

February 24, 2021

Emerging Farmers' Working Group

Meeting Minutes

1 pm – MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen greets the group: hope everyone is staying warm. We are really excited about the legislative session. Support for 50k to Farmlink program, pilot program to create farmland access team, 1million in request for meat processing, custom processors and halal meat processing, 12% comes from the federal government, lots of opportunities in USDA to do good things.

1:05 pm - Working group introductions

1:20 pm - Rosa Tock, Executive Director of Council of Latino Affairs. Background in public affairs. Has done some work on community gardens with Waite house. The Council works on education, economic development, health equity policies to advise the governor. MN Latino population is projected to double in 15 years. Some statistics regarding Latinx farmers:

Latinos are 28% of Nobles county, 25% of Watonwan county, 651 Latino farmers in MN, .58% of total farmers in MN.

Barriers are lack of bilingual information, access to driver's license, need for more representation in professional, political and leadership spaces.

Member question: What are the stats on % of farm labor that is latino

1:40 pm – Ag Marketing and Development Presentation by Ashley Bress and Paul Hugunin

Topics: International marketing, Biofuels, Ag land preservation farm safety mental health, MN grown program, MN Ag in the classroom program, FMNP.

1:55 pm - Grants overview from AMDD

Paul Hugunin, Division Director - Most funding comes from AGRI in 2013, budget of \$14million, started at \$2.9M, 8-12 different programs, 5.2 million in requests to value added grants, only 1million available.

Most grants focus on infrastructure for farmers. Office of grants management, housed within Administration to streamline grant disbursement across the state, governed by the Grant Governance Committee, 13 policy framework that guides the grantmaking process. 3 policies revised in 2018 to focus on DEI

Competitive grant review, RFPs. Give priority points on diverse applications, new criteria from civil unrest Included community-based grant reviewers and stipends. 40k for reviewers. State of MN policy is to reimburse, but grantees can advance with justification statements that are kept in grant file, urban ag and GFAP are only two advancement grants.

2:20 pm - Questions from Members or public:

Price of Minnesota grown? not more than \$60 a year

Member question: how do we increase % of payments in grants, specifically for livestock investment grants?

10% is not enough. Could we make advance payments for only beginning farmers? On the topic of farmland, is \$50k enough for farmland investment?

Statute sets reimbursement rate at 10% for livestock investment grant, we set reimbursement rate for other programs. AMDD is adding more money to 50k. Odds are better of receiving funding with small dollar amount and then adding more in 2 years. Dairy profitability teams work well and we have a good starting place
Member question: Is there a hot line where farmers can be referred to in order to inquire about these programs in their appropriate languages? This could be a great recommendation from this group. We know it's a need.

2:40 pm - Sabrenia Young, MDA Diversity, Equity inclusion coordinator

Helped with strategic plan, equity statement, culturally specific events, subcommittees to tackle certain areas
Member question: are you discussing recruitment strategies of employees in DEI committee? Yes, it is one of our charges

2:50 pm – Michael Birchard closing and looking ahead. Central Lakes College Dean Keith Olander to give an overview of Farm Business Management Program and ideas to have a person in the metro area too. Next meeting March 12th, send ideas to Melissa. Linda Sloan from Council of MN of African Heritage will present. Listen to Legislative Hearing by Patrice on Feb. 22nd.

2:55 Open for Public Comment and Announcements –

3:00 pm – Meeting Adjourned by Patrice Bailey