

Meeting Summary

Agribusiness Incubator Project

February 21, 2005

Attendance: Glen Yeager, Andy Johnson, Peter Weinschenk, Paul Daigle, Bob , Dale Heise, Bob Kaldunski, Jackie Gliniecki, Paul Nehring, Alex Crockford, Sandy Cihlar, Peter Arnold, Jim Cisler, Lyle Guralski, Ron Riehle, Mike Braunel, Denise Severt, and Tom Cadwallader

1. Meeting was convened at 11:40 AM
2. Progress on Screening Process
 - a. Financial Assessment Tools: Tom Cadwallader has begun working on the financial analysis of two different farm arrangements. The first step in the process is to develop balance sheets for both families involved in both farms and to help them define their goals. After getting the initial balance sheet information they will run financial projections to see what arrangements would work the best for each family involved. Once the assessment is complete the type of arrangement that would work out the best would be taken to a legal professional to help develop a legal agreement, sharemilking or otherwise.
 - b. Physical Assessment Tools: Paul Daigle will begin working with each of the two farms to assess what their assets and liabilities might be. There was some discussion on using some of the professional fees in the grant to pay for a professional to help evaluate farmsteads. The group felt that we should involve professionals outside of agriculture who do environmental assessments in the farmstead assessment but not to contract them to do it exclusively. There was some concern about the cost associated with hiring environmental assessment specialists, while Conservation, Zoning and Planning staff are concerned about the time commitment on their already tight schedules.
3. Progress on Financial and Business Planning
 - a. Past and Future Educational Programs: There was a brief update on the November program on the “Tools for Dairy Reinvestment”, a dairy modernization tour scheduled for February 23 and a Dairy Modernization Conference scheduled for March 17th.
 - b. Development of Financial Benchmarks: Cadwallader said that he had met with Tom Kriegl to begin the process to developing some financial benchmarks for grazing based farms that could be used in business planning. A number of dairy graziers locally and from around the state have expressed an interest in helping to develop the benchmarks.
4. Progress on Mentoring Network Development
 - a. Status of Mentoring Network Development Grant: Cadwallader was notified that the grant was one step closer to being in Lincoln County. The funds have been released from the USDA in Washington and all that is left is setting up a contract between Lincoln County and the University of Wisconsin. As soon as the funds are in the county Cadwallader will convene a meeting of a steering committee to guide the process over the next year.

- b. Report on Field Trip to Crawford County Incubator Project: On December 13, 2004, Cadwallader, Ron Riehle and Lyle Guralski took a field trip down to Crawford County to visit with the group that is working with their farm incubator effort. Although the trip was reported on at the December 22nd Agribusiness Incubator Project meeting, because many of the Project steering committee member weren't able to attend, Guralski gave a short report on what they had learned.
5. One-Stop-Shopping
- a. Website Development: Gliniecki and Crockford distributed a draft copy of the website homepage and information on the agribusiness directory that is being developed for the website. A letter will be going out to area agribusinesses asking if they would be interested in being listed in the directory.
 - b. Tips For Getting Started: A portion of the new website will be some helpful tips for new farmers; new to farming and/or grazing and/or to the area. The group was given time to write down their answers to the following questions:
 - i. What are the top 5 things that helped me most in setting up a grazing based dairy?
 - ii. What pleasantly surprised me when I started a grazing farm?
 - iii. What are common things to be aware of when you start any type of farming system?
 - iv. Who are the people that are important to have on a management/advisory team?
 - c. All of the answers to the four questions were recorded so they could be typed up and included in the tips section of the website.
6. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Tom Cadwallader