

VCC Executive Council Meeting
Wednesday, June 30, 2010
White River Jct., VT 05001

Present: Mark Fischer, Sebastian von Trapp, Linda Miller, Lisa Batallina, Laini Fondillier, Rachel Schaal, Christopher Coutant

Updates:

Phone is all set up with Verizon under the Vermont Cheese Council name (no longer in coordinator's name). Chris had to go in to write a check from the VCC account. We did not need to do a deposit. It cost us \$115 to get out of the AT&T contract.

Vermont Fresh Network: Rachel had a discussion with Meghan Sheridan regarding the sponsorship for the Shelburne dinner for Sunday, August 9. We do have an 8 foot table available for a display. There are 14 VCC and VFN members. Meghan is going to be asking those folks first if they would like to do a tasting and then open up to other VCC members.

Logo: We reviewed some prototypes. **ACTION:** Mark will take it back to the designer. He will also ask her to do the current logo in color.

Next event is the **Brewfest** on July 16 and 17. Peter Dixon, Rachel Schaal and Lisa will be present. Two sessions: Noon to 4 pm and 6 to 10 pm. Peter will bring some cheese from Consider Bardwell, Mark will send some cheese.

Cheese Festival:

Rachel will be going to Shelburne Farms tomorrow (Thursday, July 1). Tables will be covered in white cloth. There will be signs for the tables. Rachel will clarify if a second person can help man the table. She should be able to see a schematic of the floor plan.

Insurance: All individual cheesemakers have to certificate of insurance in by July 1. The Festival has to have at least \$2M in insurance. The VCC policy is for \$1M and the Shelburne Farms has a \$1M policy. The bill for this coverage is \$769.95 for this policy.

Poster: Rachel has received responses from most cheese makers to update their label/art for the poster. We need to get them to Rachel by the end of next week to get the poster completed in time for the festival. Laini suggested a bumper sticker today "Give Cheese a Chance"

Other Business:

RBEG – At the end of a quarter. Need to do a report by July 15. We were getting a bit behind, but Sebastian was able to submit ~\$11,000 of sponsorship for matching funds. Now we have the \$250 for the VFN sponsorship. We need to come up with a way to ensure capturing this. We need to keep up on this. Can include the funds paid to Montse for the workshop. Charged \$400 for participants.

VCDP can only pay for Marketing, so the brochure would need to go through them.

There are still some technical issues with getting Quicken Mac files over to Quicken for PC. We discussed purchasing a used Mac. ACTION: Rachel will ask Chris what type of Mac he is using. Lisa may have one available. She will also ask him to sort the Festival funds out from the VCC funds.

Sebastian has an income statement from Chris for 1/1/10 through 6/30/10. It shows activity involving the Cheese Festival checkbook. Who is the Treasurer on the Cheese Festival Committee. ACTION: Rachel will clarify if the reason for the input from Hillary to Chris.

eNewsletter: Rachel has published her first one. There were a couple of things she was unable to manipulate. She would like to change over from *iContact* to *Constant Contact* program as she is used to that. It would also enable Rachel to be able to then send the eNewsletter articles to Elysa Clancy, who will continue to be the webmaster. ACTION: Rachel will ask Elysa if we have a contract with *iContact*. If not, we will switch.

We also discussed changing the publication to a first of the month. She will send out the July copy out during the first week of July.

Pay Pal: We can use Pay Pal to receive membership dues. There are two different versions. The first is “free” for transactions up to \$3,000 of revenue/month, although it does cost \$3.20 for every 100 transaction (includes transaction cost). The second version costs \$30 per month plus a transaction percentage, but they are less than with the free version. This version can be used if the patron does not have a Pay Pal account, then they can process a credit card. We decided to go with this version. Rachel will also check if they accept all credit cards.

Recap of workshop with Montse. There were 16 people present. Montse tried to be too accommodating to include all cheeses. She did the morning session with the cheeses we bought from Provisions. It would have been helpful to have more seasoned cheesemakers. Due to the mix of participants, the outcome was different than what was expected. The difficulty also was that the cheeses that came in the afternoon did not match the categories from the morning session. In the future we need to have the participants evaluate the session. We should also limit the types of cheeses (bloomy rind, hard, etc.) to evaluate and not do those that are not in those categories. ACTION: Rachel will send out the evaluation.

Retailer/Producer Event with Ann Saxelby: One might be to have Ann and a producer discuss what they each need/expect, what trips the other up, handling of the cheese, how to communicate, etc. Lisa suggested adding the distributor in this discussion. Ann would like to also do a tasting at the same time. She could also talk about what the public likes such as labels. Show photos of her cheese case. ACTION: Rachel will talk with Ann further about this.

Cheese Flaws/Controls—Peter Dixon is willing to do this workshop. What creates them? How to control for them? Address shelf life in open cases. Need feedback from Retailers to Cheesemakers when there are flaws.

HACCP/Risk Management: Laini suggested including how controlling for temperature, impact of stirring on texture, adding of culture. Mark said that there is a chart and perhaps it can

be put on the web site following the workshop. There are classes at VIAC for Risk Management, so we should not overlap.

HACCP (Critical Control Point) is more complicated. Silliker is the company who started this. Jasper Hill has suggested that we need to have some sort of recognized plan for each product that is made. The plan needs to be done by a certified plan. The plan entails that the pH was accomplished in a certain time frame, the culture was added at a certain time, that the temperature was kept at a certain rate over time, that cleaning standards were met. Mark suggested that the facility would be visited a couple of times by a third party, do an environmental sample, help with issues, and then label it as such. Maybe there is a format that the Vermont cheesemakers can follow.

There are some conflicting ideas for cheesemakers per VIAC as a true HACCP plan has a way to stop the process at a critical point. Thus, this would be better to be called a food safety plan.

The Cellars are currently planning to bring in a specialist that can teach this as a two-day course on July 21st and 22nd. Once completed, the attendee would be certified. They need to have a critical number of participants. Right now only the farms using the Cellars are invited. Mark asked if Andy would open it up. The cost is \$550. The VCC might help sponsor this. Instead, VCC should sponsor a workshop to give the overview on what is HACCP, and to give a better sense on where the need for a HACCP is going.

In summary, there are benefits to understanding this better and it would be beneficial for Vermont Cheese producers if we could show a standard food safety plan. The question arises if we are then required to develop a HACCP plan, then this would be rework.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Simon Miller
Secretary