

**From:** Markowitz, Deb [Deb.Markowitz@vermont.gov]  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 07, 2012 10:52 AM  
**To:** LaClair, Jolinda; Mears, David; Johnson, Justin; Ross, Chuck; Bothfeld, Diane; Recchia, Chris  
**Subject:** RE: Ag and DEC Labs

Thanks for taking the lead on this Jolinda. We think this is a great idea, and involving staff will help us identify and resolve potential issues early on. Deb

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**From:** LaClair, Jolinda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 03, 2012 6:58 PM  
**To:** Mears, David; Johnson, Justin; Ross, Chuck; Bothfeld, Diane; Recchia, Chris; Markowitz, Deb  
**Cc:** LaClair, Jolinda; Leland, Jim  
**Subject:** Ag and DEC Labs

Good Evening! It's the new year and time to forge ahead with our discussion about the options and opportunities to merge the Agency of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Conservation Labs. Justin and I met the week before the holidays and have both discussed the pursuit with our respective Lab Teams – positive feedback received about exploring possibilities. While there are many uncertainties that will remain until a decision is made about the Lab's future location, a united, cross-Agency Lab should be in a stronger position to chart a course forward.

As Justin and David know, the Agency of Ag met w/VMEC (VT Manufacturing Extension Center) to discuss an assessment of the Ag Lab – this had been planned pre-Irene though didn't occur until November. The conversation included the potential for a merger with the DEC Lab, and an offer from VMEC to facilitate a Free ½ day session to explore lab merger opportunities and challenges. Justin and I have agreed to accept this offer (graciously) and you will see a follow up email to Bob Ziter, VMEC Ex Dir, to arrange a forum which will include all Chem Lab staff – Ag and DEC. Justin and I will meet w/Bob and his team prior to the session to frame q's and share knowledge of any dynamics.

Our staff are already thinking about the advantages of a merger – from growing lab testing within the state and regionally, to sharing resources and adding certifications. From past experience, we know that employee support will only occur if this is a bottom-up process, including all affected staff in the dialogue from the start.

We've seen a number of bright lights as a result of Irene...this may be another. We will keep all apprised throughout the process. - Jolinda

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