

**Utah Agricultural Advisory Executive Committee
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
4315 S 2700 W
Taylorsville, UT 84129
VIA Google Hangout and UDAF Offices
Wednesday December 13 2022 @ 11:00 am**

MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

Meeting ID: meet.google.com/sib-wtrv-yjx

Phone Number: (US) +1 402-864-0232 PIN: 134 922 256#

Attendees:

Craig Buttars, Commissioner
Dr. Ken White, USU (via Google)
Dr. Kerry Rood, USU Veterinarian School (via Google)
Mike Larson, UADC
Robert McMullin, Fruit Growers (via Google)
Ron Stratford, Utah Farmer's Union
John Hilton, USDA NASS
Amanda Petersen, UDAF

Amy Wengren, UDAF Loans
Roberta Valdez, UDAF Loans
Shelly Rentmeister, UDAF Loans
Amber Brown, UDAF Director
Connor Peterson, UDAF
Camille Knudson, UDAF

Excused:

Ron Gibson is in Washington DC
Cliff Lillywhite is in Washington State

Welcome..... Commissioner Buttars
Brief discussion on if the committee has selected a Vice Chair for instances when Chair is not available. Amanda Petersen verified that a Vice Chair was selected for the General Agriculture Advisory Board, but not Executive Committee. That individual is Brian Bitner.

Call to Order/Roll Call..... Commissioner Buttars
UDAF will continue to provide virtual options for this meeting as well as in-person. Commissioner changed order of some agenda items to ensure we have a full quorum to conduct business.

Loans Update/Rural Rehab..... Amy Wengren
Correction given on Rural Rehab month end report that had typo on the State cash account figure. It should be \$10,033,728 rather than \$1,033,728. No changes to Federal account to report.

They have a recommendation to approve a memorandum to extend loan terms for those Rural Rehab loans reaching maturity in 2023 and 2024. Every 10 years these loans are reviewed and recommended for an additional 10-year term extension with a 20 or 30 amortization schedule. This is standard practice on the Rural Rehabilitation Loans. There are 1 federal and 9 state loans that meet this recommendation. State Code, Title 4, Chapter 19, Section 3 is the reference on this.

Reminder that we will need to do a roll call vote as we have people attending virtually. Commissioner Buttars entertained motion for approval.

Motion to approve: Ken White
2nd Motion: Robert McMullin

Commissioner Buttars opened floor for questions or further discussion. There were none.
Unanimous affirmative vote from all voting members in attendance:

Ken White
Kerry Rood
Robert McMullin
Mike Larson
Ron Stratford

Amy Wengren read a recommendation for a loan approval. The loan is \$325,000.00 in Sanpete County at 3% interest rate with a 10-year term, amortized 30 years. This is a beginning farmer loan and is in partnership with Farm Service Agency.

Commissioner Buttars entertained motion for approval.

Motion to approve: Mike Larson

2nd Motion: Kerry Rood

Commissioner Buttars opened floor for questions or further discussion. There were none.
Unanimous affirmative vote from all voting members in attendance:

Ken White
Kerry Rood
Robert McMullin
Mike Larson
Ron Stratford

Commissioner Buttars commented that it is good that there is interest in farming from young farmers and that they are needed. We wish these new farmers the best.

Unknown phone number signed on through Google but chose not to identify themselves.

Legislative Updates..... Commissioner Buttars

Legislative session begins January 17th

Commissioner explained that there are a lot of new legislators, so we have our work cut out for us to establish relationships and work on educating these legislators on what the Department does.

The Department has a clean-up bill with some smaller issues which they are working on with Senator Derrin Owens. Issues in the clean-up bill are those which can be passed without too much debate. There are some things the Department is working on with regard to cannabis but these will not be included in the clean-up bill because there are many complexities to address. Cannabis issues always bring up a lot of debate and discussion so the Department will be working on those separately.

The Department also has other requests for appropriations or RFA's. As example is the Grazing Improvement Program (GIP). The GIP Program was awarded a large grant to work with Working Lands Conservation on carbon sequestration and reinforcing good grazing practices. UDAF Director Tory Forrest made the announcement to the Department today.

The Department was also able to bring in a marketing person to help with grant programs.

Commissioner Buttars stated there is a proposed bill from Representative Mike Kohler to remove the requirement to have a veterinary license for preg checking cattle. There are some concerns with this especially for rural vets in the state. Further discussion needs to be had.

There is an elk farming bill being run by Representative Keven Stratton.

Commissioner did not have any other updated for the legislative session at this time.

Governor's Budget Review..... Commissioner Buttars

The Governor released his budget this last week, December 9, 2022.

Commissioner Buttars went over a few highlights:

There is a recommendation for an additional \$200 million for AG Water Optimization, this is in addition to the \$70 million from last session. This is a big appropriation for the program so the Department would be hiring more staff members to support that and get that money out on the ground and projects completed in a timely manner.

Question: What the chances of that funding being approved is? (Ron Stratford)

Commissioner Buttars stated that he believes that chances are very good. There is good support legislatively because there is a focus on water and AG water in particular because of the Great Salt Lake. The Department and program managers are looking at the way those applications are evaluated and looking at ways to make some changes. The feedback received is that it is taking a lot of time to review applications.

Question: Are there any types of projects that they are specifically looking at? (Ron Stratford)

Commissioner Buttars responded that it is the same type of projects from past rounds of application for Water Optimization such as lining canals, pipes, doing what has been done in the past, just on a larger scale.

Question: Are you looking at any continuing funding on that? (Mike Larson)

Commissioner Buttars responded that this is just one time funding. We will have to evaluate again after this initial push to see what the ongoing need is. There is still \$25 million that has yet to be committed through the first 2 rounds of applications.

