

Cochise County Extension Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

December 03, 2021, 11:00am – 1:00pm, Riverview/Coronado Dairy, Willcox, AZ

Chairman Dennis Moroney welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 11:09am.

Introductions

- Advisory Board and alternate members present: Gwen Calhoun, Aaron Cardona, Barbara Clark, Tyler Curry, Dennis Moroney, Daniella Reidmiller, Paul Sebesta, Alan Seitz, James (Stu) Stewart, Nathan Watkins, Moiria White, and Jason Zibart (12)
- UArizona personnel present: Sharon Buono, Connie Forsyth, Jan Groth, Randy Norton, Joshua Sherman, Mekenna Smith, Charlotte Taylor, Evelyn Whitmer, and Ashley Wright. (9)
- Guests present: None

There were no minutes from the previous meeting.

New Business

Advisory Board: Function and Responsibilities

- Extension Board Handout, from Graham County, was provided to all members present.
- All members were provided with copies of the External Advisory Council, and Equivalent, Guidance form (Keep one, sign one), Advisory Boards / AZ Revised Statutes, Roles and Responsibilities, AZ Cooperative Extension History, Cooperative Extension Focus Group report 2013.
- Cooperative Extension has been around since the early 1900's and is a part of the Land Grant University. Cooperative Extension was set up in each county in the state and divided into three main categories,
 - 4-H Youth Development
 - 4-H Clubs
 - Development of youth
 - Ag and Natural Resources
 - Production
 - Large Production Agriculture
 - Home Horticulture
 - Commercial Horticulture
 - Master Gardeners
 - Livestock
 - Range
 - Water Wise
 - Urban Use
 - Agricultural Use
 - Family and Consumer Health Sciences
 - Nutrition
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)
 - Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
 - Building Healthy Communities
 - Parenting
 - Financial Literacy
 - Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) (Not in Cochise County)

Program Area / Issue Identification Exercise

- 4-H

- Moiria – Lack of Leadership, Volunteers, and Participation
- Alan – Concerns of what we’ve seen in last few years, Lack of Youth Involvement, Enrollment Numbers Declining
- Nathan – Would like to see the program revitalized
- Aaron – Need more volunteers, Bridge the programs
- Dennis – Concerned about 4-H in our county, Youth are our future, Not Attracting youth, Agriculture is the most essential industry on the planet – hungry people don’t get much done.
- Tyler – I want to get involved and help.
- AG / NR
 - Dennis – Water Resources, Access to Meat Processing
 - Paul – Water, Succession Plan
 - Moiria – Water Concerns, Access to Meat Processing
 - Alan – Water Resources
 - Nathan – Same as previously mentioned, Cost of Implements, Alternative Use
 - Aaron – Water, Agriculture and how the rural populations are changing, need a viable market for young people to step into, moving produce into sectors such as food banks and other programs to get it to the populations in need, Funding (Grants), Programs are too isolated need to connect them to meet the needs. Need more “Josh’s” for organic growing.
 - Paul – Ag Job Market
 - Tyler – Water Issues
 - Barbara – Appropriate agriculture to work within water resources to provide food and fiber locally and beyond, promoting local ag, meat processing area, trouble with processing beef and goats, young people brought in through apprenticeships, encourage young people to be self-employed, empower youth to connect to local communities both socially and economically.
 - Stu – Water, Meat Processing – especially goat and lamb on a USDA level, growth in the area means getting products out, Inefficiency in agriculture production, being aware of regulations and exemptions, there is enough food it is a matter of getting it to the people.
 - Added note: from comments – Small Acreage, county regulations
- FCHS
 - Jason – Nutrition, Global Resources for those without access, Intervention, Connecting local growers with those in need
 - Gwen – Food scarcity, not located close enough to food, no transportation, community gardens, healthy eating, lack of knowledge of Cooperative Extension – what it is, what it does, importance of farming, good nutrition, outreach information.
 - Daniella – Increasing physical activity in schools, small breaks – brain breaks, mental health

Extension Operations

COVID Update

- University is fully open, went through phased transition, able to hold meetings with some restrictions including masks/social distancing in any University buildings, many working remotely, University vaccination policy is in place, fully vaccinated or provide documentation of medical or religious exemption, all University employees must upload one of these forms of documentation to the University website by January 18, 2022, vaccination policy does not apply to advisory board.

