

# **New Jersey Agricultural Education Advisory Council**

2014 NJ FFA Convention

Club Lounge

Samuel Hays Magill Commons, Monmouth University

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

1:00 – 3:00 pm

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **I. Call to Order – Chairman Bill Walker**

Bill called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm in the Club Lounge, Samuel Hays Magill Commons, Monmouth University, in Long Branch, NJ.

### **II. Introduction of Members and Guests**

Members and guests in attendance included Dominick Mondic & Suzanne Van Sciver (NJNLA), Annaliese English (Helena Chemical), Mitch Baker (National FFA Secretary), Kyle Clement (NJ FFA), Barry Jesse (Animal Science-Rutgers), Donna Schaffner (FIC-Rutgers), Amy Ricco (MCCC), Bill Walker, Nancy Trivette, Frank Yesalavich, Russell Redding (Dean-Delaware Valley College), Tom Leustek (Assoc. Dean-Rutgers), Anne Edwards (Assoc. Dean-BCCC), David McNair (NJDOE), Dave Specca (Rutgers-EcoComplex), Frank Yesalavich, and Kevin & Carol Keith (National FFA Program Success Specialist).

### **III. Approval of Minutes from May 2013 Meeting**

Motion by Russell Redding to approve the minutes. Seconded by Barry Jesse. Motion passes.

### **IV. Chair's Report:**

Unfortunately, we were “snowed out” of our normal February meeting at the NJ State Agricultural Convention.

A working relationship has been developing between farm to school advocates and FFA chapters throughout the state. The NJ Farm to School Network, in collaboration with Rutgers, recently hosted a Food Corps class in Salem County. These efforts promote better school nutrition, local sourcing, and the teaching of nutritional education through the use of school gardens. This helps to connect kids who know how to grow food (Ag Ed students) with kids who need better access to food as well as a better understanding of the effects of food upon their health.

Chair feels that although NJ agriculturists are some of the most highly skilled and technically advanced farmers in the world, they are not often skilled marketers. Agriculturists are about 1% of the population but must be able to inform the other 99% of the population relative to the importance of preserving farming as a way of life in NJ. Farmers must represent agricultural interests at many types of local and state meetings. Future farmers have to become advocates as well. As a marketing professional, it is his desire to help farmers become better marketers.

Liaison distributed copies of a new Departmental publication, *New Jersey Agriculture*, to the meeting attendees. This is a new undertaking that is produced by a private company that is in the business of producing state agricultural publications. Liaison also distributed copies of the “Local Farms – Local Food” brochure that was produced by the NJ Farm Bureau. Liaison felt that FFA students, like adult farmers, should become much more aware of their own state's agricultural

businesses so that they can help to advocate and market our state's agricultural products. The study of publications like these should help students with their agricultural education.

Liaison distributed a list of current members of the NJ Agricultural Education Advisory Council, along with their e-mail addresses, for everyone to consider. Liaison asked that everyone take notice of their information and update it if needed.

## **V. FFA Report and Introduction of National FFA Officer, Mitch Baker – Kyle Clement**

Liaison introduced NJ State President Kyle Clement. Kyle presented Dr. Barry Jesse of Rutgers University with the National FFA Honorary American Degree for his work furthering agricultural education and FFA in NJ.

Kyle also introduced Mitch Baker, the National FFA Secretary. Mitch is from Lebanon, Tennessee and is currently enrolled at the University of Knoxville studying Agricultural Communications. Over the next four months, Mitch will travel over a hundred thousand miles representing the National FFA. Mitch was impressed with NJ's state officers and the organization of the state convention. There were almost 63,000 in record attendance at last year's national convention, making it the largest youth conference in America, and he encouraged everyone to try and make this year's conference in Louisville, Kentucky at the end of October.

## **VI. National Team Ag-Ed Report – Kevin Keith, Local Program Success Specialist, National FFA and Team Ag Ed.**

Kevin Keith reported on national happenings. The Ag Career Network is a career development membership system that will provide life-long career related information and direction for FFA members. The Ag Career Network is also being used in the scholarship application process as well as online applications for American Degree candidates and proficiency awards. There are many more applications and potential uses for this system including the community portal, which can be used by anyone. The system will also work as a way for FFA Alumni to connect. Another benefit of the system is the ability to generate better data on program enrollments and courses of study. NJ is a leader in the implementation of this system. National has an agreement with AgCareers.com and CareerCruising.com to help them with that effort. They will be refreshing the website this Summer and will include suggested changes at that time.

