

**VCC Executive Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 16, 2011**  
**White River Jct., VT 05001**

**Present:** Mark Fischer, Christopher Coutant, Jeremy Stephenson, Rachel Schaal, Lisa Battilana, and Linda Miller

**Guest:** Mateo Kehler, Vince Radzionale

**Workers Comp and Board Insurance:** Awaiting final quotes as the agency has two carriers.

**Website for Cheesemakers Festival:** There have been some reports of the website being down. There have been some ticket sales to date. The thermometer will appear once we get to 50% tickets sold. First round of media has gone out. In kind with *Culture Magazine*. Adelaide and Hillary will be returning part time in early April. There are also *Twitter*, *Facebook* and tag line with a URL to post with one's email available.

**Educational Programming Committee:** Rachel Schaal, Christopher Coutant, Lisa Battilana met today with Vince Radzionale and Allison Hooper. They identified a number of farms for retailers and chefs to visit with up to 10 participants each. Also three separate subject matters are planned. They are: wrapping-cutting-merchandising, cheese use in restaurants, and a generic seminar about different age profiles of cheeses, molds, etc. The Committee is planning one final large event for up to 150 people for August 29 with Anne Saxelby to be held here at Provisions. There will be a presentation as well.

**Maps/Brochure:** The designer is DeDe Cummings (DC Designs) in Brattleboro, VT. We agreed with the current logo with the following changes: a) Put a ringed boundary around it. b) Clean up the font. c) Add the sun rising in the hills. d) Add a silo. In addition the plan is to replace the current pictures on the brochure. We will remove the cartoon characters from the cheese trail map and will code the cheese houses with red, yellow and green indicating if they are open or not. This will be explicit. The color palette and fonts will be changed. We will have a statement of cheeses for educational purposes on the brochure. The paper will be recycled. The goal is to have the changes made by the end of this month and to have a mock up available for the next meeting.

**Membership/Associate Membership:** There will be a separate page for the Associate Members with a hyperlink on the left hand index on the site. We are lacking just 13 renewals, so we have 28 confirmed members.

**HACCP:** Mateo described a meeting held in Washington, DC, last week with FDA with Cathy Donnelly as well as members of the ACS. They are trying to engage the ACS in advance of the release of their risk assessments (one for raw milk cheese which is very broad and a second for soft cheese risk safety regardless of whether or not the cheese was made from raw or pasteurized) which are to be published at the end of 2011. There will be peer review during the first six months of 2012 that will have published/peer reviewed science. There will then be a 60-90 day public comment period. Following that there will be a rule making period. The FDA is sending a representative to the ACS event this year. Vermont has the opportunity to help producers build a preventative practice plan. As a Council, we need to take a stand and stress that this is important to educate our cheesemakers. Mateo suggested that we invite a member of the Food Safety Modernization Act to come and give us a presentation, then we could investigate funding for implementing this throughout Vermont for all cheesemakers to adhere to a two year window to have this plan. The statement should include where we are today and where we want to be in two years.

They have not revealed why this assessment has been done, even though the review started in 2008. Perhaps they are responding to the recent *New York Times* article or perhaps it is due to the *Listeria* outbreak in Washington State. There is not going to be any radical change, however, all will be expected to write a food safety and preventive practice plan.

FDA will be changing the 60-day hold rule. This conversation will be ongoing. Mateo stated that there is a plan to have a conference call to include VIAC, University of Wisconsin, Cornell, University of Oregon and will need to get a representative from California.

**Peter Dixon Update:** Has been in contact with the Cornell instructors. Both were happy to assist. They also suggested that he contact the ACS. He has started working on the best practices plan.

**e-News:** Rachel asked for new photos. She has received enough information to have a robust newsletter. She has been working with Dreamweaver and Elyse, and she is feeling more comfortable with publishing the newsletter now.

**Strolling of the Heifers:** It has been requested that we sponsor this event at \$2,500. Mark proposed instead that we offer money to the Brattleboro Co-Op who puts out artisan Vermont cheeses at the Festival. Lisa suggested that we write a letter stating that we are taking over the Vermont Cheesemakers Festival and are focusing our funds and energy on this. **ACTION:** Mark and Rachel will craft a letter explaining this. In addition, they investigate supporting the Brattleboro Co-Op about supporting their endeavor.

**VCC Phone Meetings:** The discussion was to have a meeting here at Provisions, but we can offer this if someone is unavailable.

**Next meeting:** Next Executive Council Meeting Wednesday, April 27 from 1 to 4 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Simon Miller, Secretary