In addition, Commissioner Buttars explained the Six Country AgriPark which would be a large agri-processing park south of Nephi. It would be administered through the Governors Office of Economic Opportunity. Dept of Ag will support this effort.

Department was awarded \$1 million for a pilot program food security grant. This was successful and we are looking at an additional \$3 million to expand the program.

The Governor's budget also included \$5 million to replenish the for ARDL program as one time funding, as well as \$2 million for the AGVIP program.

Amber Brown also explained that there is also funding in the Governor's budget for land conservation. Commissioner Buttars provided additional information that this would be for the Land Conservation Board (also known as LeRay McAllister) and would include \$10 million onetime funding and \$7 million ongoing. There is a possibility that legislation will come to change the name focusing more on agriculture.

Those are the things that Department will be watching closely for this legislative session and in the Governor's budget. The Department will be providing information as requested throughout the session as there is a distinction between educating and advocating for funding.

Ken White needed to leave for another meeting and was excused.

Roundtable Discussion Committee Members

Dr. Kerry Rood: Concerned with Diagnostic Lab issues relating to Avian Flu outbreaks. Would like to have open discussion to address some short comings and challenges (such as turn around times on tests) in response to the outbreaks in the future legislatively.

Veterinary Practice Act does state you need to be licensed for cattle pregnancy diagnosis. Will be watching closely for possible legislation to change this. Representative Mike Kohler is just starting this process. Dr. Rood is concerned about this with the new Veterinary School coming online as well as what recourse does the cattle owner have if something is misdiagnosed?

Ron Stratford: What is recourse if Vet messes up?

Dr. Rood clarified that the owner could go after the Vet's license and have it removed. The Vet is also required to have professional liability insurance.

Ron Stratford: The problem the dairy men have, is finding a vet in rural Utah. In one case, the farmer is without a vet because theirs retired 6 months ago. It's difficult just finding a vet. There are pros and cons on both ends.

Mike Larson: From more of the cattleman side, they may only have the vet come once a year or during a preg check and there are a lot of things found out about your herd through the visit.

Dr. Rood also mentioned FDA's move to change antibiotics where you can no longer get them over the counter through retail as you once could, which changes the dynamic for establishing a client-patient relationship to have access to those. This is something to watch closely as it could have unintended consequences.

Commissioner Buttars stated that the Department is watching this and will be asking for more information.

Thanks for the virtual option with the snow!

Robert McMullin: Tart cherry industry is working with USDA on definition of "added sugar" into the dried tart cherries. They are trying to redefine "healthy". Dried cherries have the same amount of sugar and calories as a raisin, but the raisin doesn't have added sugar like cherries do. No other issues to report.

Mike Larson:
Conservation
Commission

Conservation Districts are clamoring and fishing for some kind of funding for equipment. Mike has spoken to Senator David Hinkins who is willing to run a fund request. Mike is worried and wanted to get Department approval. Would we have the Departments support to do that? Last year the request for \$500,000 went all the way to final appropriation but was then dropped. Discussion that Hinkin's would recommend \$1 million. Mike wants to make sure there is no conflict.

Commissioner Buttars stated the Department would be glad to help if they can.

Ron Stratford:
Utah Farmers
Union

Discussion regarding the Salt Lake Tribune article on alfalfa and water (December 4, 2022).

Commissioner Buttars explained that UDAF and the other stake holders (Farm Bureau, DNR) are putting together a coordinated information campaign for the coming year. It will be a 6 month marketing campaign starting in the spring to get good and reliable information out there. UDAF and stakeholders are looking for partners for funding.

Ron Stratford: Value of flood irrigation. A student reached out to interview him for an assignment in their high school English class on the importance of agriculture in development. The teacher is promoting that agriculture can be done somewhere else and that water resources are needed for people. This is what is being taught in high schools.

Commissioner Buttars reiterated the purpose and goal of this informational campaign will be to educate people on the benefits and importance of agriculture. People may see that every day, but they do not really see the ancillary benefits. UDAF wants to put out facts.

Annual Utah Farmers Union Convention, January 13 and 14, 2022 at Mountainland ATC.

Commissioner Buttars asked Ron to send the information to him by email.

Public Comment.....

Commissioner Buttars

Commissioner Buttars opened floor for any public comment.

John Hilton
USDA NASS

Reminder to participate in the USDA Census of Agriculture. Letter was sent to all producers across the state to complete the questionnaire. February 6th is the deadline, but they will accept information after that date. This is done every 5 years and is really the only local county level data as a state, so it is important.

Requested unknown participant who joined virtually to identify themselves for public record. They chose to disconnect. Discussion on whether those who do not identify themselves can be dropped from the call. Amber Brown clarified that this is not a closed session and is a public meeting. Commissioner Buttars reiterated the importance of making sure the things discussed are appropriate for all media and others who chose to participate.

Amanda Petersen suggested shifting dates for 2023 meetings to not be in the last month of each quarter. The next meeting would be due before the end of March. Commissioner Buttars stated it is likely we will always have some conflict in scheduling but we will look at dates that work for most participants.

Action Item: Amanda Petersen will coordinate calendars for next meeting date

Question: What is the difference between the AG Advisory and AG Executive Committee (Mike Larson)

AG Advisory is the larger board that meets twice a year and includes producers from each agriculture industry around the state. AG Advisory Executive Committee is the smaller approving board for loans and changes to fee schedules. They meet quarterly.

Commissioner Buttars entertained motion to adjourn.

Motion to approve: Ron Stratford

2nd Motion: Ken White

DRAFT