

**VCC Executive Council Meeting
Wednesday, October 20, 2010
White River Jct., VT 05001**

Present: Mark Fischer, Eric Johnson, Linda Miller, Sebastian von Trapp, and Rachel Schaal as well as Jeremy Stephenson from Springbrook Farm.

Discussed the HACCP Training held on Wednesdays October 6 and 13 which was attended by 16 people. This is a quality assurance program as well as a food safety program. Responses on the post training survey were overwhelmingly positive. Interestingly, 9 people suggested that a HACCP plan be required to license cheesemakers, but 7 stated it should not be required.

Treasurers Report:

Sebastian is now receiving documentation from Chris at the Vermont Farm Bureau electronically. We went through the expenses and income line-by-line. Net in bank is \$75,135 (\$67,444 in checking and \$7,691 in Money Market). We still need to meet with Chris to correctly categorize the expenses. **ACTION:** Rachel will set up a meeting for Chris to meet with Sebastian, Mark and Rachel in Richmond.

Sebastian has not received the final submission of the RBEG grant. Rachel has been playing phone tag with Karen Lynch of the USDA. Sebastian suspects that there might be an issue with the way we are submitting our information to Karen, and that she is looking for more description in every item. He believes that she also wants breakdown of VCC funding. Mark reiterated that the first source of funding for promotion should always come from Agency of Ag. Dairy Promotion related funds. **ACTION:** Sebastian will come up with a new template to meet Karen's requirements, and Rachel will also submit her hours to match the template.

ACTION: Rachel will contact Diane Bothfield to discuss the Agency of Ag. Dairy Promotion funding, and whether we need to submit a new budget. Last year we did not send anything in, but the funds were received.

By the time of the annual meeting, we should have an idea of where all of our funding will be coming from.

Coordinator Report:

AIC Grants—

Christopher worked on this grant requesting funding for Producer/Retailer Workshops. By requesting through VCC, the Provisions in-kind donations of space etc. can be used. This is proposed to culminate with the Retailer/Cheesemaker Workshop with Anne Saxelby. The funds requested were \$8,500 with a 60/40 match. This series is tentatively scheduled for February 2011. The program still needs to be developed, and the target audience defined. Following that, Rachel will contact Anne to firm up a date. We need to keep in mind that this will be around the same time frame as the annual meeting. Mark thought that we might invite Leslie Mann, formerly from *Southend Fromaggio*, now living in South Royalton, VT, to add a bit of interest/entertainment to the annual meeting and perhaps show/taste cheeses.

The second grant was written by Louise Calderwood and Rachel for a \$30,000 grant requested for paying Rachel's time as well as to subsidize an intern for the Festival. Rachel will be taking on average of 10 hours per week until just prior to the Festival. At that point she will back off from routine VCC duties to take on more Festival duties. There was some talk of hiring Hilary back as well. Since much of the foundation for the Festival has been established, the plan is that Rachel can take on the role of communication with the cheesemakers. Rachel will be meeting again on Saturday, November 6. There will be separate billing for Rachel's time so that she will be paid out of Festival funds.

Alison Hooper has asked for VCC sponsorship. **ACTION:** Mark suggested that he will have a conversation to find out what her expectations are for the funding source.

Taste of Place Recap

Rachel described her interpretations of this meeting. This is really a marketing scheme and this might be an AOC-like product. Taste of Place is not just about taste, but also about quality. Need to meet certain standards. This really does apply to our size. Roger Albee asked Rachel about the VCC presence regarding the seal of quality program. They were expecting more on the risk reduction program.

This excerpt is from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture brochure on *Taste of Place*:

Primary goals of this initiative are to:

- Create producer-driven tools to protect and market unique food products
- Create new ways to promote and preserve Vermont's working landscape
- Identify and strengthen a cultural identity around food that is deeper than a brand, but that, like a brand, returns an economic value to our local products.
- Develop a system for creating elective standards that are producer-initiated with assistance from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.
- Build Vermont's reputation within the international discussion of taste of place and within the global marketplace of highly regarded, protected origin foods.

The Taste of Place framework allows producers to identify specific, unique characteristics of their products and authenticate those characteristics by making connections to the place the product was grown or produced, the natural environment, production practices, and culture. This concept is different from other standards because it focuses on: product quality, uniqueness, collective action by producers.

Terroir would limit the size of the farm.

Discussed marketing angle described at the ACS. Preference is that consumers want to know about their food source.

Membership Committee:

Rachel, Lisa Battalina and Laini Fondillier are the members. They were supposed to meet prior to this Executive Council meeting, but Lisa and Laini were unavailable. The question was asked about what is the benefit for Associate Retailer Members. The reduced rate VIAC classes were mentioned. The Associate members are not able to take advantage of these as the reduced rate is

the result of the VCC paying that portion. The Associate Members will now be included in the drive so that we can revise the brochure.

The cheese trail definitely needs to be explicit for those cheese houses that are open to the public and not. Mark suggested looking at the newest issue of *Culture* magazine for the list of retail sites selling Vermont cheeses.

Website

Need to have new information. **ACTION:** Rachel will put out a call to all to send new photos etc.

Print Newsletter

Will be coming out shortly, but Rachel has some issues with working with Jane Dale. She felt that there was a lack of collaboration. We discussed sending it just once a year. It is received by chefs, retailers, cheesemakers, cheese enthusiasts, etc. **ACTION:** We will bring up again at the Annual Meeting with a discussion about the cost of the production

eNewsletter

Mark suggested that we pull in more information from outside of Vermont if there is not enough news from Vermont Cheesemakers.

Events

--Cheese Flaws with Peter Dixon needs to be changed from the previously noted Wednesday, November 10 from 10 am to 3:30 pm. He has other commitments on Wednesday, but Provisions is only available on Wednesdays. We will put this off until January so that we have more lead time.

--Sensory Evaluation with Montse to be held at Provisions International on Wednesday, December 8 from 10 am to 3:30 pm with a 30-minute lunch break. Rachel has changed the description to have less cheese tastings.

Annual Meeting.

We do not know if Lisa was able to check on the availability of the Coolidge Foundation in Plymouth. **ACTION:** Lisa was to contact Joan Randall at the Foundation to check on availability of a Saturday at end of January or early February.

Mark has had a conversation with Leslie Mann about doing a slide show of her travels in France.

We discussed nominations for the elected officers. **ACTION:** We need to look at term limits for officers to re-address the following "Section 2. Officer" in the By-Laws:

b. Each Officer shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.

c. No Officer shall serve more than two (2) consecutive years in the same office, unless approved by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors.

ACTION: We will make a note that the Vice President, Secretarial, and Treasurer positions are open. We also need to think about staggering the positions.

Open Meetings Policy:

We will post the meeting dates. We would like to make sure that members feel welcome so that they will want to serve on the Board. **ACTION:** The secretary needs to send the minutes regularly to the webmaster for inclusion in the *Members Only* area of the VCC website.

ACTION: Rachel will change the members-only area password with Elyssa.

We also discussed the personal liability of Board members. Eric has a book on being a good Board member which he will bring next time. **ACTION:** Mark will look into personal liability insurance for Board members.

Office Supplies:

Rachel will be purchasing some ink cartridges etc. RBEG grant allows for equipment purchases. We discussed buying a printer.

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 17, 2010 at 1 pm at *Provisions International* in White River Jct. For next time come up with names of retailers to solicit for associate membership.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Simon Miller, Secretary