

Proceedings of the 2015 Northeast Pasture Consortium Annual Conference & Meeting held at the Waterfront Place Hotel & Conference Center in Morgantown, WV, March 11-12

Business Meeting

A brief Business Meeting was held. Ms. Jennifer Colby, Program Coordinator of the Vermont Pasture Network, University of Vermont, was nominated and unanimously elected to be our new Public Sector Member-at-Large for 2015-2016. Mr. Richard Swartzentruber, Swartzentruber Homestead, Greenwood, DE, was nominated and unanimously elected as our new Private Sector Member-at-Large.

Jim Cropper was charged with sending letter to all US representatives and Senators in the Northeast Region and Jason Weller, Chief of NRCS introducing them to the Northeast Pasture Consortium and telling them about our work.

Jim Cropper was also charged with writing a letter specifically to Glenn Thompson, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation & Forestry of House Agriculture Committee, introducing the Northeast Pasture Consortium to him and providing him information on our function of promoting pasture-based farming and our connection to the Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit at University Park, PA that is in his home district. Diane Schivera asked that she be sent a copy of the letter.

Jim Cropper also volunteered to draft a resolution to be sent to the House Agriculture Committee and the Senate Agriculture Committee to document the need for the Conservation of Private Grazing Lands program of NRCS be funded for the first time since its authorization in 1996. For some time funding of grazing lands technical assistance came out of the Conservation Operations program. However, this has been discontinued and as the appropriations continue to dwindle for Conservation Operations, it is unlikely that funds will be set aside expressly for grazing lands assistance under this program. Joe Hatton asked that a copy of the resolution be sent to him.

The Farmer Survey questionnaire sent out earlier in the year to all farmer members was briefly discussed. The deadline extension for sending in the questionnaires is April 1. It was estimated that it would take 10 days to analyze the input received from pasture-based farmers around the Northeast. A conference call for Private Producers to discuss the results was scheduled for April 10. Susan Parry, USDA-NRCS, Harrisburg, PA and Executive Committee member, is the contact person for this survey.

Jim Cropper thanked Joe Hatton and Tom Akin for their service on the Executive Committee of the Northeast Pasture Consortium over the past four years. He further thanked Joe Hatton for his help in setting up the Conference at the Waterfront Place Hotel and Convention Center this year. The Waterfront Place was a great venue for this year's conference.

Jim Cropper asked for approval to adjourn the business meeting. It was approved and the business meeting was adjourned and the Conference was at it's end.