

Dairy Innovation Hub Advisory Council

August 13, 2024

Meeting minutes

Notes by Elisabeth Berndt

Participants In-Person: Heather White, Maria Woldt, Elisabeth Berndt, Dave Daniels (WFBF), Steve Kelm (UW-River Falls), Mitch Breunig (PDPW), Troy Runge (UW-Madison), Chuck Steiner (UW-Platteville), Mike Orth (UW-River Falls), Glenda Gillaspay (UW-Madison), Chad Zuleger (DBA), Holly Dolliver (UW-River Falls)

Participants Virtually: Tera Montgomery (UW-Platteville), Tim Fiocchi (WFBF), Scott Rankin (UW-Madison)

Proxy Participants: Mike Strigel for Randy Romanski (DATCP), Emily Vander Grinten for Shelly Mayer (PDPW), Kim Heiman for John Umhoefer (WCMA)

Absent: Chuck Nicholson (UW-Madison)

In person at Marshfield Agricultural Research Station & virtual Zoom meeting.

Dave Daniels called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Approval of Minutes (1.16.24 meeting): A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Glenda Gillaspay, Mike Orth seconded. All were in favor. The minutes were approved.

Dave Daniels provided the meeting overview (meeting, lunch, tours) and welcomed everyone.

Council member updates: Each council member provided a working update from their areas/departments since the Jan. 16th meeting.

Industry/association representatives: Dave Daniels (WFBF) shared that the Wisconsin Ag Road Improvement dollars are going out to fix rural roads that will help farmers and processors. Ag outreach education for young people interested in politics is improving. Ag Day @ the Capitol will be on March 26. WFBF will continue to support federal marketing by educating dairy farmers in preparation for Nov./Dec. voting.

Tim Fiocchi (WFBF) added more detail to Dave's comments about the WI Ag Road Improvement project. The first round of grants had many applicants for \$50M. This seems to be the best tool to demonstrate and educate legislators that the program needs to continue.

Emily Vander Grinten (PDPW) reported that program calendars have been released including "ACE Twilight Meetings," which intend to bring communities together and to keep dairy farmers active. The Federal Milk Market Orders Workshop will be in Madison on Sept. 18. The PDP Stride Youth Leadership Conference will be on Sept. 21. "Your Farm, Your Footprint" is a program that will promote farmer stories to educate stakeholders on sustainability.

Mitch Breunig offered a farmer perspective. The weather has been unpredictable due to lack of rain or too much rain. Area farmers are between third and fourth crop hay. Commodities are falling and prices are moving; milk prices continue to remain favorable. Cow prices on heifers are anticipated to rise with limited replacements available.

Chad Zulegar (DBA) shared that DATCP watershed grants have been a huge opportunity for groups around the state and DBA continues to promote around the state. Expanded climate smart grants, are open to DBA farm members. The Ag Education series features all commodities, which shows legislatures what's happening on farms. DBA will continue to partner with the Wisconsin Ag Coalition to keep dairy relevant on the governor's biennial budget. Chad also talked about the ARIP program, stating that the initial 50M in grant funding was spent with over 200M in applications. The application process is open for the second installment of 100M, applications are due at the end of September. The 50M and the 100M will complete the 150M total investment in rural roads as part of the ARIP program.

Mike Strigel (DATCP) provided an update about H5N1, which has not yet spread to dairies in Wisconsin. DATCP is working with stakeholders to ensure the disease does not infect cows in the state and to prepare farmers in the event of reported cases. The producer-led watershed grant program is open for applications with up to \$40K (per group) available for farmer collaborations and closes on Sept. 13. DATCP will be hosting the Global Dairy Summit on Oct. 4 at World Dairy Expo that will feature presentations and moderated discussions.

Kim Heiman (WCMA) shared that the Federal Milk Marketing Orders will be under review after the election and will prepare farmers to testify. WCMA is working with the FDA to educate people on H5N1 and to protect people working directly with cows by encouraging increased PPE in milking parlors. The annual cheese contest is planned at WDE.

WCMA and Nasonville Dairy are working with DATCP to provide immersive training for bulk tank sealing to ensure milk is pasteurized properly in an emergency. WCMA continues to educate legislators about the importance of cheese processing when opportunities arise.

Campus updates and Hub highlights: Campus leaders were asked to highlight two major budget priorities on their campuses

Platteville (Proxy for BILSA Dean, Chuck Steiner): Chuck reported that the Dairy Pilot Plant, which will be adjacent to the Tech Center, received external funds through fundraising to support the building. Processing will be the focus of the facility. Fundraising is not complete, but progress is being made

The Beef Center, built in 1969, needs to be updated. UW-P submitted a capital funding plan after external fundraising efforts were complete. Renovations should begin prior to the April bull sale.

Due to the \$9M budget reduction, 111 positions were eliminated, and campus is working on reorganizing across all units, divisions, and departments. UW-P achieved and submitted a balanced budget for FY25. There is a reduction in enrollment.

Renovations of Karrmann Library and Ottensman Hall are due to centralized student support services. Demolition of several buildings, already offline, are anticipated soon. Future on-farm investments are needed, especially for food intake systems.

River Falls (CAFES Dean, Mike Orth): Mike shared that the university is undergoing a 15% budget cut across the board (10% in FY25 and 5% in FY26). Recent Hub funded hire losses (to R1 and land grant universities) is not ideal, but helps pad the budget. DIH allocation is not immune to budget cuts at this time. Chancellor Gallo is retiring.

The Dairy Pilot Plant is running and hopes to begin ice cream creation soon. The cheese production is centered around unique flavors of cheese curds, aged cheddar, aged Monterey jack, and artisan cheeses. The Sci Tech building is in progress, which is creating problems for the Ag building by compromising water and electricity. Student enrollment is breaking even.

Holly shared that a large land donation of 78 acres will be used to establish a farm to support research in the stewarding land and water resources priority area. The property will also be used to support conservation initiatives in the field space.

Steve shared that Dr. Uddin recently joined the Ag Economics faculty. The research specialist position (Mann Valley Farm) is advertised for a person who can facilitate campus and on farm research. The application closed on Aug. 11.

Dr. Bahareh Hassanpour was awarded a large NSF grant through the embrace program based off of preliminary data from her DIH faculty fellowship.

Madison (CALs Dean Glenda Gillaspay): Glenda shared that the FY25 priorities for UW-Madison will be student support. The Data Science Building, fully funded by gifts, is in the construction phase. In general, campus funding is too slow and too expensive to support the infrastructural updates needed in campus buildings, on agricultural research stations, and in greenhouses.

UW-Madison leadership advocates for farm bill to support residents in rural Wisconsin. Student enrollment in CALS has increased by 16%.

Heather shared that the graduate student RFP recently closed with funding decisions ready for approval by the UW-Madison steering committee. All three recently hired faculty will begin their new roles on Aug. 19 and all will be present at the tour portion of the day.

Discussion: All three campuses are addressing student enrollment. This is a state-wide, and nation-wide concern.

Administrative update and discussion: Heather began conversation about how the DIH can help campuses, and campus new leaders best understand the history behind DIH funds, and their intended use.

Collective support for campuses: The three deans are working on a white paper to release ag campuses from the slow and expensive process of the state building process. Campuses are concerned that simple building projects, such as a three-sided hay shed, end up taking too long

and costing far more than they should. Farm building is not the same as building on campuses. The ability to be more responsible with taxpayer dollars is desired.

Discussion: DIH needs to present unique and novel impacts to the state but also needs to address infrastructure updates needed at the research farms. DIH research relies heavily of the research farms associated with UW-Madison, UW-Platteville, and UW-River Falls. In some cases, research facilities are 10 years from shuttering. Without appropriate facilities, DIH research will be a challenge.

Outreach efforts with the ag coalition and the legislature were discussed to elevate the concerns discussed in the meeting to the appropriate channels. More discussion is needed to ensure that points are refined and brought forward in the best way.

Relationship with extension and council: There is increased interest to get research from campuses to farmers quicker. It is recommended that an extension leader have a seat on the advisory council to serve in this capacity. Further discussion is needed regarding voting rights for this individual.

Motion to add an extension position to the advisory council: A motion to add a seat on the advisory council for an extension representative with “ex-officio” voting rights was made by Chad Zuleger. Mitch Breunig seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Faculty director role: Heather is currently in transition, and the process to fill the opening has begun between the three deans. The call is open to tenured faculty; applicants should submit an updated CV and a statement of interest for the position. The DIH leadership team (all three deans) will review candidates in September. Hopefully, the new FD can be introduced at the combined DIH receptions at WDE.

Outreach updates and upcoming events: Maria Woldt provided an overview of the following outreach opportunities, meetings, and events.

Dairy Symposium: Data from the event (May 15, 2024) was presented to the council. Attendance numbers, online engagement and usage, and favorite sessions were highlighted.

Nov. 20, 2024 – Dairy Summit – Madison: Condensed programming will be scheduled for the morning. The focus of the day will be on robust tours offered in the afternoon. All are encouraged to promote the event.

DIH will host breakfast at 8 a.m., in a separate room at Union South, for Hub funded faculty and special guests. Invites will be sent closer to the event. The Summit will begin at 9 a.m. with registration and 10 a.m. with programming. The day will conclude by 4:30 p.m.

Annual report: A draft is in progress. The executive summary should be ready by WDE.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mike Orth. Holly Dolliver seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 11:50 a.m.

Lunch and tours of MARS north followed the meeting.

Future meetings: The next meeting is in January via Zoom.