

Minutes – CEC Meeting (Cotton)
March 25, 2015

Present: Jim Takala, Frank Jewell, Roger Sabin, Don Dicklich, Richard Pierce
Others: Bob Olen, Kendall Dykhuis, Mardi Harder, Patty Swedberg, Shirley Lantz

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 9:10 am. Minutes from January 21 CEC meeting were presented for approval. Approved unan.

Agriculture/Horticulture Program

Kendall spoke about agriculture efforts in the county. He works with Gilbert's municipal water treatment lime. He provides testing and reports for the land application project--they meet 98% of MPCA requirements. Wood ash is transported from International Falls and delivered to the Cook area—two farms receive the ash. A fee of \$1.40 per ton is charged due to the large tonnage being delivered. Frank inquired as to value for farmers; Jim asked if Boise would spread since it is such a large amount. Kendall stated they will spread if less than 55 miles from the plant--otherwise they deliver and farmer gets the ash for free. The farmer is required to spread it.

Beef Production educational meetings are offered in partnership with St. Louis Valley Livestock Association. Grand Rapids Outreach Center and NEFGC share data base. Frank commented on UMD wanting to push to have experiment station back in Duluth. Grand Rapids Experimental Station has a split position between horticulture and entomology. Research on new ways to do things--will help smaller producers.

Beef producers have seen viable profits for the past two years. Eric Mousel, educator from Grand Rapids Outreach Center, does a great job. Mardi commented Research Centers are driven by dollars--allocated by legislature.

Three educational forage events are planned per year. NEFGC has the largest forage council in MN. For 2015 the annual summer Forage Field Day will be planned for Hibbing. Last year's event was held in Carlton County at the Mach Angus Farm in Sturgeon Lake.

The Horticulture Line in St. Louis County works well. Both Kendall and Bob respond to a very large number of calls, which is a great service for consumers.

Horticulture Program

Bob spoke about several educational program offerings: Garden Fest was held in Duluth and Embarrass. Let's Get Growing was recently held (March 19) in Floodwood with approximately 60 participants. Both Kendall and Bob have been presenting half-day workshops which works out well, and in many ways easier than planning the large full-day workshops. He did experiment with the annual Spring Gardening Extravaganza program—switching to a half day. Feedback was very positive about content; participants expressed they prefer a full day for this particular workshop. This year's SGE will be held Saturday, April 25 at Hermantown High School. The workshop presentations will focus on gardening for good health.

Educational opportunities via media continues—the Great Gardening Series will begin in April and air on WDSE-PBS. Bob continues the weekly one-hour horticulture program and call-in segment on the local KDAL Radio. Duluth News Tribune requests feature horticulture articles. Consumer and commercial inquiries—responded to over 4,000 inquires via email, phone, visitors and consultations.

Applied research continues--vegetable varietal trials, small space gardening and potato plots are the focus. A community White Pine Forest project was held last year at a Lester River location. Marshall School requested his assistance to begin a white pine project.

The Extension Master Gardener program continues--manages 70 volunteers. Master gardeners are required to complete an application process and interviews. The program structure includes monthly educational meetings and 25- 50 volunteer hours. They volunteer at numerous community educational projects. Q and A booths, Growing For A Cause project and Community Gardens.

Updates –

Staffing -Mardi updated the committee on the two 4-H program vacancies in South St. Louis County--4-H PC and IE Coordinator. Interviews were held for the 4-H PC position on March 18. There were 4 interviews. HR is determining salary and an offer will be made to a candidate in the next few days. The IE position--will wait until after the summer session to open the position; it is being backfilled until then.

CEC vacancies –Patty stated two vacancies exist on the committee. The Auditor Dept. advertised the vacancies with an emphasis on seeking applicants from South SLC for geographic member balance. One application was received and Patty received an email with another person expressing interest. The application deadline was extended through the end of this week. Frank suggested to reach out to someone in the Duluth area who uses Extension--a niche. If a new member requires assistance with traveling to meetings, Frank offered to help with transportation.

Patty spoke about the IRYA Conference—held in February at Fortune Bay. Approximately 360 youth attended--Taryn and Tyler (youth coordinators) did a wonderful job working with students and conference preparations. There were several great workshops and it was very well organized. Sixty people came to volunteer on Sunday to help decorate and set up. It was a very successful event.

Recommendation for St. Louis County Farm Family –

Mardi asked if there were any recommendations to nominate a SLC farm family. Kendall asked if it's a requirement for family to travel to the recognition event. Mardi stated it's not required; there could be local recognition. It was suggested to nominate Marv and Peggy Pearson of Rice River Farms (Angora). Kendall offered to collect the necessary information. The paperwork needs to be completed and submitted by the May 1 deadline.

Next meeting date is Wednesday, April 15, 9 a.m. at Cotton Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 11:12 am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Lantz