

**Vermont Cheese Council Annual Meeting**  
**Saturday January 27, 2018**

PRESENT: Springbrook Farm, Vermont Farmstead, Karin Farm, von Trapp, Mt. Mansfield Creamery, Consider Bardwell Farm, Cabot Creamery, Shelburne Farms, Parish Hill, Grafton Cheese, Twig Farm, Boston Post Dairy, Lazy Lady Farm, Boston Post, Cobb Hill, Hildene Farm, Crowley Cheese, Crooked Mile Cheese.

Guests: Greg Lockwood, EB Flory, Ivan Larcher, Pat Polowsky, Celia Riechel, Sugar House Creamery

Presentation from Agency of Agriculture

- EB Flory- new Dairy Section Chief, from Virginia home cheesemaker
- Voluntary program amongst the group for testing of soft ripening cheese through the Department of Health. Looking for 1-3 producers, testing would be free, looking for input from procedures about testing program.
- Laurel Junkins will be retiring and looking to keep the rotation of inspectors to a minimum. Quarterly inspections might decrease during the next month.
- NCIMS conference was in May, proposed changes to the PMO JC-1, JC-2, JC-3, JC-4. (Stands for joint committee)
- Open discussion between HACCP implementations committee and liaison committee in conversations with FDA/ Milk Safety and FDA/ Food. Moved to be accepted and amended and voted on by 49 states and passed as amended
- JC-1 and 2 were not going to be passed, PC inspection would be required every 3 months. JC- 2 and 4 were easily passed.
- After meeting sections 15p part c remains as is but addition of Appendix T (this was a “cat fight”) a combination of the PC for human food final rule (recall plan, allergen control, environmental monitoring , supplier verification, and hazard analysis).
- 11th hour in the \$1 million dollar exemption was added (CFR 117 (cGMPs), CRF
- Split program, September 17th, 2017 all of the cheesemakers have to comply.
- If they are not compliant with Appendix T, the state is notified after 60 days the states repeats the initial process. (Need clarification on this)
- FDA Food performs an audit once every 36 months for those facilities not meeting the million dollar exemption.
- Not completely transparent yet but positive movement from conversations with FDA food
- Vermont’s Current Position: still performing one on one food safety plan reviews with those requesting assistance, all plant inspection staff PCQI certified, Vermont staff is awaiting accredited audit training, resolution at NCIMS to use the HACCP training committee to develop a dairy based audit training and PC for human food audit form (FDA food’s current auditor course not just dairy based and 8 days long)
- Upcoming auditors training to included Lockwood and Young along with other state level HACCP certified individuals.

- Still inspected every 3-6 months Appendix T audit once every 36 months by Vermont auditor other than inspector of record, Appendix T audit once every 36 months by FDA/ Food for those facilities over the million dollar exemption
- IT'S VERMONT INTENTION to not recognize the million dollar exemption!
- All milk handlers even the smallest must have a food safety plan that meets applicable Appendix T requirements and the applicable portions of PMO 15p. Section C. (Thought: how do we prepare people for this?)
- Vince- we can't afford the Vermont Vulto
- 3/4 of the producers are 5000 pounds or less
- Roberta? (need to get name) the testing requirements have costs that are prohibited to smaller producers (note: Thank you for the PCQI training) It is not a level playing field for the small producers.
- Greg- testing is appropriate to scale. You need to test enough to control the hazards, this will be different for people who are larger. "As often as necessary to control the hazard"- we need a discussion about this!
- Rachel- it's important for those of us who are developing food safety plans to talk with you.
- Jeremy- let's talk about what we need to do to help the smaller producers. I would to see as a group who we are using for environmental testing. Talked about the cost of testing from ACS, Tom will get information for the members.

#### Water Quality Regulations with Celia Riechel of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

- Environmental Assistance Office, charged with helping people figure out the laws. Here to help you understand what you are suppose to do. "Your guide to the department of environmental conservation" kind of like consultants
- Have an environmental hotline! Permit specialist, one for different regions,
- Mission is to follow environmental law, we value clean water and clean air, businesses that want to go above and beyond and they try and highlight their businesses that are going above and beyond in environmental conservation.
- We work individually with businesses, on site assistance (note: they have been working a lot with auto body shops and breweries)
- Agency of Natural Resources vs. Agency of Agriculture, on farm processing and farm will deal with both agencies.
- Department of Environmental Conservations deals with air pollution, municipal water, hazards waste, and wetlands.
- Onsite wastewater- gray area (if you are expanding and are not on municipal waste water it will be regulated by both), Storm water- also gray area (note: there are still boundaries that need to be set between the two departments).
- Value added product on the farms hasn't been as much of an issue and it's growing, so they are trying to decide who will be regulating that.