Budget Update: Sharon introduced herself to the board and presented the budget

- Income sources include
 - State/Smith Lever (58%)
 - Primarily faculty and staff salaries
 - Grant/Federal (10%)
 - Faculty, Staff, ERE, Operations, Travel
 - Gift (2%)
 - Staff, Operations, Other Activities, Specific Program-related expenses
 - Cash/Other (13%)
 - Staff, Operations, Program related expenses
 - County (17%)
 - Staff, Operations Travel, Rent, Building, Vehicle Maintenance
- Projected Usage of Funds
 - Personnel – 83%
 - General Expenses – 16%
 - Travel – 1%
- New vehicles include a truck each, Ashley (2020 Chevy Silverado 4x4 \$31,743), Josh (2021 Dodge Ram 2500 4x4 \$39,198), and a car for Evelyn (2020 Nissan Altima \$28,027).
- Used vehicles include a SUV for 4-H program (2013 Ford Escape \$12,132, two mini vans one for the Oral Health Program (no longer active) 2007 Odyssey \$4,900), and one for the EFNEP program (2018 Dodge Caravan \$18,335)
- Disposed fleet vehicle 1995 Dodge Ram truck (Federal surplus auction)

New Positions

- Dr. Silvertooth stepped down as Extension Director, he's back in his department position. Ed Martin is the new Interim Extension Director for the state. New search committee in place, there may be internal candidates. It is a national search and advertised nationally. The timeline is still up in the air, goal to fill by next fiscal year.
- New Extension Weed Specialist Jose' Dias, starts 01/03/22.
- Soil Health Specialist Debankur Sanyal, also early Jan.
- An Irrigation and Water Engineer Extension Specialist will be hired soon, Randy will serve on that committee, will be advertised in Jan. More than likely based at the Maricopa Ag Center or in Tucson with water responsibilities in irrigation water issues, this is a statewide position.
 - The board noted the importance of lobbying for rural Arizona, need more help and direction in rural areas.
- A new livestock specialist has been hired; Dr. Joslyn Beard came on last spring (May 2021). A search committee has been put together for the hiring of the new FCHS statewide director.
- Ashley is on the search committee for the Animal & Comparative Biomedical Sciences (ACBS) director position, they hope to get it posted soon.
- Will be hiring a Nutrition Specialist, the previous specialist has retired, Evelyn will serve on that committee. Position will be based in Tucson overseeing the federal program.
- New agricultural internship positions: the state legislature appropriated half a million dollars annually for an ag apprenticeship program. Ethan Orr is the lead on this right now as the search is on to find someone to administer the program. The program will bring 200 interns over a two-year period. If we can be successful in finding people to participate in this program, it is believed the legislature will continue to fund it. The faculty in Cochise County has already talked over some different opportunities, if you think of any please let

us know. An application process to come, applicants will be reviewed, it will more than likely be a committee overseeing those. These internships would be “on farm”, for instance if Moiria wanted to have an apprentice, this person would be working with this entity, this would also cover some of the risks such as insurance cost increase due to internship on premises the idea is that the internship costs will cover that. The goal is to get more young people involved in agriculture and give them opportunities to get hands on experience.

- 4-H Youth Development Agent Position, Peter Hooper has resigned effective 11/30/21, we now have the opportunity to decide what that position will look like, where it will be stationed in Cochise County. That position is committed to be refilled and I would like feedback from the advisory board. Is this going to be a county agent and an Extension director, there might be an opportunity to hire a new Extension director for Cochise County. Currently we have Mekenna Smith working through the Willcox office, we’ve just moved her from half time to full time (1 FTE). Luis is currently located in Douglas and working full time. No one in Sierra Vista, do we need a part time there?
 - Moiria: Exclusive to Cochise County, exclusive to 4-H (not including director position), based out of Willcox (with knowledge of driving the county), full time with primary focus on 4-H, based out of Willcox will send the right message to the dissenters that are still on the fence, and then another position, program coordinator, based in Sierra Vista, of at least halftime.
 - Evelyn: The biggest population of youth is in Sierra Vista, the second biggest is Douglas, and then Willcox and different smaller areas.
 - Dennis: Active counts by club (4-H reg. report), no way to justify that effort unless a big part of it is in recruitment of leadership and then members. What is the thought of those who defected in Willcox with the livestock alternative and what about a future with 4-H, are they set on mounting it as an independent development?
 - Moiria: The quarrel is with Cochise County Fair and not necessarily with 4-H. Part of the issue that it created, prior to the “divorce” is you have kids in 4-H or FFA, kids getting the education piece of it that makes it work, it’s not about the animals but the kids, so now because of this split, because of the issues that were happening in 4-H, there is this “other youth” category (Cochise County Fair), kids can show their animals without education, club, or leadership components. Both the Cochise County Fair and the Expo allow this other youth category so that’s the struggle. There is a definite desire for the formal club (4-H Program), we need the right fix, the right person in there, we can bring it back, it is not dead, the love of 4-H still exists in people. It needs to be a livestock person, 4-H isn’t only livestock, it needs to be a person who gets livestock, that is the only way to bring it back in this county. Now, you can grow in other areas, so these are opportunities for a program coordinator in Sierra Vista to focus on STEM absolutely, but we need someone who understands livestock, someone who came through the ranks.
 - Nathan: In agreement, this is what we had in the past and it worked well. The person in Willcox totally focused in Willcox, and the person in Sierra covered most every other project.
 - Dennis: A unique personality is needed in Sierra Vista to involve military youth who may have moved 15-20 times before graduating high school and believes those programs were very successful. These numbers (4-H reg. report) are

- horrible, not that we are all about numbers, but it is going to be extremely hard position, or couple of positions, to fill because of the holes to fill to get back in order.
- Moiria: Incoming personnel to understand rural, understand these communities, people who know how to talk to rural people.
 - Stu: If the focus is on minority you need to cater to that minority group. Build the program for the audience.
 - Moiria: My club is primarily Hispanic, that is internal, and each club has that, but we need the leadership at the county level to help guide that. Thankful for CE staff (Tricia / Connie) and their guidance. There are always opportunities, need to find the leadership to guide the volunteers in clubs. I could not have done it without the CE office, I know my job is to form the bridge between my club and the Extension.
 - Dennis: It is a position that needs support.
 - Josh: Resources available for this new agent.
 - Mekenna: Would like to see someone who understands the EXPO, someone who isn't going to shut them out, who will work with both sides and understanding the conflict.
 - Barbara: A local hire, agrees with what everyone is saying, and emphasize the social and community aspects and character building are the most important parts of 4-H. May be small as it rebuilds, need to build, and share those character traits so we can become more inclusive. This separation of differences is not good.
 - Nathan: 4-H is a lifestyle, it is a 24/7, 365, outgoing an everybody's your friend kind of person, not making enemies, If we can find a dynamic person like that we will have a program.
 - Moiria: Would like an advisory board member on the hiring committee.
 - Josh: Including community members on the search and screen.
 - Randy: Work toward a connectedness between the hiring committee and the person doing the hiring. We need to be listening to those spending the time with the candidates.
 - Alan: Can those suggestions be made at the start to those who will make the final decision that we would like someone that is already involved in 4-H. The program needs an agent to rebuild what had historically been a good county wide program that is now gone.
 - Dennis: Need to remember it's about developing character. It is the components of the program that will carry through, such as public speaking and being a good communicator will help develop the youth. Those are the attributes we are advocating for when speaking of character development in our kids in rural communities/settings.
 - Jan: Important to education youth in what 4-H involvement could lead to, not just the best capital account, I think people forget that aspect.
 - Nathan: We need 4-H and we need to lobby for it.
 - If there are any other comments, please don't hesitate to contact Randy directly.
 - The County Extension Director (CED) position is in the works. It could be an internal position. I have heard from all here that this new 4-H position should not come in with surrounding county administrative support duties.

Reports

Faculty/Program Updates

Randy – Primarily with field crops, several research projects around southeastern AZ with cotton and corn, with Nutrien corn hybrid trials and products for nematode control on dried beans, recently contacted by Riverview to look at the work they are doing with a switch from summer forages to winter forages, triticale trials for them, we are in second year, looking at 15 different varieties, I commend them for looking at new alternative water savings. The Southeast Arizona Farm and Ranch Show a lot of us are involved, we support the community, it has a long history and continues to run, and is happening again this year.

Evelyn – Received a proposal from the Extension Advisory Team (EAT) to do collective impact, involved with different advisories nationally in this new position will be working with the research team the CRED Team. I would like to do a presentation in the future. Charlotte, in attendance today, is on the Building Healthy Communities Team, will be doing health summit, just finishing up leadership academy which is changing to community leadership academy it will be distributed statewide. The POWOW up and running in Douglas, too much produce in Benson that it was hurting local farmers, came up with a popup. Applied for funding for a produce van, possibly doing DCC's working with farmers in the area. Two NIPPA grants, Hispanics serving institute grant. Done rotary presentations, cover all topics we have in CE. Doing town halls in communities looking at collective impacts and delivering on deliverables. Sepp working on farmers and ranchers not having enough food for their animals and on getting federal funding. Working with State of Arizona on oral health grant see if we can get more funding in. Chiricahua has federal funding now to build a huge building in Sierra Vista with smaller satellite locations for all health services for little kids. We have financial literacy, parenting, nutrition programs, this is mostly what I've been working on.