Kevin spoke on the upcoming National convention at the end of October. He also spoke about National FFA's support for the National Association of Agricultural Educators convention at the end of November. Kevin will be missing these state meetings in the future as he has been promoted to a new position as LPS Team Leader. Karen Hutchison, Delaware's state FFA supervisor, will be taking over as the Northeast Local Program Success Specialist.

## **VII. Old Business:**

### **A. Review Advisory Council Membership Reflecting Industry Representation**

Chairman disseminated Council's membership list, showing the five career pathways and their industry representatives, and asked the attending members to check their listings. If anyone is familiar with someone that they think would be a good addition to our Council, please let the Chairman know.

## **B. Post-Secondary Articulation Agreements – Post-secondary educators**

Dr. Tom Leustek of Rutgers University said that he's just become a new Dean and one of his first projects was to process eight CASE articulation agreements in the Plant Science area and is working on draft agreements for the CASE Environmental Science and Animal Science courses.

Russell Redding, of Delaware Valley College, described the articulation agreement process that DVC is using. DVC also has eight articulation agreements in place so far. They are using templates to make the process of articulation easier. All articulation agreements will be reviewed annually to ensure that each accurately reflects the educational programs.

Nancy Trivette reported that 19 NJ high schools are implementing at least one CASE course. Rutgers and DVC are national pioneers in creating articulation agreements and other colleges around the country have noticed. SUNY Cobleskill and the County Colleges of Mercer, Morris, and Cumberland are developing agreements as well. The great thing is that since CASE courses have consistent content and teaching methods all over the country, each college only has to have one general conversation about accepting these courses for college credit. So far, these CASE agreements have all been in the animal or plant science areas (the foundational CASE courses) which correspond to freshman college courses.

Nancy serves on a national CASE Advisory Board that has made the recommendation to offer a new CASE pathway of "agribusiness" as a new course. Burlington County College has an agribusiness program.

About 20 teachers throughout the country field tested the Natural Resources & Ecology course at this time and is ready for a full roll out in the fall of 2014. Rutgers will be hosting a Food Science & Safety course at Woodstown High School this summer. This 90+ year old school has upgraded its Agricultural Science laboratory facility and brought it up to state of the art technology.

Amy Ricco (Mercer County Community College) asked if articulated credits at the community college level will be accepted should a student transfer to DVC or Rutgers. Rutgers will award 3 credits for both the Plant Science and Animal Science CASE courses. DVC will accept those awarded credits as they appear on a student transcript. Nancy will share those Rutgers and DVC agreements with Amy. Amy asked about soils course credits. Rutgers is just starting to re-teach a soils course again after some years. Donna Schaffner, Rutgers Food Scientist, asked when an articulation agreement should be started for the new Food Science & Safety course? Nancy said that it is too early yet to develop an agreement since the field testing is still going on. Teachers teach the course for a year, provide input, and then it is refined for full roll out the following year. That final course syllabus won't be available until that's completed and the published course is released.

## **C. Reports from Spring FFA CDE Coordinators**

**Vet Science** – Dr. Barry Jesse helped Ms. Dean Spencer to coordinate this event. There were about 60-70 students participating in this CDE which has been held for three years now. About a dozen college students from the veterinary science club volunteered to help with the event.

**Nursery Landscape** – Dominick Mondì and the NJ Nursery & Landscape Association ran this event for the first time this year. Five teams/35 students participated this year and NJNLA members volunteered to judge the event. NJNLA members were impressed by the knowledge and skills of the students. They look forward to continuing their involvement in this event.

**Ag Sales** – Bill Walker coordinated this event again. Seven teams participated. Each year, the quality of the student participation is better. This quality event couldn't be done without the support of the NJDA, Rutgers and the NJ Farm Bureau.

**Floriculture** – Deb Moyer has been coordinating this quality event for 25 years.

**Natural Resources** – Rich Belcher again coordinated this quality event. He changed it up a bit this year with some new techniques and added some GPS work.

#### **D. State Agricultural Education Update – Nancy Trivette**

There are 32 school districts with approved agricultural programs of study. In those districts, 24 of those schools have approved programs of study, and 19 of those schools are CASE schools. CASE is allowing some school districts to re-examine what they're teaching their students. Some of these schools are upgrading their agricultural programs to include CASE.

Nancy Trivette reported that there is only one known opening in NJ for an Agriculture Teacher; at Bergen Tech. It's always challenging to fill teacher vacancy spots.

