

Summary of Housekeeping Items Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets– 2015 – Contact Diane Bothfeld or Chuck Ross

Priorities

- 1. Chapter 215 Ag Water Quality** – multiple updates to more closely match USDA Requirements, addition of a grass filter strip program and clarification of definitions.

2. Title 9 Chapter 73

Unit Pricing Change in Title 9: Commerce and Trade - Chapter 73: WEIGHTS AND MEASURES – adopt the NIST Unit Pricing Language in our statute. Needed to maintain national certification with NIST.

3. Title 6 Chapter 1 §1

Refunding overpayments for Licenses, permits, registrations or certificates

The agency proposes the option to not refund overpayments for license, permits, registration or certificates if the amount of overpayment is \$25 or less. The staff time and mailing to provide these refunds exceeds the amount of the refund.

4. Title 10 : Conservation And Development Chapter 12 : Vermont Economic Development Authority

Subchapter 10: Vermont Jobs Fund § 280a. Eligible projects; authorized financing programs

VEDA has approximately \$210k in an account which dates back to the Clean and Clear days. VEDA wants to move the funds to Agency of Agriculture to manage. Funding available that could be used to water quality programs. In Chapter 10 and ANR is aware and in agreement that these changes should be made and the funds allocated to the Agency of AG for Water Quality.

5. Title 6 Chapter 162 and Chapter 207

Merge VT Agricultural Development Board and Working Lands Enterprise Board

Act 142, passed in the 2012 legislative session, created the Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) and Initiative, and added the forestry sector to the Vermont Agricultural Development Board to become the Vermont Agricultural and Forest Products Board (VAFPDB). The WLEB is an impact investment organization whose mission is to grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont's working landscape by making essential, catalytic investments in critical leverage points of the Vermont farm and forest economy. The VAFPDB is charged with making recommendations to Vermont policy makers on the adoption and amendment of laws, regulations, and governmental policies that affect agricultural and forest products in Vermont.

Both boards operate with administrative support from the VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM).

Each board has a broad charge and goals; the administrative scope of work has grown beyond what is feasible with 2 FTE at VAAFM. In addition to the administrative inefficiencies of coordinating two sets of agendas and meeting logistics, the structural inefficiencies of two boards with similar missions and constituencies working in parallel but disconnected by function and operation, results in an unequal allocation of resources and as well as board outcomes.

The three State Agencies/Departments designated in statute to serve on both boards – Agriculture, Commerce and Forests, Parks and Recreation, and members of both boards, have recommended moving forward with a merger of the two boards. The newly configured Board would have two primary committees – a Policy Development Committee, and an Investment and Grant Making Committee. The Secretary of Agriculture would continue as the Board Chair, and a Vice Chair would be elected from among the citizen members of the Board. The Vice Chair would chair the Policy Committee. The proposed structure would include a total of 17 voting members and 3 non-voting members: 3 State Agencies; 4 Agriculture representatives; 4 Forestry sector representatives; 1 Maple representative; 5 Cross-sector representatives (including marketing, financing, education, economic development, and land use); and 3 non-voting members (VEDA, VSJF, VHCB).

6. Title 6 Chapter 151 §2744a

Clarification of animal milk drug residue statute and the reinstatement of farmer after residue found in milk.