

LARIMER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2016

Present: Tim Clouse, Karen Crumbaker (liaison), Charles Gindler (liaison), Greg Schreiner, Richard Seaworth, Jon Slutsky, Ted Swanson, Zach Thode, and George Wallace. Guests: James Thompson, Sam Adams, Rusty McDaniel, Justin Hersh, Scott Hamilton, Travis Rollins, Wade Meek, Bill Markham, Bob Kraft, Myron Fertig, Ken Lutz, and Curt Burgenes.

Absent: Jennifer Bornhoft (liaison), Jason Brothers, Sarah Fox, Lew Gaiter, Brenda Gimeson (liaison), Debra Herston, Nic Koontz, Minerva Lee, Val Manning, Gail Meisner, and Bill Spencer (liaison).

I. Greg Schreiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

II. Discussion of weight limits on County Roads with Larimer County Engineering Department. Richard expressed concern with the County decreasing its weight limits on county roads. Trucks hauling sugar beets often exceed the allowable weight of 97,000 pounds. He questioned why sugar beet growers were not aware of the new weight limits.

Rusty McDaniel, Justin Hersh and Scott Hamilton with the Engineering Department explained the County allows fleet permits up to 97,000 pounds and that a special transport permit would need to be issued to transport a load greater than 97,000 pounds. The reason is because Larimer County bridges are rated for weights up to 85,000 pounds. An example was given: a truck hauling sugar beets from Wellington out of Larimer County (~ 10 miles) and it crosses one bridge. The cost of the permit could be as much as \$500 per truck load. Richard stressed the sugar beet growers could not afford the additional fee. Ken Lutz, President of Aulick Leasing, who transports sugar beets from Larimer County expected lowering weights to 97,000 pounds would require 300 more loads, adding \$150,000 to the cost to haul.

Jon stated not only would it affect the sugar beet industry, but the dairies in Larimer County could see an increase of over \$100,000 to transport milk out of the county.

Rusty was very willing to work with ag producers to come up with identifiable routes trucking companies can take when hauling out of the county. He welcomed producers' input and to be involved in the decision process. The producers who attended the meeting met with Rusty, Justin and Scott afterwards to discuss how they could work together to come up with a solution.

III. The May 11, 2016, AAB Meeting Minutes were approved.

IV. Sam Adams, District Conservationists, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Fort Collins provided information on the role of the NRCS and what opportunities are available to farmers. First, though, Sam thanked the AAB members who hosted a scholar in their home from the Nuffield Scholarship Program and who hosted a tour stop. The scholars were from New Zealand, Ireland, England and Australia.

Sam went on to discuss the NRCS and its role in addressing resource concerns on private property (i.e. water quality, soils, erosion, etc.). The Fort Collins NRCS office has four employees: Sam (District Conservationists), John Fusaro (Range), Andy Piszkin (Soils), and Jessica Stiles (Forester). NRCS goes out on site visits to help with landowner concerns on their property, then creates a conservation plan with the landowner. If possible, NRCS will offer cost share opportunities to help the landowner achieve his/her goals.

The programs offered by NRCS in Larimer County are the Conservation Stewardship Program, Conservation Easement Program, Conservation Reserve Program, and Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

V. Updates from AAB:

- George Wallace will update the AAB at the September meeting on the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) draft for Larimer County.
- Richard, George and Zach updated the Board on the State Water Plan Conference they attended on July 13, 2016.

VI. Task Force working groups break out. The Housing/Immigration task force met briefly following the meeting. There were not enough group members present for the Evolution of Agriculture or Rural Broadband task force to meet.

VII. Announcements:

- Senator Bennet toured farms throughout the State to discuss immigration and labor issues. LaLuna Dairy in Wellington was one stop on the tour. Topics discussed on the tour were the legal pool of workers, the guest worker program, and the 2013 Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill.
- Charlie mentioned the County's upcoming purchase of farm property in the Berthoud area with agricultural importance. He will update the Board once the transaction occurs.
- The Larimer County grazing leases on three properties – Red Mountain Open Space, Eagles Nest, and a parcel northwest of Wellington – will end on December 31. The County will accept applications for a 5 year lease, with a possible 5 year extension. Charlie asked if anyone from the AAB would be interested in being on the application review committee. Greg expressed an interest.
- Charlie announced he will retire in December and Travis Rollins will replace him as liaison on the AAB.

VIII. The next AAB meeting will be held on September 14, 2016, at 12:30 p.m. at the CSU Larimer County Extension Office, 1525 Blue Spruce Drive, Fort Collins, CO.

IX. The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.