

GRAFTON COUNTY FARM COMMITTEE MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
September 12, 2022

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper, Lauer and Ahern, County Administrator Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross, Interim Farm Manager G. Libby, Sgt. Griffin, DoC Supt. Elliott, Pam Gilbert, Heather Bryant

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM

G. Libby reported that they have 41 calves and are milking 55. They have 48 heifers for a total of 144 cows. He stated that they are in the process of figuring out how many replacement calves they will need to carry if they are going to milk 50-55 cows. G. Libby spoke with Preston Hatch this morning regarding the custom cropping and Hatchland Farm will likely start to cut corn next week. The tentative plan is to fill the large bunk closest to the Nursing Home and hopefully by then they will have some numbers back on how much corn they will need for the herd and then he hopes to work a deal with Hatchland where they take the extra corn and help offset the cost of the custom cropping. G. Libby spoke with G. Nelson over the weekend and found out what his plan was for the grass and haylage in both bunks and his plan would have been to compress the haylage down with the corn and keep both in the bunk.

G. Libby reported that the haylage has been put out to bid and bids are due September 19th.

G. Libby stated that the 7520 tractor is in need of \$50,000 worth of repairs. His recommendation at this point is to try to get by through fall crops. It does not make sense to buy a new tractor and there may be an opportunity through United Ag & Turf to rent a tractor if need be. He spoke with H. Bryant regarding cover crops and he hopes to figure out a crop rotation plan.

G. Libby discussed erosion issues on the lower field. H. Bryant stated that she would not be comfortable giving a recommendation on the severity of the issue. P. Gilbert stated that they have an engineered sketch design on how to address the erosion but asked if they are at that point yet.

The Committee discussed the replacement herd and the need to figure out what size replacement herd they should have. CA Libby stated that she would forward G. Libby J. Porter's report from 2021 that made suggestions regarding the replacement herd.

G. Libby stated that the farm had its state inspection last week and thanked Sgt. Griffin for his efforts in cleaning up the walls, which helped them pass that inspection. B. White had noted that they are due for a federal inspection soon and they will continue to work on cleaning the walls.

CA Libby asked for an update on the potatoes. Sgt. Griffin stated that they hope to have some starting Thursday or Friday and they will have whites. He stated that the red potatoes are not feasible and they will not be selling them. They are looking at the possibility of composting them

and are working to learn how to do so. Sgt. Griffin explained that the issue was there was no rain for a long stretch and then they received too much rain.

Commissioner Lauer asked if there would still be a timber harvest this year. H. Bryant stated that she spoke with J. Frohn this morning. He has finished marking out the skid road and will now start marking the trees. Commissioner Lauer then asked if UNH Extension still planned on the experiment with burning to try to stimulate oak growth. H. Bryant stated that her understanding is that is still the plan.

H. Bryant asked for an update on staffing. G. Libby stated that he has not heard of any more applicants from HR. CA Libby stated that they have advertised the Farm Manager position twice. There were a couple of applications for the Farm Manager the first time it was advertised but there were no viable candidates. The second advertisement there were no applications. The Farm Assistant was posted in house last week as well as on Indeed and will be coming out locally and in the Weekly Market Bulletin.

G. Libby stated that they are now milking at 4am and 4pm and it seems to be working for them.

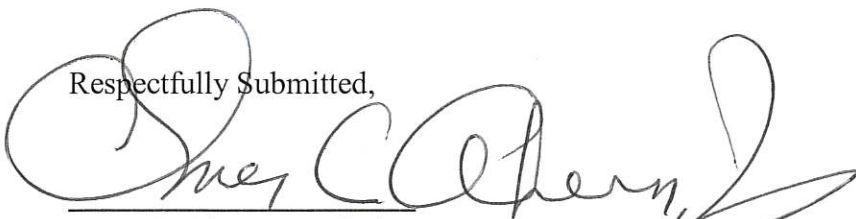
H. Bryant asked what tasks the farm uses the 7520 tractor for that they are currently unable to do because it is down. G. Libby discussed what they would use it for but stated that if they can figure out a way to get through fall crops with some help, they can then decide what they want to do.

P. Gilbert asked about the possibility of custom hiring for certain jobs where a local farmer would bring their tractor in to do certain tasks, like the farm already does with the custom cropping. G. Libby stated that he could look into that.

Commissioner Lauer asked if there is anything more they should be thinking about for the farm. G. Libby stated that right now they need to figure out a way to attract workers. They need to get through fall crops, maintain the herd they have now as well as reducing some of the other animals. If they do not find help, none of the plans that they have will happen. Commissioner Piper asked if there is anyway to be able to offer housing for employees. She stated that Cheshire has purchased a house for some of their nursing staff needs. G. Libby stated that it is a great idea, if housing is that much of an attraction it is something to think about. CA Libby stated that she believes a lot of housing that employers are doing is for traveling nurses, which is not permanent housing. She does not know if there are many places doing housing for full time permanent employees. The committee further discussed the issue of staffing.

The Committee set the next meeting date for September 27th at 11:30.

Respectfully Submitted,



Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk