

Vegetable AoE Meeting
March 20th, 2008

Those present were Hannah Stevens, Natalie Rector, Bill Steenwyk, Dan Brainard, Ron Goldy, Norm Myers, Phil Tocco, Mathieu Ngouajio, Dave Smith, Jim Breinling, Bernie Zandstra, Roger Brook, Darryl Warncke, Larry Olsen, Fred Springborn, Vicki Morrone, Mary Hausbeck, Mike Brewer

Meeting was called to order on 9:33 am.

Upcoming Manure Program (Natalie Rector)

Natalie wants to do a one day training for crop consultants in January or Feb of '09. She was looking for information/feedback to help make her program better. Dave suggested she stay away from Dec 9-11 (Expo). We suggested Kalamazoo or Grand Rapids as potential locations. The primary target is consultants. Growers will be welcome, but the emphasis would be consultants. We suggested having an ABA (American Bakers Assn.) inspector. Third party auditors as speakers.

Election of Co-Chairs (Norm)

Bylaws indicate that we need to rotate co-chairs every three years. This is Bernie and Norm's third year. Bernie and Norm feel that, for continuity's sake only one of them should step down to show new people the ropes. Bill encouraged that Bernie be the one who gets replaced. Darryl W. was the group's first choice. Moved by Bill seconded by Norm, all approved. We consider him approved unless he chooses otherwise. Darryl remarked that he will begin a consultantship year Sept 1, with retirement occurring on Sept 1, 2009, so he declined. Bill Moved seconded by Ron to make Mathieu the Campus Co-chair. All accepted. Ron moved, seconded by Bill that the co-chairs can assign a person to represent Veg aoe at functions related to the aoe. Motion passed.

Report on Meeting with MVC (Norm and Dave)

Dave and Norm received little or no feedback from the Veg Council. One comment was that there seemed to be a significant amount of administrative work. Dave shared that he appreciated that it was necessary for money. We're doing some good things and they did not propose any new ideas. The research priorities have not changed at this time. Any changes will probably be made in the fall. No public announcement of grant awards, but that will be coming within the next week. 7 proposals were received, 3 were funded. MVC put in \$53K this year back into research and extension. Dave gave a report generally about the MVC's recent activities.

2008 Great Lakes Expo Programs (Mathieu Ngouajio)

Mathieu passed around a copy of the expo program from last year. There was some discussion on including hoop houses/high tunnels as a session. This can be in tandem with plasticulture. A potential exists to give a full day of workshops on Hoop houses, cross it over to cover fruits and vegetables. A proposal was to have a half day program on hoop houses to replace plasticulture in '08 and a full day program on hoop houses as part of the Great Lakes Working Group in '09.

There was some discussion on the viability of having a full day of sweet corn, and a half day on sweet corn. The consensus of the group was to have both sessions. There was some discussion about marketing opportunities and having a session on marketing. The consensus was that it was a good idea to have a marketing session. Ron said he would get it started, but really felt that someone else (Tom Kalchik, Elaine Brown) should plan it. The marketing session will be carried by Tom Kalchik. It will be in the Alt. energy slot.

There was discussion about placement of onion and carrot sessions. Several combinations were suggested. Carrot and plasticulture will be switched. Ron will be co planning the plasticulture with Golean Hanson (SIC) There was discussion whether to have the pepper/eggplant session. The consensus was to combine pepper and tomato in the tomato Tuesday am slot. Ron will coordinate the session. There was some discussion about putting together a Cole and Mustard crops session in the old pepper/eggplant slot. Dan and Jim will coordinate the session.

On Wednesday, vine crops and sweet corn will be switched. The Sweet Corn IPM Workshop will be headed up by Jim Jasinski and Hannah. John Biernbaum and Dan Brainard and Vicki Morrone will plan the organic section of the vegetable program.

Dave shared some ideas from the vegetable council on Expo. GAP/GHP regulations from the USDA might be a good topic. Steve Beauchamp as a third party auditor or Mike Sutton as a processor might lend a perspective as speakers. Water is also on a lot of folks minds. There are still a lot of unknowns that need to be worked out at the legislative level about water use. Dave suggested talking with growers to run ideas by if you don't already do that.

There was talk about having a session on insurance but not from an insurance salesman. Roger Betz was suggested as a speaker as was a panel of growers who have had insurance. A "Risk Management" Session was proposed including Betz on insurance, PACA and GAP/GHP stuff. Norm volunteered to plan it. It will be in place of water issues.

There was some discussion about including publications from John Biernbaum. Concerns were brought up regarding the accounting and whether the bulletins are refereed. Norm had said that accounting was no problem. There was some concern that the info presented was refereed. The consensus was to accept the refereed journals.

Ron thanked Roger and Dave for all they do in making Expo a success. Hannah reinforced that when a speaker is available for other sessions, it is individual session coordinators responsibilities to contact them for their sessions.

Budget Update

\$3780.45 in AoE account as of Jan 8th. There are a few things that have been charged against us. In general, we have until June 30th to use this up. Beth Bishop has a claim for funding of pheromone traps of \$300. Moved by Bill seconded by Vicki to give Beth the \$300. all approved. We also have \$10,000 in the Phytophthora Matching Grant. Hannah will look into bringing a group of producers to Atlantic City for a pepper meeting.

Cover Crops Mtg. Update (Vicki Morrone)

Vicki shared a copy of the proposed tentative agenda. Norm asked others on the Veg AoE to get involved. Vicki asked for our help in publicizing the event. She asked if anyone would like to volunteer to write a press release for the workshop. Vicki will send a copy of the press release out by next Wed. Vicki will have a brochure out by April 17th.

Finalize Annual Report (Norm)

Norm shared the final report with us. Jim moved that Norm publish the report Seconded by Phil. All Accepted.

AoE Competitive Grants

Vicki reported on her “Nuts and Bolts of Organic Certification” as part of MAEA Spring Training. Vicki will be doing another in Ann Arbor on April 21.

Daryl gave an update on his web based fertility tool. It is pretty much finished, but a few things still need to be done.

Other Business

Ron suggested nitrogen utilization efficiency as a possible project to “survey” growers preplant, just after planting, after harvest.

Tom Kalchik gave a short presentation on MarketMaker.

Ron suggested we get the out of state speakers a tee shirt. He ran it past Larry Olsen and Larry said Ok. The consensus was that we should pursue this.

Mike Brewer solicited us to see if we might be willing to offer feedback about the customary rates for the cost of agricultural activities. The goal would be to help them update their customary reimbursements for these activities.

Adjourn