

## STARTING AN AGRICULTURAL OR LIVESTOCK ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN YOUR COUNTY

Livestock producers can play an important role in promoting and defining the future of livestock retention in their respective counties. Livestock producers can also be proponents of livestock industry retention, development and re-development in their respective counties via agricultural or livestock committees. These types of committees can play an important role in guiding the future of land uses at the county level by providing guidance to local policy makers regarding livestock, feedlot and related land uses. Generally, these types of committees are comprised of livestock producers and individuals that represent various sectors within the agricultural community.

Ongoing committees have been implemented in Counties such as Stearns and Todd with favorable results. Here is how to get one started:

1. Official recognition by your county board of commissioners is a critical component of starting a committee. Before you organize a committee, talk with county commissioners that represent the agricultural districts in your county to discuss the merits of the development of a committee. Having the support of your commissioners will give your committee credibility, leadership and can lead to positive results.
2. Develop goals, objectives and a mission statement for your committee. A mission statement will guide your committee and goals and objectives will enable your committee to accomplish the mission. Some example goals can include but not be limited to the following:
  - Preservation of prime farmland as well as open farmland that has the potential for higher crop yields.
  - Reducing urban development in rural areas, which may result in fewer neighborhood conflicts in regards to odor, noise, dust, mud on roads, etc.
  - The organization of farm tours, June dairy month celebrations and other ag related events.
  - Become involved with and align your committee with other livestock and crop producer groups.
  - Become the sounding board for your county board of commissioners on agricultural issues.
3. Membership should include a wide array of individuals from various agricultural sectors, such as:
  - One or two county commissioners.
  - A local legislator that represents your area.
  - Individual crop and livestock producers.
  - Crop or livestock producer groups.
  - Agricultural lenders.
  - Veterinarians.
  - Implement dealers.
  - Grain elevator, feed mill or ag processing plant managers.



*Mission of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture - Our mission is to work toward a diverse agricultural industry that is profitable and environmentally sound; to protect public health and safety regarding food and agricultural products; and to ensure orderly commerce in agricultural and food products.*

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651/201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-627-3529.

The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

4. Ex-officio members may include but not be limited to:
- Local County Feedlot Officer.
  - Local planning and zoning staff.
  - Staff from the local Soil and Water Conservation District
  - Staff from the local USDA - NRCS office.
  - University of Minnesota Extension Service staff.



5. Create partnerships with other entities such as your local chambers of commerce, which can be a valuable asset to livestock producers. Livestock production is an important and large part of the economic engine of local economies. Partnering with your local chamber will provide opportunities for your committee and individual voices to be heard as business owners – ones that contribute to the economic well being of your county and city.



**Della Schmidt** of the Winona Chamber of Commerce says, "Local Chambers recognize that livestock producers are important business operations to not only the local economy, but also the State. However, we need livestock producers to be actively engaged with the local Chamber and tell us how we can best meet their business and legislative needs." To discuss how the Winona Chamber of Commerce works with livestock producers, contact Della Schmidt at 507-452-2272 or via the internet at: <http://www.winonachamber.com>

6. Once organized, meet on a regular basis to ensure that your organized voice is heard at the local level. It is difficult to meet during spring planting, hay harvests and fall harvests. However, a regular schedule will keep your newly formed committee informed and ready to implement your goals, objectives and mission statement.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about creating a livestock or agricultural committee in your county, contact Jim Ostlie at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture at 320-842-6910 or Kelly Anderson at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture at 320-808-4424.

### **Minnesota Department of Agriculture**

625 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538  
651-201-6000  
1-800-967-2474 (Toll Free)  
TTY: 1-800-627-3529  
<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/>



**JANUARY 2014**