

**Need a Name - Ag. Practices Task Force - Meeting 2 - December 18, 2017, 7:00 PM -
Agenda and Notes**

Attendance:

- Ashar Nelson
- Elizabeth Burdine
- Barnaby Feder
- Jeremy
- Susan Smiley
- Letitia Wulff
- Ben Gleason
- Steve Maier
- Ross Conrad
- Barrie Bailey
- Wally Bailey
- Lynn Cole
- Jon Copans

Notes:

Ashar expressed the desire to name the group. Suggestion – the Future of Agriculture. Agreed to make suggestions offline. Definitions of Regenerative Agriculture from Rodale, Paul Hawken’s Drawdown, and other sources were distributed and discussed. There was the desire to establish appropriate measures for progress. % organic matter in the soil and depth of topsoil were both raised as possibilities. The long-term nature of these measures was acknowledged. A question of tactics was raised with a preference expressed for working in a collaborative fashion with voluntary compliance that also establishes trust and builds community. Organic, Conservation, and Regenerative were all discussed as different gradations. Organic practices do not necessarily result in building carbon in the soil. Conservation practices often involve synthetic fertilizers and herbicides.

The question was raised about how this Task Force will make progress? The 5 Action Steps prioritized at the first meeting of the group were read. Steve Maier also described the way the other Task Forces are embarking on research and engaging other stakeholders so as to be sensitive to others working in the space.

No-till practices were described in some detail. This is an important step forward but there are concerns about application of Round-Up to kill cover-crops. A desire was expressed to get some of the conventional dairy folks to the table, and also to engage other experts at UVM Extension. How do we engage the existing farming community in the county? The LEED example was cited, and the emergence of the Living Building classification to push beyond LEED. Could there be a similar LEED labelling system for milk and other agricultural products? As with the transition to organic, given the struggles of VT dairy farmers, the question they will ask is – who is going to pay for that?

There was further discussion of the goals of the task force. Are we trying to establish a standard and require compliance or move directionally along a spectrum with an overall goal of making progress? Is the goal to reverse global warming or to sustain area agriculture in a time of climate change? Both, and models for sustaining agriculture shouldn’t at the same time exacerbate

climate impacts. To be aware of – the bulk of climate impact from VT agriculture is the result of methane coming from cows rather than field practices – “the elephant in the room.” The consumer side was also discussed – change the market – shift demand to less impactful and more sustainable foods. Are area farmers well-positioned for these shifts? How do we help farmers get ahead of the curve? How do we provide alternatives?

Next Steps – Meeting frequency and timing was discussed. There was a willingness and desire to meet twice monthly through March. 2nd and 4th Monday, but not January 8. A doodle poll will be distributed to find the best date in advance of a January 22nd meeting.

Homework – Everyone agreed to take on assignments to complete in advance of a next meeting:
Susan Smiley – Will reach out to the coops – Agrimark or St. Albans Coop. Talk to their marketing people.

Lynn – UVM presentation on soils and water. Will reach out to Extension when the timing is right.

Ashar – Research LEED rating system.

Barnaby – gradation for LEED analog in Agriculture. Contact UVM Sustainable Ag. people. “Linda Berlin”

Letitia – Will wordsmith a definition of regenerative ag.

Ben – Methane and cattle. Will research the total effect.

Ross – Will reach out to state agencies – who is developing what on regenerative Ag.?

Barrie – Mark Cesario – get the background

Lynn – Contacts in Denmark – net zero projects including some farms

Wally – Contact John Turner – veteran – Wild Roots farm.

Elizabeth – Demand. Bring the buyers in. Agrimark and St. Albans.

Jeremy – Will dig further into emissions data.

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introductions - what moves you to participate? (10 minutes)
- 1.5 (Added) How do we define Regenerative Agriculture? (Added to the agenda at the suggestion of Letitia).
2. Review notes from last meeting (10 minutes)
3. What are our goals?
What are we hoping to achieve?
What problem are we trying to solve? (20 minutes)
4. What actions can we take to meet our goals/solve our problems? (20 minutes)
5. How do you want to work on these issues? What would be first steps? (5 minutes)
6. Who else should we engage, as both partners and resources? (5 minutes)
7. What are our Next Steps? (10 minutes)