

Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Livestock Care Standards Advisory Council was held on May 16, 2013 in the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' second floor conference room at 116 State Street in Montpelier, VT. The following members were present:

Dr. Kristin M. Haas (KH), Jane Clifford (JC), Dr. Ruth Blauwiel (RB), Diane Bothfeld (DB), Paul Saenger (PS), Les Pike (LP), Jessica Danyow (JD), and Londa Nwadike (LN).

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by DB at 9:03 AM.

The following public observers (affiliations) were present:

Joanne Bourbeau (Humane Society of the United States); Dottie Nelson (consumer and animal advocate).

The March 2013 meeting minutes were unanimously approved as written, following a motion made by JC and seconded by LP.

The following "housekeeping" topics were reviewed by DB:

- Public comment – public comments should be directed to the Council as a whole rather than to one or several members of the Council. The public comment period is not intended to be a dialogue between members of the public observing the meeting and Council members. These ground rules will be restated by DB, or the Acting Chair in DB's absence, prior to each public comment period. After a brief discussion, Council members reached consensus that the public comment period should be held immediately after the meeting break.
- Council decisions – Once the Council finalizes a position or opinion about a particular topic, all Council members should speak on that topic in a manner that accurately reflects the decision that was made. The Council should consider drafting associated talking points whenever possible to assist members in instances where they are asked to speak publicly on Council decisions. Council members recognize the fact that a position that can be agreed upon by all members is stronger than one which can't, but that there are instances when it might be impossible to reach a unanimous opinion. In those instances, the Council will consider drafting a minority opinion document to accompany the position statement. The Council recognizes that voting on a particular topic may be a valuable tool used to establish a starting point for discussions, but using a consensus rather than a vote to conclude discussion/debate on a particular topic is desirable.

A discussion regarding member updates was facilitated by KH:

- The first terms of members Melody Squier, Jessica Danyow, Dr. Ruth Blauwiel, and Dr. Kent Henderson expire in August 2013. The option for each of them to renew for an

additional three year term exists. JD and RB are interested in renewing for three years. KH will email members Squier and Henderson to inquire as to their intentions to renew. JC informed Council members that the Speaker of the House and the Senate President's offices have new personnel in charge of Board appointments. Rebecca Ramos is the Senate office's director.

- JD informed Council members that she has accepted a position as the executive director of the Homeward Bound Animal Welfare Center in Addison County, effective the week of May 20th. Her new position enables her to remain in her current seat on the Council.
- LN informed Council members that she has accepted an employment offer with the Extension service at Kansas State University, effective June, 2013. As a result of the necessary relocation, she will be resigning from the Council prior to the next meeting. LN and KH will solicit potential Council member candidates to fill the vacated seat from the membership of Vermont's Food Safety Task Force during its next meeting.

A discussion of the status of pertinent bills following legislative adjournment was facilitated by DB:

- S.109 - bill pertaining to tail docking – Introduced in the Senate; referred to the Senate Agriculture committee; was not voted out of Committee before adjournment
- S.438 - bill pertaining to swine gestation crates – Introduced in the House; referred to the House Agriculture committee; was not voted out of Committee before adjournment
- S.70 – raw milk bill – Passed out of the Senate; did not pass out of the House Agriculture committee before adjournment.
- S.162 - fraudulent facilities bill – would have made it a criminal offense for individuals to seek employment with agricultural facilities under false pretenses – minimal testimony was taken; bill did not move out of the Senate Agriculture committee before adjournment.
- H.515 – VAAF “housekeeping bill” – Passed by both legislative bodies; awaiting signature by the Governor. It was determined by consensus of the members present that a LCSAC statement relative to the on-farm slaughter portion of this bill should be developed prior to the next legislative session.
- H.523 – a bill concerning animal cruelty reporting requirements – passed the House and Senate bodies prior to adjournment; awaiting signature by the Governor.
- H.101 – a bill proposing to ban the importation and possession of feral swine – passed the House and Senate bodies prior to adjournment; awaiting signature by the Governor.

A public comment period was held:

- Joanne Bourbeau addressed the Council on some of the background pertaining to, and aspects of, S.162.

The Council continued its discussions regarding animal well-being as it relates to livestock transport. After extensive discussion, it was determined that by the September meeting date, Council members will have reached out to pertinent stakeholder organizations to obtain buy-in for this outreach initiative in order to facilitate the dissemination of verbal and written materials. These stakeholder groups include:

- Rural Vermont – KH to contact
- VT Grazing Conference – contact unassigned
- VT Beef Producers Association – contact unassigned
- Vermont Beef Council – contact unassigned
- VAAFMEAT Producers and Processors group – KH to contact
- Beef Quality Assurance program management – JC to contact them to obtain updated written brochures and educational videos
- Addison County Commission Sale
- Livestock commingling points – contact unassigned
 - Empire Livestock
 - McCracken’s facility in St. Albans
 - NFO

Options for dissemination of materials include the following:

- VAAFMEAT personnel/DMV officials to hand out brochures and other materials at truck weigh stations
- Offer annual training for licensed transporters and livestock dealers. It was noted haulers are busier in the spring than during other times of the year; Council discussed going to several sites or having training at one centralized site annually.
- Utilize beef check off program
- Dispense materials/have training at the beef producers sales twice annually

Following this discussion, a second public comment period was offered:

- Dottie Nelson spoke to the Council regarding her concerns about the manner in which “conventional” livestock operations handle their animals. She expressed appreciation for the Council’s efforts to address livestock well-being during transport.

Council members were reminded of the next meeting date – Wednesday, September 4, 2013.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 PM.