Josh – Tree/nut program is active pecan and pistachio, national effort for pecan industry including variety, records, etc. for long term record, establishing NMSU as lead. In pistachio working toward annual meeting and programming, Covid put it to a halt. Viticulture program grant will bring a two-day program together locally to establish a mission and directives toward forming a viticulture research center. Ashley and I are gearing up for a new Beginning Farmers & Ranchers Series. Another new project funded for enhancing pomegranate production in AZ, in seven locations to study 15 varieties looking at their viability, how they perform at different elevations, to provide more scientific based recommendations to clientele.

Jan – Master Gardener class starts in January, we are almost full, had six more calls this week. We hope to get started on our workshops post Covid. Horticulturally we get more calls about why plants are dying, and new to the area what to plant. Working with the city to update our ornamental plant list, it is archaic and many plants on that list cannot be purchased locally. Will be working with the City of Sierra Vista on their westside, what to plant it will be a fun challenge. Hosted symphony in the gardens, hosted the chamber of commerce, on December 21st we are hosting cocoa with Santa including a hot chocolate bar, live music, and open to all.

Kim – Rangeland monitoring, 21 years working with US Forest Service, mainly out of Safford Ranger District, some in Sierra Vista and Douglas Ranger Districts, ranchers with state and private lands, mostly in southern half of county. Working in mesquite trials for herbicide and mechanical removal, documenting effectiveness of herbicides on Chihuahuan Scrub. Establishing a network of rain gauges on rangelands to fill in gaps between official stations, this is helpful with interpreting changes in plant communities and impact of draught. Forage nutrition studies look

at the nutritional value of plant species and how ecological sites influence nutritional levels. Chair of the Rangelands Working Group for Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Restoration Partnership, identify priority projects in area of water conservation, agricultural viability, wildlife habitat restoration to further the military mission of the fort. Part of a working group in San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area that looks at rangelands within the conservation area, how they are managed, specifically the four ranches that graze cattle within the boundary. Working with the five Natural Resource Conservation Districts in Cochise County and the AZ Land & Water Trust to provide workshops on a variety of rangeland and ranching topics such as soils, small acreage landowners, noxious weeds, and wills and trusts to carry ranching on to the next generation.

Ashley – Completed first Artificial Insemination (AI) Clinic in the southeast region, three days at the Santa Rita Ranch, had twelve slots and filled fourteen. Evaluation came back good, looking to make that a yearly event. We do have some capital funds, putting in with Nate Brawley, Graham County, to get a cow breeding box on a trailer with two stalls that can be pulled by a pickup truck, a ready-made AI facility. Clinic opens opportunities to bring genetics that would not otherwise be affordable, can buy semen for \$20-\$30 a straw. The Beginning Farmer Rancher series (in Benson) coming up March - May with the last event at Riverview talking about how one can complement the other, while this is large scale it can be scaled down. Ag Day event February 9th, working on agenda for that. Range Livestock Nutrition Workshop will be in Willcox, March 5th, half range issues, half livestock issues, this is part of a traveling road show. Equine Symposium, full day Jan. 22nd, draws over 200 people, hands on demonstrations to high level industry experts, excited to be back in person. WaterWise has been doing everything virtually, were back in schools briefly, now back to virtually, guides for homeowners and such. Nicole resigned; we now have Alex filling that position. Mary Ann has submitted her retirement for the first of the year. The new position is in process of being posted. Domestic well water testing is available through ADHS. Cochise CE are the collection points.

Mekenna – Fifth generation 4-H, 4-H'er then leader. Working to rebuild the program in Willcox. Received the official insurance to kick off 4-H meetings at the Willcox theater in town, found a community club leader who will potentially help with Cloverbuds, bridging the gap between expo and 4-H. The dog program is allowing kids to show their dogs at the expo and at the county fair, working toward bridging the gap in dairy goats. Excited and ready to roll on club finances as well and some other 4-H ideas (leadership camps, activities, etc.).

Josh & Randy – Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) funded for next three years, both coordinators for that program. Funds will make available putting together an annual sustainability conference focused on sustainable ag practices.

Next Meeting Date: TBD (Before April)

Alan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Moiria seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Connie Forsyth