

LARIMER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2017

Present: Jennifer Bornhoft (liaison), Tim Clouse, Karen Crumbaker (liaison), Brenda Gimeson (liaison), Nic Koontz, Gail Meisner, Travis Rollins (liaison), Greg Schreiner, Jon Slutsky, Bill Spencer (liaison), Ted Swanson, and George Wallace. Guest: Kathy Thornton, Office of the Assessor, James Thompson, Senator Bennet's office and Laura Tyler, Fort Collins Conservation District.

Absent: Jason Brothers, Lew Gaiter, Debra Herston, Minerva Lee, Val Manning, Richard Seaworth, and Zach Thode.

I. Greg Schreiner called the meeting to order at 12:33 p.m. Introductions of guests were made.

II. The January 11, 2017, AAB Meeting Minutes were approved and accepted.

III. Laura Tyler from the Fort Collins Conservation District provided information to the Board on the baling twine recycling program which began in 2012 in Larimer County. In 2016, over 9,000 pounds of twine was collected in Larimer County, sorted and transported to Waste-Not Recycling near Greeley, Colorado. Through a \$488,000 grant with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and in partnership with Waste-Not Recycling, the Conservation District will purchase processing equipment to process twine into pellets. The equipment will be stored at Waste-Not Recycling. A list of collection sites in Larimer County can be found on www.twinerecycling.com.

IV. Kathy Thornton, Senior Appraiser from the Larimer County Office of the Assessor was invited to provide information to the Board on how the county values agricultural land. The assessor's role is to: (1) verify continued agricultural use; (2) assure the property is classified

correctly; (3) request additional documentation (IRS 1040-F form) or conduct a physical inspection; and (4) verify typical crop yields and expenses from the landowner. The assessment date is January 1 each year. Pleasure horse facilities and hobby farms do not fall under agricultural classification. The Assessor's office is audited every year by the Colorado Department of Public Taxation (DPT) on the value of ag. land and buildings. The Larimer County Assessor's office is required by the DPT to audit a certain number of parcels every five years. Any concerns on ag. status not being met can be addressed by Steve Miller or Alexis Smith at the Assessor's office.

V. Task Force presentations. The AAB Task Force on the evolution of agriculture in Larimer County and the Task Force on immigration will present their findings during a work session with the County Commissioners on March 20, 2017, 10:00 to noon in the BOCC Conference Room at the Courthouse, 200 W. Oak Street, Fort Collins. All AAB members are encouraged to attend.

- The Evolution of Agriculture in Larimer County. Zach Thode made available a copy of the power point presentation created for the work session with the Commissioners.
- Report on Immigration for the Larimer County Board of Commissioners. George reviewed the proposed power point presentation on immigration for the work session on March 20 with Members and asked for final tweaks and comments. Members made suggestions which included a discussion on the appropriateness of the wording of some statements that could be construed as recommendations versus statements and what would be required for a recommendation by the Board, such as an official vote of the Members. It was decided the wording contained in the summary slide should be tweaked to assure statements were made versus a recommendation for action.

VI. Larimer County Agricultural Advisory Board By-Laws. The attendance of Board Members at meetings is an issue that has been brought up in the past. Jon Slutsky asked if the attendance section in the By-laws needed to be removed or amended. It states, "*Section V. Attendance. Regular attendance by the members of the Board is expected. Upon recommendation of the AAB, the BOCC may replace Board members having three or more unexcused absences in a calendar year. Recommendation for dismissal and replacement shall be made only upon the majority vote of the members (not including the member(s) whose attendance is being considered) in attendance at the meeting at which such consideration takes place.*" The concern is there are members who have exceeded the number of unexcused absences. Does the length of time (a calendar year) for unexcused absences need to be changed to a 12 month period of time?

Jon also asked the AAB to consider the definition of a quorum as it appears in the By-laws. The By-laws state, “*A quorum for transaction of business shall be greater than fifty percent of the board members.*” Jon asked if membership should be lowered from 11-15 members, as stated in the By-laws, to 10 in an attempt to meet a quorum when attendance is low.

George stressed the value and importance of the Board to advise the BOCC on issues relating to and affecting production agriculture in Larimer County. Over the years, George felt the AAB has made an impact in Larimer County on important issues brought by the BOCC or AAB members.

After further discussion, Greg asked that an amendment to the By-laws concerning attendance and membership be placed on the agenda for the May meeting.

VII. Announcements:

- James Thompson announced Senator Bennet or his Senior Staff will hold a number of listening sessions across the State over the next 4-5 weeks to receive input on the upcoming Farm Bill. The first listening session is scheduled on March 20, 2017, 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. at ARDEC, CoBank Center for Ag. Education. Jon Slutsky asked if Senator Bennet will hold any town hall meetings on immigration issues in agriculture. James said Senator Bennet’s focus at the moment was on the Farm Bill.
- Greg Schreiner reviewed and provided a handout of current commodity prices for crops and livestock (Market Values as of March 3, 2017). Jennifer Bornhoft shared commodity quotes could be found on ARDEC’s website, under DTN: <http://aes-ardec.agsci.colostate.edu/dtn/>
- Greg asked the members to bring ideas for presentations for 2017 and be prepared to share at the next meeting.
- Nic Koontz shared concern with a proposal to build a gravel pit and concrete batch plant by Loveland Ready Mix Concrete adjacent to his farm in Laporte. Over 300 people attended a meeting on March 7, 2017 to learn about the proposal. Nic stressed the potential harm to his farm, employees and produce if the proposal is accepted by the County. The decision lies with the Larimer County Commissioners after a series of public hearings and recommendation from the planning commission. George Wallace suggested after the proposal is submitted, the AAB can make comments.

VIII. The next AAB meeting will be held on May 10, 2017, at 12:30 p.m. at the CSU Larimer County Extension Office, 1525 Blue Spruce Drive, Fort Collins, CO.

IX. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.