

GRAFTON COUNTY FARM COMMITTEE MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
November 1, 2022

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper, Lauer and Ahern, County Administrator Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross, Interim Farm Manager Libby, Supt. Elliott, Sgt. Griffin, Herdsman Ben White

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 11:30AM.

Farm Update – G. Libby

G. Libby reported that all red potatoes were a loss. They dug up all the white potatoes, went through those and sold what they could. They have sold all of the potatoes that were available. He stated that a good percentage of the white potatoes were lost to the same condition as the reds which was in part due to the drought followed by too much rain. G. Libby noted that they have decided to move the potatoes to a different location next year. They will get soil samples of the fields below. Right now, the potatoes are in one of the best soils they have and plan is to rotate corn back into that area depending on the soil samples.

G. Libby reported that Hatchland has harvested the corn. The farm took what they needed for corn and traded off the standing corn that was left to Hatchland in payment for the custom cropping. They had Hatchland help to get the cover crops on as well. Everything has been cover cropped, except for the pumpkin patch. In doing the harvesting of the corn, and speaking with Preston Hatch, they had areas that were very productive and some areas were below average. G. Libby explained that what they will concentrate on this fall is storing manure down there; after the soil samples are completed, they can find those high yield areas.

G. Libby stated that he had made a commitment to H. Bryant and in working with Hatchland, rather than spreading manure right up to the river's edge, they are going to plant strips of grass along the border of the property. He stated that the farm staff will be able to drive around all crops on grass to see what they have and it will give nursing home residents a chance to use their side by side down there as well. He noted that he is going to ask Forester Frohn to walk the property with him and rather than relying on his staff to get the trimming done, possibly include it in the upcoming timber harvest.

G. Libby stated that they were able to get the 4<sup>th</sup> cut of grass done and put up. Part of their plan with having less manure, is hitting the grass where they can now. They have some requests for manure deliveries and the goal is to get the manure pit empty before winter.

Inmate Update – B. White stated that he has four (4) inmates right now and they are very good. One (1) is here for a year. G. Libby stated that he would be interviewing someone this week. The applicant is a former inmate and he would like to see if this person has turned himself around. He stated that he would like to give this person a second chance and will see how the interview goes.

G. Libby reported that he is trying to look into potential partnerships for the farm.

H. Bryant asked what the mission and vision going forward is going to be. She is concerned that G. Libby will not be here long term and they cannot lose any more person hours. B. White can only keep this pace for so long and therefore they need to have a plan moving forward. H. Bryant stated that you could not last long in a farm this size without a farm manager. In the long term, filling that position is critical. Commissioner Piper stated that she has recognized how dire the situation is and that is why they felt there are some hard decisions that need to be made. Her fear is they have not been able to find and keep a farm manager the last few years. H. Bryant stated that she feels the current size of the herd is going to be more manageable for a new manager.

G. Libby stated that one of the reasons he used the word supervisor, is because in the last 6-8 weeks, B. White has had some opportunities that he has never had in his ten (10) years here. There are things B. White has asked to learn about moving forward. G. Libby stated that he would like to allow B. White some of the opportunities that he would like to see if he could be in that position of a manager or supervisor. G. Libby believes they should not sell themselves short on a homegrown manager and he is trying to give B. White some more time to explore these opportunities. He stated that in this immediate window, finding a manager is not the biggest priority, the biggest priority, is to work on what that vision is. He stated that he thinks they can do that without a manager and believes they have the expertise to make those decisions. H. Bryant stated if they could have the Commissioners answer some of the big questions such as if they are going to stay a dairy farm, grow vegetables, or are they going to go in the education route, then they gave move forward with a vision.

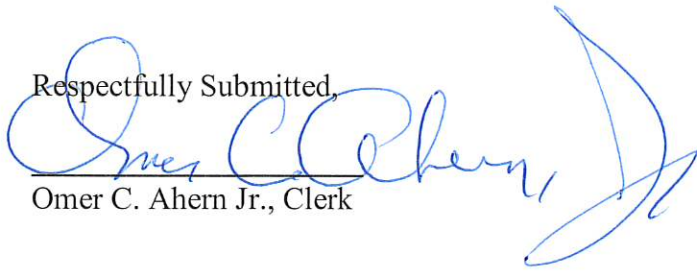
B. White stated that he had made a post on social media and the purpose was to show that they reduced the herd and are still being successful. He has been working with a great team. They hosted a 4H group that was a success and now a 4H club wants to work with them. B. White stated there are little things that have happened in the last two (2) months that have gone better than the last four (4) years. Commissioner Piper stated that they might be able to stay the way they are for a while longer, and work with G. Libby, B. White and Sgt. Griffin to come up with a vision.

G. Libby stated that he has made a commitment to do a cost analysis on the chickens but has not had time to do it. He noted that they have also talked about the pigs. The farm has been putting off a meeting with another potential partner with the pigs while they get through the harvesting. G. Libby believes they should foster partnerships and use those resources to keep the farm thriving.

H. Bryant stated that the sweet corn typically loses money because it is labor intensive. She asked if they could use those fields for feed corn, hay or other things. Sgt. Griffin stated that \$15 worth of pumpkin seed gets them a long ways. It is not the end of the world to have a bunch of extra, but if you plant more and can sell them, that is a win.

Next meeting - November 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:30

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, written in a cursive style, that reads "Omer C. Ahern Jr.". The signature is positioned to the right of the typed name and extends upwards and to the left, overlapping the "Respectfully Submitted," text.

Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk