

## MEMORANDUM

**To: Molly Gray, Lieutenant Governor**  
**Fr: Jahnessa Ryea**  
**Re: The 5th Annual North American Saffron Workshop**  
**Date: February 26, 2021**

### **Background:**

#### **Remarks to be filmed in advance**

*March 18, 2021 , 1:00-4:30pm via Zoom. Lt. Governor has been asked to speak for 5 minutes to open the event and welcome the participants.*

### **Speaking Order/Attendees:**

1:00 – 1:20 Welcome: Margaret Skinner, Univ. of Vermont. Molly Gray, Vermont Lieutenant Governor & Anson Tebbetts, VT Secretary of Agriculture

1:20 – 2:20 Saffron Plot Preparation and Cultivation: Arash Ghalehgalabbahani, Univ. of Vermont. Rahmatallah Gheshm, Univ. of Rhode Island

2:20 – 3:00 Grower Shorts: Sean Lindley, Garlic Company of VT. Jette Mandl-Abramson, Calabash Gardens, VT. John & Patti Padua, Cobble Creek Nursery, VT

3:00 – 3:15 Sponsor Shout Outs

3:15 – 4:15 Saffron Diseases Michael Brownbridge, BioWorks, Inc. Simon Avery, Peace & Plenty Farm, CA

4:15 – 4:30 Closing Remarks: Margaret Skinner, UVM

### **Suggested Speaking Points (5 Mins):**

- Hello everyone -
- I am so grateful to be able to share a few words with you all and welcome you, virtually, from Vermont(!), to the Fifth Annual North American Saffron Workshop.
- For those of you not from Vermont, I hope we can welcome you back to our state in person in the years ahead.
- In particular, I want to thank Arash Ghalehgalabbahani, for inviting me to speak today
- *Shoutout Anson Tebbetts?*
- As you all well know, we've come together today to discuss one of the most coveted and rapidly emerging industries in agriculture.
- Saffron is the most expensive spice and medicinal plant in the world, with a short harvest season of around 2-3 weeks.
- The fall harvest of Saffron occurs after most other crops work is completed, it is a perfect crop for North America, and Vermont, with a high retail price

- Our small businesses need help, and farmers seeking alternatives to traditional crops to boost their dwindling revenues have generated a lot of interest and sought to start growing Saffron
- In 2015 UVM scientists began research to determine if saffron could be grown in Vermont, and found that indeed it could be grown successfully in the field and in high tunnels.
- The greatest challenge remains securing funding to support this initiative. While many growers recognize the potential of growing saffron in Vermont and other US suitable locations, for most agricultural funding sources it remains too innovative and risky to support.

**Attachments:**