**MINUTES**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**PA State Council of Farm Organizations**

**Harrisburg, PA**

**June 12, 2017**

The meeting was called to order by President J. Nogan at 1:12 p.m.

**Issues.** J. Nogan announced that he would continue the members’ forum as the first Council agenda item. This was initiated by past presidents E. Richard and B. Huber.

* PACD: Budget and conservation funding is the top concern.
* Dairy Farmers of America: High production and processing capacity continue to be issues and dairy infrastructure in the northeast needs improvement.
* Mushroom Farmers: I Immigration and labor supply continue to be a priority.
* Farm Vacation Assn.: agri-tourism liability
* Potato Cooperative: Group received a Specialty Crop grant from USDA through PDA. (NOTE: PSCFO wrote an endorsement letter.)
* Corngrowers Assn.: Green fuels and increased use of corn ethanol. Sheetz is the biggest user.
* PA State Grange: Broadband access in rural areas and targeted local issues
* Northeast Equipment Dealers Assn.: Amending the Fair Dealer Law
* PA Bar Assn. Ag Law Committee: Rob Davison is the incoming chair of the Ag Law Committee.
* PLNA: Immigration and labor shortage
* PA Farmers Union: FSMA (PFU is offering webinars.), State Budget, CAPO, sewage sludge
* Central PA Food Bank: Seeking increase for PA Agriculture Surplus System (PASS) from one to five million dollars. (Note: PSCFO had endorsed this earlier.)
* Lancaster Farming publication: It is not fun being a dairy farmer OR a grains farmer given market stress, State Budget
* PDA (G. Hostetter): Chronic wasting disease has potential to affect PA’s 1,000 deer farms; FSMA implementation; State Budget – If HB 218 were enacted, the PDA would lose 21 inspection positions immediately.
* PVGA: FSMA, research dollars
* Versant Strategies: Announced that House Bill 944 (M. Keller-R-Perry) was reported out of the House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee (Agriculture Education Commission)

PDA’s M. Smith shared Secretary Redding’s best wishes to PSCFO and discussed current issues facing the PA Department of Agriculture with the most notable one being HB 218 and the State Budget. He pointed to the General Government Operations line item which sustains 400 employees including those involved in food safety, animal and plant inspections. HB 218 called for a 6.5% cut in this line item, translating into 21 fewer employees and 8,000 fewer restaurant inspections per year. Other areas of concern are re-writing the Noxious Weed Act and finding a way to fund PDA’s Dog Law responsibilities. The fund will be depleted next year, leaving only the General Government Operations line item to pay for those activities. M. Smith also asked for input on the 2018 Farm Bill.

Minutes were approved per motion by D. Leese, second from B. Shambaugh.

**Association Management Report**.

**Correspondence** from PDA re HB 218 (Budget) forwarded to members, correspondence from legislative staff on various legislative issues. Correspondence to PSCFO members on topics such as job positions (via PAPSS), F. Brown re HB 544 (liability), agri-entertainment issue from G. Schubert (Farm Vacations Assn.), and grant opportunities such as DuPont Pioneer Excellence in Education $3,500 grant to selected members.

**Other Items**

* 2017 Legislative Directory released April 13, 2017. Advertising being sought for Agricultural Directory.
* Association Management Agreement comes up for renewal this year. Per contract, there should be a formal evaluation by the PSCFO Executive Committee. President J. Nogan said that the matter would be taken up.
* FSMA/Risk Management workshop in Tamaqua was completed June 1.

**Treasurer’s Report**. 2017 YTD income is $12,899.00 expenses $9,798.51. Cornucopia income was $2,995.00 while expenses were $4,696.80. Bank balance as of 5/31/17 was $20,546.98. G. Robertson and K. Fuchs serve as an Audit Committee. Treasurer’s report approved per motion by K. Fuchs with second from B. Leiby.

**President’s Report.** J. Nogan reported Board actions:

\* The Board appointed W. Campbell to fill out the remainder of B. Downey’s term.

\* The Board recommended that the Council adopt these policy positions:

- **Endorse HB 176** exempting roadside stands from the Uniform Construction Code. Council approved per motion by D. Leese, second from S. Case.

- **Urging restoration of cuts** in PDA and other agricultural line items, particularly with the General Government Operations line item, University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary medicine, etc. Council approved per motion by E. Richard, second from T. Wentz.

- Endorse **legislation to limit liability** for farmers engaged in agri-tourism. Council approved per motion from H. Secord with second from W. Campbell.

- The Executive Committee will meet regarding reorganization of PSCFO’s committees.

**Program**

The Council heard from two presenters. First was **K. Smith from PA Certified Organic** who described the system through which a product may call itself “organic” She noted that 14% of fruits and vegetables consumed by the public are labeled organic as is 8% of dairy. The second presenter was **L. England, Director, PDA Bureau of Market Development** which, among other things, oversees PDA’s PA Preferred branding program. She is also a past president of the PSCFO. L. England discussed PA Preferred success and said that a new priority is Home Grown by Heroes as a plan to encourage more veterans to take up farming. Her 11-person staff also works on Specialty Crop Grants, and commodity boards including the reconstituted PA Apple Program, as well as international trade, PA Fairs, and farmer succession/continuation programs, and Crop Insurance education

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m. per motion from G. Robertson with second from T. Wentz.