

Alaska Farm Bureau Meeting—December 19th, 2012

8:30am – 4:00pm

(Atwood Building) 550 West 7th Avenue, Room #240 – Anchorage

The **Purpose** of the meeting is to formalize the list of issues from the November 12th AFB meeting with Commissioner Sullivan, and develop strategies for how DNR can move forward on those issues.

Lunch is on your own and a break will be taken around noon.

For those unable to attend in person the following teleconference number has been provided:

1-800-315-6338 Pass code: 8426#

Agenda

8:30 - Welcome by Commissioner's office

8:40 – Introduction of those present and on the phone

8:50 – Discussion of the following issues

1. Lack of agriculture research –
 - a. List research needs by priority
 - b. PMC received funding for a Horticulture Program in FY'13
 - Requests from industry on horticulture research
2. Importance of Interagency Cooperation
 - a. Increase collaboration between state, federal, and University (example: DEC issues with veterinary services, food inspections, etc)
3. Infrastructure –
 - a. State's Role?
 - b. What is needed?
4. Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund
 - a. Comments/suggestions/concerns
5. Agriculture Land
 - a. Comments/concerns:
 - Land Sales
 - Covenants
6. Grazing Leases

- a. Comments/Concerns
7. Marketing
- a. Comments/Concerns
8. Other issues discussed:
- a. Transportation costs—
 - Interest in reduced rate from ferry system?
 - What products/what time of year?
 - b. High Insurance costs
 - c. Tax incentives for Agriculture
 - d. Support for agriculture for biomass energy
 - e. Slaughterhouse issues

The Division of Agriculture hosted two Agriculture Advisory Panel meetings last winter to gather information to be incorporated into a “Long Range Plan for Agriculture”. The plan was never written. The following items were brought forward by participants:

- a. Industry Challenges:
 - No state plan for agriculture
 - i. Industry hindered by lack of state plan
 - Input costs/cost of production
 - i. Producers need reasonable energy and fertilizer costs
 - Lack of research
 - Regulations
 - ARLF interest rates
 - Lack of incentives to produce
 - i. Production credits
 - ii. Lower interest rates
 - Few young farmers involved
 - Poor soils
 - Infrastructure
 - Reduced rates for ferry/RR
 - Support for agriculture biomass
 - Marketing
 - Increasing food security
 - Lack of funding for new farmers (lacking 3 years experience)
 - Connect land owners not utilizing land with those interested in farming
- b. Solutions (brought forward by participants)
 - State needs plan so industry can pivot towards that plan.
 - i. For example: Point Mackenzie
 - Remove agriculture covenants from land
 - i. Allow for subdivision into more than 4 parcels and smaller than 40 acres

- Reduce interest rates on ARLF loans
- Provide state incentives to produce
 - i. Lower interest rates if land is in production
 - ii. Production credits
- More infrastructure
 - i. Mobile processing facilities
- Regulations that encourage small scale production
- Resource rich state
 - i. Identify phosphate/lime/urea deposits
 - ii. Build another fertilizer plant
- Grower education
- State needs to look at niche markets

9. Moving forward

- a. DNR's role –
- b. Division of Agriculture's role -
- c. Agriculture industry's role –

Closing remarks