There is a threat of the agriculture program closing at the Burlington County Institute of Technology. Nancy has spoken with the principal at that school and they would like to revise their program into a CASE program. Unfortunately, it will now be hard for BCIT to hire a teacher w/o certification and there are no introductory CASE Institute openings this summer for any prospective teachers to take advantage of to get their certification.

Dale Cruzan of Allentown is certified as a lead teacher in the Natural Resources & Ecology CASE course. Four other NJ teachers were selected for extra training to become CASE lead teachers to help train teachers around the country. Eleven school districts received \$5,000 NJDA grants to help train teachers to get their CASE professional development this summer. We now have about 2,660 students being educated in NJ agricultural education courses; an all-time high.

Mrs. Trivette detailed this year's convention statistics. This larger venue is accommodating 481 students, advisors, and staff. There are 80 industry professional volunteers on hand to evaluate students in various events. About \$32,000 in scholarship money is being given by the FFA Foundation this year, about \$10,000 more than usual. Frank Yesalavich is a member of a Rutgers fraternity (Alpha Gamma Rho - Alpha Delta Epsilon chapter) that dissolved and was looking for a way to 'give back' after selling some real estate. Four students will each receive \$2,500 Rutgers scholarships as a result of this new donor to the State FFA Foundation.

National scholarship funds are also up to about \$30,000 this year; up \$22,000 from last year. The Garden State Star awards are at \$600 again this year. The state proficiency awards are funded by the National Foundation and are up to \$1,000 (up from \$500 last year). The total cash awards from the NJ Association, Alumni, and NJ Farm Bureau are \$8,300. This is about

\$500 more this year because the NJFB wanted to increase amount on the public speaking awards. A program was developed whereby donors purchase FFA blue jackets for kids who can't afford them. This has become a model for other states, and national FFA, who have adopted similar programs. This year, students received 41 state degrees and 14 American FFA degrees. A student from Freehold received a World Food Prize award last year. She attended this ceremony in Iowa last year. That award enabled this Freehold student to apply for an international internship the following year. She will be leaving for Costa Rica next month. All convention session times are the same as in the past. Those unable to attend in person can watch the proceedings on the internet on [ihigh.com/NJFFA](http://ihigh.com/NJFFA).

Special guests this week include Secretary Fisher of the NJDA, Ryck Suydam of the NJFB, Ryan Warren is the keynote speaker, and Lt. Governor Guadagno.

#### **E. Marketing High Tech Ag Science Programs Follow-Up**

Bill Walker asked members to peruse the handout related to the October '13 special program that was coordinated at the Somerset County Vocational & Technical High School related to "Marketing High Tech Science Programs". Erik Fargo, the agriculture teacher at SCVTHS, had reached out to Mrs. Trivette about problems that he was having with his program. For years, the program was focused on landscaping and floral design. He felt that he wasn't getting the academically oriented students that he would have liked to see enroll in his program. As he began to learn more about CASE, he felt that he could possibly gain more of these kinds of academically oriented kids. He also felt that he wanted to prepare more students for new, and in demand, high tech careers in agriculture. He recently began to teach CASE but felt that he needed help in communicating his new program to Somerset County students, parents, teachers, and guidance counselors.

At this meeting, SCVTHS students demonstrated how to culture E. coli. Students commented on how much they enjoyed the science aspect of the class and didn't realize this was a part of agriculture. The meeting was very well attended. The NJ Secretary of Agriculture and NJ Farm Bureau President were the featured attendees. Several County Freeholders, Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff, County agriculturists, parents and residents attended. School administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers were all also interested enough to take part in the afternoon meeting.

Annaliese English is a Precision Agriculture Specialist at Helena Chemical. She is responsible for variable rate application files, mapping, plots, record keeping, soil testing, and crop scouting using GIS technology. She gave a presentation on GIS technology to the attendees who found it all very interesting. She feels that her FFA background gave her the direction to succeed in her career. She believes that there are good high tech careers in agriculture, here in NJ and elsewhere, that could be pursued by other young people also. She was very pleased with the discussions that took place at this meeting.

### **VIII. New Business:**

**A. Food Science Industry Presentation** – Donna F. Schaffner, Associate Director, Food Safety, Quality Assurance and Training, Rutgers Food Innovation Center

Donna Schaffner was in FFA in high school and participated in their vet science and

floriculture program.

