

## **MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

### **Minutes**

**August 8, 2018**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:13 p.m.

Present: Don Miner, Bess Parks

Absent: Paul Drone, Ron Miner III

No comments from the press or public.

### **NEW BUSIINESS**

- a. SUMMER MARKET UPDATE: A new vendor offering barbecue ribs and other grilled items has joined the summer market on Wednesdays but will open for business daily at the Vault Storage parking lot area weekdays for those looking for a noontime meal or take out. Despite, less than ideal weather conditions, customer traffics has been busy on market Wednesdays.
- b. UPCOMING WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS: See attached.
- c. REVIEW OF LOCAL FARMS: To be presented at the September 12, 2018 meeting.
- d. ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS/4-H DONATIONS: Bob has not been able to communicate with either Jolee Chase, 4-H Manager, regarding funding assistance for campers attending the Joppa Hill Educational Farm, or Deborah Baker, head of guidance at Merrimack High School relating to scholarship money available for those students furthering their education in an agricultural related field. While it is too late in the season to assist with camp funding, it was suggested that the Commission consider a \$500.0 donation to the to the Joppa Hill Educational Farm to be used towards their summer camp's educational needs for the 2019 summer season. Discussion will continue at the September 12, 2018 meeting on this appropriation when a full board will be in attendance. Merrimack students are encouraged to submit letters to the Commission for scholarship money toward their education in an agricultural related field. Letters should be addressed to Bob McCabe, Chairman, Agricultural Commission, Town of Merrimack, 6 Baboosic Lake Road, Merrimack, NH 03054. Don inquired if the check had been sent to Blue Seal, Milford, NH, for the gift certificates presented to the 4-H winners in their respective divisions at the Hillsborough County Fair in September 2018. Don will check with the Finance Department.
- e. FARM REPORT: To be presented at the September 12, 2018 meeting.
- f. BUG ALERT: Forest Tent Caterpillar moths are making an appearance, along with corn earworm now that the corn crop is developing and becoming ready for harvest.

Forest Caterpillars is a North American moth found throughout the United States and Canada, especially in the eastern regions. Unlike related tent caterpillar species, the larvae of Forest caterpillars do not make tents, but weave a silky sheet where they tie together during molting. The adults favor oak, sweetgum, tupelo, aspen and sugar maple, but the larvae can be found feeding on many other species of deciduous trees and shrubs. High population density outbreaks tend to recur at reasonably regular intervals every decade or so and usually last two to three years, during which time trees and shrubs can be almost completely denuded of leaves. Most plants replace the lost leaves without permanent damage. Two effective methods of control are to restrict caterpillar movement, cutting off access to feeding areas, or scrape off and discard over-wintering egg masses by tearing protective tents before the larvae start to feed.

Corn Earworm is found throughout North America except for northern Canada and Alaska. In the eastern United States, corn earworm does not normally over-winter successfully in the northern states. Corn earworm is considered by some to be most the costliest crop pest in North America. It is more damaging in areas where it successfully overwinters. It often attacks the harvested portion of the crop. Thus, larvae often are found associated with such plant structures as blossoms, buds and fruits. On corn, its most common host, young larvae tend to feed on silks initially, but eventually gain access to the kernels. Management can include insecticides, cultural practices, biological control and host plant resistance. Whichever method one chooses, follow directions carefully for the best results.

- g. HORSE SENSE: For horse owners, summer also means getting enough feed hay in to last throughout the winter. The best quality should be obtained and stored properly to keep hay fresh and palatable as possible. Whether you have a separate storage barn or using the loft in the barn storing your horses, stack hay so air can circulate freely to evaporate moisture. Square bales should be stacked on edge leaving narrow gaps between rows. Alternate bale orientation in each layer, stacking no more than 4 or 5 bales high. More horse owners are using round bales, and they should also be well dried before stacking. Protect hay stacks outdoors with well-secured waterproof tarps or canvas that will withstand the elements. Even under ideal storage conditions, more than 5% of vitamins are lost each month. A hay or pasture nutrient analysis can be performed to determine if a vitamin/mineral or other supplement is needed. Storing forage properly helps maintain nutrient content and feed palatability. Critical aspects of safe storage include keeping feed in cool dry locations to avoid moisture, mold development, heat buildup or combustion.
- h. TREASURER'S REPORT: Not available, to be read at the September 12, 2018 meeting.
- i. MINUTES: The minutes were reviewed by the board members present, however, acceptance of the minutes will be at the September 12, 2018 meeting when a quorum will be present.

No comments from the press or public.

No comments from the Commission.

Motion to adjourn by Don at 7:35 p.m., Bess seconded, motion carried 3-0-0.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on September 12, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully submitted,

Bess-Arden Parks  
Acting Secretary