

Working lands?

## Legislative Prep Worksheet – Agency of Ag

### 1. Pro-active

- \$ Water quality/TMDL – need Ag positions.
- \$ Lab – need money from Capital Bill.
  - Food Safety Modernization Act (may need state fund, may get funds from FDA, still unclear).
  - Rural Enterprises – address changing nature of agriculture (value added) and address any regulatory or other gaps – interagency work, will be worked on with group attending Land Use meetings. Report was due Nov 1 – need to check status. Complex issue, probably better to avoid this year.
- \$ Working Lands – will there be funding? Board continues to ask for big \$\$.
- \$ Position for dairy processor facilities, only have 3 positions and facilities are growing exponentially – 20 new this year.
  - Solar on primary ag soils? Also Land Use meeting issue.

### 2. Defensive

- Agency of Ag budget so small, they now need to cut programs that legislature will likely be unhappy about.
- Ag Housekeeping bill – would prefer not to have one, Will Stevens always brings it up – now that he is no longer in State House, may avoid this year.
- Neonicotinoid insecticide – will likely see a bill to ban this. Controversial and nuanced – not viable to ban, but then we will be in position to defend it and seen as killing bees. All corn seed in VT is treated with this out-of-state before we buy it, huge \$\$ in having to regulate this. Report due Jan 15.
- Rural VT – Expand sales and/or distribution of raw milk sales in VT and raw milk uses including processed products.
- Farm Labor Housing possibly – good interagency collaboration happening now.
- Agricultural Sales tax exemptions – pushback from farmers, may come up.
- Agency staff to support beekeepers in state, likely to come up.

### 3. House-Keeping/Neutral

- Ban on PCP-treated poles – definitely will arise again due to concerns with pipeline in Monkton. Agency of Ag doesn't have authority over this, would be problematic.
- Get rid of Ag/Forest Products Development Board (Lucy and Mike Snyder are partners from ACCD/ANR on this). Does nothing, agencies have no capacity to staff it. Merge with Working Lands Enterprise Board.
- Amendments to large farm law for clarity.
- Updated livestock import regulations.
- Animal health statutes updated.

- Antibiotic residue avoidance through completion of training program for producers.
- Language to allow Ag to enforce Food Code collaborative with Dept. of Health.
- Reword Section 2744a on drug violations in plain English.

4. Interagency

- TMDL – ANR, VTrans, ACCD etc
- Lab – ANR
- Rural enterprises and value-added ag – ACCD, Mary Peterson, Ron Shems, Mike Snyder
- Solar on prime ag soil – ANR/Tax/ACCD et al

5. Questions/other?

- Ag Budget Woes: Some programs cut so much already, best to just cancel whole program. On the other hand, even small programs with small dollars keep Ag relevant and at the table for important initiatives.