She believes that high school students today aren't very interested in Food Science careers, probably because they do not know the possibilities for successful careers. She also thinks that most folks who work in Food Science today got involved in that career path by accident just like her. There are many highly technical scientific fields in Food Science though most parents and students believe that people who become involved in Food Science careers want to be cooks. There is a Food Science field called Culinology that is about the science of cooking; not being a chef. There is a real need for more U.S. students to become involved in Food Science to fill available jobs here. There are now many foreign students in Food Science programs in this country. The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) has created a huge need for people to do food inspections. The FDA, USDA, Third Party Audit companies, and food industry need to hire people to do this work. Right now, the same qualified people are simply recirculating about the food industry moving from job to higher paying job. There are lots of jobs available. Mrs. Trivette echoed that.

The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) has recently developed an industry test to determine "Certified Food Scientists". As part of a training program to prepare students to take that test, Ms. Schaffner has pulled some slides from that training to demonstrate to everyone the kinds of subjects that students must be proficient in to pass the test and begin a career as a Food Scientist. Ms. Schaffner mainly works in Food Safety and Quality Control. Produce Development, Food Chemistry, Regulatory, Microbiology, Food Engineering, Sensory Evaluation, and Consumer Testing are additional areas that students should have some familiarity with if they are going to pass this industry test and be considered a "Food Scientist". These are all highly technical areas which are in demand for qualified people. Ms. Schaffner also elaborated on related areas in demand which support the food science industry. Food companies will also pay for training and additional schooling for entry level folks to become more skilled. This field also allows people to travel the world and work anywhere that you want to work as the international demand for food scientists is also huge.

Bill Walker thanked Ms. Schaffner for her presentation. Mrs. Trivette said that NJ's field testing of the CASE Food Science & Safety course this year seems like good timing. We need to do a better job of communicating these career opportunities to students and parents in NJ. Amy Ricco asked about entry level starting salaries? In the Food Safety or Quality Assurance area, a Bachelor's degree might get a starting salary of \$50-\$75,000. With five years of experience, you could expect to make at least \$100,000. Anyone hoping to move into management would probably have to gain at least a Master's degree. Most of the larger food companies would pay for new hires to continue their education. New B.S. graduates might consider their graduate studies while job hunting at the same time. Most graduate students at Rutgers are already working full time and having their costs paid for by their companies.

Dave Specca mentioned that the NJ Food Processors Association had a meeting at the Rutgers EcoComplex last week. While talking to an employee of Campbell's Soup, the person expressed problems finding people with rural backgrounds who were capable of interacting with the poultry farms that they source chicken from.

Anne Edwards of Burlington County College said that she's had discussions with food companies about their needs. With the cost and time involved in getting a four year degree, she's hoping to encourage a 2+2 type of education. Students could get a glimpse of the food

science business while obtaining a relatively inexpensive 2 year degree from a community college. That degree could be used to get an entry level job in the food science field or used to transition into a four year college.

## **B. Industry Outlook**

Dominick Mondri felt that there were a lot of parallels in the landscape industry similar to what Donna Schaffner spoke about with food science. Donna had said that many people think of food science as a culinary related degree. She felt that the Food Network had brought awareness but dumbed down people's perceptions of food science. Dominick believes that HGTV has similarly confused people. Too many folks think that getting a degree in a landscape field only qualifies you to cut grass. Modern technology and science is increasingly involved in this career and students need real science and technical knowledge and skills. Both industries suffer from a lack of real knowledge related to what the career field encompasses. Chairman Walker asked Dominick about the industry professional accreditations and their effect. He said that these individual certifications are starting to play in career advancement opportunities.

Russell Redding hopes that we can keep these career pathways open for interested students. The CASE curriculum helps students to prepare for their futures. Not one specific model is best. This continued collaboration of interested parties will help everyone. Mrs. Trivette felt that we needed to continue to disseminate great factual information to students, parents, and teachers related to future careers in agriculturally related fields. Amy Ricco said that she has been in the position of having to explain career opportunities in horticulture to parents who didn't see a future career for their child. Career oriented resources would be a great help. Besides AgCareers.com, there is a HortJobs.com, and CareersinFood.com website that could be consulted for information on careers in those fields.

## **C. Coordinators Needed for FFA Dairy Handler & Horse Judging CDE's**

Mrs. Trivette stated that she is seeking CDE coordinators to run these career development events. Please consider recommending someone to coordinate these events.

## **D. Establish a Nominating Committee to Propose New Officers**

Chairman Walker may have already served his tenure and the Council may need to consider someone else to chair this group in the future. Please consider.

## **E. Other Critical Issues From Members**

Anyone that is interested in observing the CASE Food Science & Safety course that is being held in Woodstown, should contact Nancy.

## **IX. Meeting Adjournment:**

Next Meeting Date – NJ State Agricultural Convention, February 2015