- Summit on February 12th: if you want to learn more about sustainability and best practices, and opportunities about funding.
- What is the difference of NRCS: federal, large standards, not focused on the creamery site, they have a lot of money!"
- Energy crisis- VCC should include this in our strategic plan. What would consumers think if they knew they were supporting a progressive mission? Example: You are buying this cheese and you are also supporting the energy of the local school

#### VCC ACTUAL MEETING

- Mike- invitation to everyone to come to a monthly meeting.
- Vince- suggestion to send out reminder and agenda.
- Galen- Table 3 is the 2018 base budget, simplest way to summarize 2017 we spent the right amount we meant to spend, the shortfall is due to the lack of corporate sponsorships.
- Main revenue sources: 1. Festival 2. Grants 3. Membership.
- Marketing Support and Education are the main mission of the council, need to balance the spending between the different priorities.
- Festival discussion- we want to address the lack of leftover money at the end of the year. Day 2 discussion.
- We had to draw on the VCC bank account in 2017
- Second festival day- can we do something that leverages all of the costs of the first day. Could drive \$40,250 for revenue at a cost of \$17,000. Create a more secure budget for next year and be able to spend more money of workshops and education.
- Education date is for the consumer population, bring it outside speakers and professional educators.
- Jeremy- question about 2017. Bank account \$39,000 in combined two accounts reserve at this point. What happened with sponsorship?
- Tom- We were optimistic as to what we could achieve in corporate sponsorship. We went through a process of going through line by line to figure out what is realistic for the sponsorship. 2015 and 2016 was stable, 2017 was the higher goal.
- Roberta- are we setting ourselves up again to have a shortfall?
- Galen- we have great progress with current leads on corporate sponsorships.
- Laini- "they got a big tax cut they should be throwing the money to you."
- Tom- it's good to remember that with each sponsorship takes time to see what they want from their sponsorship. Looking at every opportunity to make sponsorship desirable. The second day expenses can easily be pulled out if it looks like it's not going to work out.
- Vince- who's the audience? Consumers! Most of them are coming for two days. There is demand that there isn't enough room for seminars.
- Tom- we'd have to do some seminars during the Sunday.

- Vince- competition as a revenue source. Lots of sensory experts in the state, can be a big revenue stream.
- Roberta- is the cheese dinner a part of the education day? Speaks to the added on desires of the festival.
- Motion to approve the budget by Mike, Cobb Hill seconds, PASSED.
- Voting of officers. Open position with Meri as VP and Galen had a one year term, wants to be voted in a two year nomination. Nominations for Lisa as VP and Galen as Treasurer.
- Nominations from the floor. None.
- Treasurer Vote: PASSED, voice voted.
- Vice President: two year term, PASSED, voice voted.
- Roberta- issue around artisan vs. farmstead. Can this be something that the regulatory committee works on?
- Mike- does this mean you want to take part of the regulatory committee?
- Peter- can the regulatory committee come up with a set of definitions that can be posted on the website?
- Jeremy- the ACS has defined farmstead.
- Mike- would anyone else like to join the advisory committee?
- Angela- when do you plan to do the four times a year monthly committee?
- Tom- we just need to do it.
- Clay- asked whether cheesemakers might consider sending a member of their staff if the principal cannot attend board meetings regularly. Better for the Board to have more companies represented, and a good development opportunity for juniors.
- Roberta- does it seem like attendance has declined?
- 32 companies that have paid, 22 that haven't paid for memberships.
- Peter- can we report about business of the meeting?
- Discussion about education committee:
- Issue with Mailchimp going into the promotion folder? People's spam?
- Laini- Money making idea! When are we going to have an open house like the maple people do? I can't be a part of the committee! It would really help to promote the cheese trail.
- We need a meeting with just discussion for members, they want to be heard!
- Motion to adjourn- Peter, second by Mike.