between the trips and advertising.

Big E – The Big E had record attendance this year with 1,543,470 people. The new refrigerator display in the Mallory Complex will be permanent. They did not provide a midterm report but did send pictures.

CISA – CISA has boosted their social media presence around dairy, updated their website, provided funding to NEDPB for a table at the Boston Food Festival, and sponsored screenings of the film Forgotten Farms.

MADF – MADF has not provided a midterm report.

Topsfield Fair – Topsfield Fair has not provided a midterm report.

Website – We are in the process of signing a new contract with Fuse Ideas. The website needs updating since it does not include all current board members. It is currently in HTML format rather than CMS so Fuse Ideas has to make any changes which are billable hours but they have said they could teach Katie how to use the system so we could do our own updates. We currently pay \$75 a month for the hosting. We need the contract signed ASAP but it can be amended as we go forward. JL pointed out that we need to be able to update our own website and it should be addressed in our next contract even if it means changing vendors. JL asked why the MDPB website is not part of mass.gov and MJ responded that while mass.gov is free; it will not allow us to do what we want on the website because it is too inflexible.

Facebook – Since 1/28/19 we have had an 8% growth in followers. KR is trying to post more and has already done 10 posts since she started with the MDPB. DW suggested KR run things by JH, MG, or LB before posting. KR suggested that we could budget some money to use for boosting specific posts. She plans to include featured farms and possibly use Facebook live if it is allowed. KR showed the groups some options for giveaways at events and mentioned that we could start collecting email addresses to start a newsletter in the future. DH mentioned that the board has done billboard advertising along I91 around the Big E time in the past.

DH and DW both received calls after the press releases went out for our FY19 grants. DW asked if we could somehow get more credit to the dairy farmers for funding these grants awards. MDAR drafts the press releases but ultimately the final version comes from the governor's office.

KR visited MG's farm but would love to visit all the other board members and then expand outwards to other dairy farms in MA.

New Business:

JL reported that he has enjoyed learning by serving as MDPB Chair but feels that AR would be able to better serve the board in that capacity going forward. MJ will be a second chair designee.

DW has been reappointed to the board representing MADF but we have not received a letter back yet to reappoint MG to represent Agri-Mark.

FY20 RFR Draft – The proposed release date for the RFR is 3/25/19. The proposals will be due back on 4/29/19 and KR will get them to the board electronically on 4/30/19. The board will meet on 5/3/19 to go over the proposals and potential grant awardees will make presentations to the board on 5/14/19. The contracts will start on 7/1/19. Once approved by the board, the RFR will go to legal for review and then can be posted. Once the board has awarded the grants, KR can draft the contracts so they are ready to go out as soon as it is approved by the governor's office. Board members should get comments back to KR by Friday with any input on the FY20 RFR. AR suggested adding language to the Evaluation Criteria section of the RFR to include the question: "Does the proposal contain novel ideas that haven't been part of previous projects?" and the board agreed. The RFR is announced on the Farm and Market report (which goes out to 4,000-5,000 industry folks) and sent to the Buy Locals (CISA). The board discussed trying to broaden how the RFRs are disseminated and DW suggested sending it directly to anyone who has applied in the last five years.

Dairy Tax Credit Program – MI reported that there were 110 farms that participated in the dairy tax credit program in 2018. The 2018 tax credit is \$2.98 per hundredweight, \$54,545 is the average, and \$33,525 is the median. There was a small decrease in average pounds per farm for 2018 (2017 was the all-time high). MI provided data comparing the 2017 numbers and the 2018 numbers and also ran the 2018 numbers as if the tax credit had remained at \$4 million (to use for comparison) instead of the increased \$6 million. Large farms are getting larger and many of the small farms are trending smaller.

Grant Initiative – Rebecca Davidson, MDAR Marketing Specialist/USDA Grants Outreach Coordinator, is currently working with a team to apply for a USDA market research grant entitled Exploring the Feasibility of a Massachusetts Shared-Use Dairy Processing Facility for Value-Added Dairy Products. The grant will look at the feasibility of this in terms of where (existing kitchen?) what products, and figure out the logistics (transportation, how to share the space with different groups). The grant program is a 1:1 match so they will need to find sponsors. The research can be used to go back to USDA for future grants to help implement the facility. One option being considered is creating a dairy wing to the Western MA food processing center in Greenfield, MA. DH commented that there are limits as to how many pounds of milk can go through a facility before you have to pay into the pool (it might be based on facility pounds rather than individual farm pounds of milk). DW said it would be worth calling the market administrator to check on this. RD reported that the only similar location they found in the country is a cheese-making facility in VT which may or may not still be active. The proposal is due 3/29/19 and she encouraged all board members to contact her at rebecca.davidson@mass.gov with any other ideas.

Board Updates:

DH reported that it had been a traumatic week for farmers in western MA. Bob Williams lost his barn to the wind and is still waiting for the insurance company but is expected to rebuild. The Pomeroy family lost their barn to a fire and lost 5 calves. They already have equipment in the yard ready to start rebuilding when insurance company gives the okay.

LB reported that there was a sugarhouse in Williamstown that burned down as well. MDAR does try to make the effort to contact farmers affected by these sorts of events and even get out to the farm.

Senator Gobi has filed legislation for emergency aid money for these sorts of tragedies as there currently is no program in Massachusetts or any other state in the country. JL pointed out that it sounds like a good idea but there are potential issues with this type of program.

DH reminded everyone that AG Day at the statehouse is 3/27/19.

AR reported that there is a Kickstarter ending on 3/24/19 for a new chocolate milk called Slate Milk. It was started by two Northeastern University graduates and is chocolate milk in cans. It is a similar model to Fairlife, having less sugar and more protein than regular milk. They have developed different flavor varieties of the chocolate milk. It is unclear who is providing the milk for the new product but it might not be MA milk.

The Amherst MDAR office is closing and moving to West Springfield because of increased rent costs. The 251 Causeway Street Boston office lease is up next year and rent looks to be going up there as well so they may do something different. MDAR will probably have a split presence with half of the group moving to a central MA office and the other half (legal, fiscal etc.) staying in Boston. The new Lakeville office is paid for by a Federal Grant.

Next Meeting Date: The board discussed possible meeting locations and decided that the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in Westborough, MA is the most central location.

April 2, 2019 10:30 AM in Westborough – FY19 midterm reports

May 3, 2019 – FY20 grant proposals

May 14, 2019 – FY20 grant presentations

Public Comment:

Jessica Dizek mentioned that she had seen a farm in PA that had painted “milk is 97% fat free” on a round bale of hay near the highway on their farm. She wondered why we haven’t already been marketing milk as 97% fat free instead of whole, 2%, and 1% all these years. Jessica also suggested getting our RFRs out to nutritionists or medical professionals who might do projects geared towards the nutrition and health benefits of dairy.

DW made a motion to adjourn the meeting, LB seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 12:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melissa Griffin
MDPB Secretary