

## **Augusta County Agriculture Industry Board Minutes**

*Thursday, September 12th, 2024; 7:00 PM to 7:30 PM  
Augusta County Extension Office Basement Meeting Room*

Members in attendance: *Cole Heizer, Kevin Phillips, Sonny Balsley, Brian Riddle, Jeremy Shiflett, John Benner*

Members Absent: *Andrew Crummett (with notice)*

Sonny Balsley opened the meeting at 7:53. John Benner apologized for shifting the meeting time from 6:30 pm to 7 so that he could attend a visitation in Berryville for the Warren County Extension agent who had passed away.

The board went through introductions and welcomed Brian Riddle as the new member of the board representing the Wayne District.

Sonny Balsley and John Benner reviewed the origin of the Agriculture Industry Board and its tasks and purpose. One task is to analyze agricultural issues brought to the Ag Industry board for potential recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Agriculture Industry Board reviewed several of the past agricultural issues that had come up in recent years. John stated that no recent issues had come up on agriculture policy for the board to review. John mentioned that the county Comprehensive Plan is in process.

Sonny Basley: Sonny had had a chance to talk with Willie Ruleman about the Ag Industry Board. Willie did state that he was no longer in a position to be able to serve on the board. Sonny did ask John to follow up with the Board of Supervisors to see if this potential vacancy could be filled.

### **Old Business**

Sonny mentioned the USDA Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Educational program was postponed last year, partially due to the 2023 drought. John stated that the program is looking to be scheduled this fall, possibly in combination with the Farm Service Agency and Farm Credit Knowledge Center. Farm Credit Knowledge Center has planned a Pasture, Range and Forage program (PRF) which was postponed. The Farm Service Agency has indicated a willingness to partner with both the Ag Industry board and Farm Credit to maximize turnout at such a meeting. The sign-up deadlines for PRF typically are in December.

Kevin Phillips: We have had several people sign up for the NAP program. It does have some details that producers should be aware of if they are considering signing up. Not all producers that sign up do receive an indemnity payment for the program. Producers have to sign up for NAP and pay a premium for enrollment. Then if hay forage quality and yield are below the area average, they may receive indemnity payment. The deadline to sign up for NAP is in February. Livestock Risk Protection Insurance (LRP) participation has greatly increased in recent years.

Sonny asked John to pursue rescheduling an educational meeting on these programs. Location could include BRCC. Ag Industry Board could provide funding support for the building rental or refreshments/snacks. The board affirmed this support to cover facility rental or refreshments for the meeting. Extension would cover the initial expense to BRCC for the rental. The Ag Industry Board may reimburse Extension for the rental expense to BRCC.

## New Business

Legislative Steak Fry by Virginia Cattlemen's Association and Virginia State Dairymen's Association.

Virginia Cattlemen's Association and the Virginia State Dairymen's Association host a legislative steak fry in Richmond in January or February. Milkshakes and steaks are served to General Assembly members. John mentioned that VCA would be interested in the Augusta Ag Industry Board again supporting this effort.

Kevin Phillips: The legislative steak fry is a good event. The governor often is there along with many General Assembly members.

Sonny Balsley then called a vote to affirm \$500 support from the Augusta Ag Industry Board to the Virginia Cattlemen's Association for the 2025 Legislative Steak Fry. The motion was adopted.

Sonny reviewed two requests for the Ag Industry Board. The first was a request for the Augusta County 4-H Senior Stockman's Team for funding support for their trip to the North American International Livestock Exposition to compete in the National 4-H Skillathon on November 18. The team won the state contest in April, earning the right to compete in the national contest. The expo is held in Louisville, KY.

Sonny also reviewed a request from Fort Defiance FFA for funding support for the three contest FFA teams, Poultry Judging, Dairy Judging, and Livestock Judging which are traveling to out of state national and regional contests. The Fort Defiance FFA Poultry Judging team is traveling to Massachusetts to compete in the Big E Poultry Judging contest. The Fort Dairy Judging is traveling to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis for the national FFA dairy judging contest. The Fort Livestock Judging Team is traveling to the Arizona National livestock judging contest in Phoenix, Arizona.

Sonny Balsley: What is the total fund allowance for the Youth Activity Fund that we established?

John Benner: In the past, it has totaled \$1000. In 2021, the state winning Augusta 4-H stockman's team received \$1000 to go to the North American Livestock Expo to compete. In 2022, the 4-H Meats Judging team received \$1000 to go to Kansas State to compete in the national contest.

Sonny Balsley: Motion to give \$250 donation to the 4-H skillathon team, \$500 for Fort Defiance FFA to support the needs of their traveling teams. This would allow us some flexibility to have additional funds remaining for any other program we may want to support, as well as have funds for the Market Animal Show. We may be able to ask for additional budget funds to increase this support if needed. This motion was approved by the board.

Cole Heizer: Let's see what the Market Animal Show may request of us. The Market Animal Show may be anticipating that we will be able support at the same level again this year.

John Benner: The Market Animal Show fundraiser will take place in January/February. We should know sometime in the fall what their request will be.

Next Meeting Date:

The prospective next meeting date is set for Thursday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> at the Extension office. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.