

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 8, 2017**

Meeting called to order by President Bob McCabe at 6:50 pm.

Present: Don Miner, Ron Miner III, Bess Parks

Absent: Paul Drone

No Comments from the Press or Public

New Business:

- a. **WINTER MARKET:** Weather conditions and change of dates for Halloween hampered vendor and customer participation at the November 1 market. Vendor offerings continue to increase with each market. Don has received an inquiry from a vendor wishing to attend the Merrimack market, selling a non-produce, but a related agricultural item i.e. alpaca wool handmade goods. This request will be taken under advisement. Don continues to pursue advertising options.
- b. **COMMUNITY GARDEN:** Bob commended the gardeners for their diligence in cleaning up the garden plots. The plots have been turnover and green cover crop applied. The water has been shut off, and irrigation system drained. The class date for the gardeners' seed swap and information night will be announced soon.
- c. **MESSAGE BOARD UPDATE:** No update currently.
- d. **UPCOMING WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS** – See Attached
- e. **THE AG. REPORT:** With the advent of Thanksgiving Ron shared some "Turkey Talk". The last couple of months have been double time for turkey producers across the country. The seasonal slaughter rates remained at normal pace, but in the beginning of October the number of turkeys slaughtered for the year was at a range of 120-130 million pounds. It is estimated that 46 million turkeys are eaten each Thanksgiving with the average weight desired as 15 pounds. Turkey consumption has increased since 1970 by 104%. 95% of Americans surveyed by the National Turkey Federation eat turkey at Thanksgiving, which means 675 million pounds of turkey in the U.S. is consumed on Thanksgiving Day.
- f. **BUG ALERT:** Ticks are still very active. Care should be taken to inspect clothing and person when out in fallen leaves and wooden areas. Tick sprays are available and recommended to be used around boots and pant legs.
- g. **HORSE SENSE:** Dentition. As horses age, their teeth change due to wear. Hopefully all senior horses have had the advantage of regular dental care in their earlier years, setting them up for success later in life. Regular dental checks and floats not only help to maintain good dental health, it also provides the senior horse with the best chance at chewing and digesting their feed and forage. With the change in teeth comes some accommodation to forage. The senior equine requires fiber as a main source of energy. Changes in dental efficacy as well as digestive system means a

good quality fiber is even higher. If high quality hay (leafier than stems) is not available, hay cubes are a good alternative. Hay cubes should be soaked for easier chewing.

- h. **TREASURERS REPORT:** The Summer Market account balance is \$4,115.87, Community Garden account balance \$2,626.50, with a combined total of \$6,742.37. The Winter Market account balance remains at \$977.50.
- i. **MINUTES:** The October 11, 2017 minutes were read. Don made a motion to accept, Ron seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public.

Comments from the Commission: Bob has requested \$25.00 dollars to attend the class on "Food Safety Training at the Farm". The course entails harvesting, sorting and cleaning before produce goes to any market. Water quality will also be discussed. Every farm will have to have a representative attend a training session to educate other employees. Record keeping, and federal inspections will also be required and will be in effect by the end of 2018. Don made the motion to approve \$25.00 dollars for Bob to attend the class, Bess seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

The Commission received a thank you note from Katie Connarn, who received a gift certificate at the Hillsboro County Fair for Best in Show for her rabbits. A letter of appreciation was also received from Jolee Chase, 4-H Program Manager, Youth and Family, thanking the commission for support of the Hillsborough County 4-H Pickle Challenge and NH 4-H Livestock show and auction. The pickle challenge had 45 youth ages 5-16, with 30 youth displaying their canning skills at the fair. Eleven youth tagged 23 animals, including sheep, lambs, goats and swine. All brought market price or above at the end of the fair.

A motion was made by Don to adjourn at 7:50 pm, Ron seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

The next meeting will be December 13, 2017, 7:00 p.m., Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary