

Members Present:

Mike Farwell, Uncle's Farm
Jodie Jordan, Alewives Brook Farm
Hanne Tierney, Cornerstone Farm
Simon Frost, Thirty Acre Farm
Sean & Lauren Pignatello, Swallowtail Farm
Dan Perron, Sumner Valley Farm
Doug Donahue, Balfour Farm

Grace Peace, Merrifield Farm
Matt McInnis, North Spore
Dominic Pascarelli, Two Farmers' Farm
David Koubek, Good Shepherd Farm
Jan Goranson, Goranson Farm
David Buchanan, Origin Fruit/Old Ocean House
Jaime Berhanu, Lalibela Farm

Hanne: there's been lots of lively discussion throughout the week since this committee's last meeting. She suggests an open discussion on the committee's consideration to retract the previous proposal made at the last Buy-In Committee Meeting and to consider instead, updating/editing the PFMA's current Buy-in rule. Hanne has prepared a new version for the committee to edit and agree upon as a new proposal for the full membership to vote on. (See seperately: new draft proposal)

General Discussion:

Simon: doesn't want to see items limited at market. Doesn't want to see current vendors excluded from the market. The goal of the market is to provide food and that includes everything that is currently available at market

Matt: The new draft looks very fair.

Simon: Likes the new draft

Hanne: We need to refresh our understanding of the 25% rule. We also need to clarify "leasing", etc of crops, trees, so on.

Requests a show of hands to go forward with the new draft: 10 hands of support.

Discussion about proposed Buy-In Meetings: the draft proposal calls to add a 3rd annual meeting specific for Buy-Ins to determine what voids exist in the market. Those voids would then to be allowed to be bought in by anyone in the market with proper signage and compliance with 25% rule.

General Discussion continues:

Dan: wants to really consider the impact on how it will affect the way current vendors are operating. He'd like to see some protection for current vendors.

David B: How do we avoid developing a popularity contest happening through voting

Hanne: We are a very diverse group, anyone can voice their opinion and she encourages others to come to meeting and vote.

Jodie: Can we do absentee ballots for all votes?

Hanne: Whenever a paper ballot is requested, it will be implemented. This proposal would make it a total of 3 meetings per year- roughly planned a year in advance, folks should be willing to come and be part of the discussion. We are a cooperatively run market- part of the process is hearing what other people have to say. You cannot do that through absentee ballots. Anyone can make a motion on any issue.

Dan P: What will the Buy-In Meeting look like? It may help us to understand how that will work?

Hanne: TO-DO: Will work on writing that up.

Jaime: Suggests creating vendor categories 1)Farmer 2)On Farm-Producer or? and considering a percentage per market of farm processors to preserve the intention of the PFM to prioritize supporting Maine farmers.

Hanne: Not sure how to define/word a farm-producer
(Discussion includes maybe this should be considered a guideline and not a rule.)

Matt: I think it would be good to be more open to processors

Grace: I like this market because it is strictly farmers.

Lauren: example of the Brunswick Winter Market shows how adding lots on non farm vendors can dilute the market.

Hanne: What changes do we need to make to the draft before going forward with this proposal?

Grace: meeting explanation as mentioned above.

-Group talks through the draft proposal and edits as needed

-Question about including the word "ferments" as an approved processed item instead of listing out specific products. *In favor: 2, everyone else abstained.* "Ferments" remains in draft.

Discussion of the 25% Rule:

Hanne: Current rule is for 25% of daily items for sale can be bought in. Jan suggested in an email that we could measure sales receipts for a single market day, on a daily basis. Its sounds like a fair way to measure, but very labor intensive.

Doug: concerned about asking farmers to provide their sales info

Jan: if you need to buy in, you should be able to quantify. This info should be easy to provide.

-Question: would the data be collected at every market or once a year?

Grace: throughout the year, her buy-ins change drastically.

David B: Confused about the exact definition of a Buy-In. What if you're sharing equipment or labor, but do not own the land or have any written agreement- is the crop considered a buy-in?

Hanne: without a written agreement/lease, then the crop would be considered a buy-in.

Lauren: would that be considered foraging?

Hanne: we don't currently have language to clarify that.

Doug: **If you are doing 100% of the management of your crop, there is no question of it not being a bought in item.**

Lauren: Do we need to slow this discussion down? There is so much to figure out.

Hanne: As we create the rules, there is always an option to change the rules and consider all of our ideas. Healthy discussion is really important to this process.

-Hanne's example of what is acceptable under the PFMA's current definition of the 25% rule: a vendor can have from their own raisin: 1 head of lettuce, 1 cabbage, 1 bunch of carrots, and 4,000 pints of bought in strawberries.

Jan: The current model/definition is an unfair disadvantage to the farmer that is actually growing the crop.

Grace: Not all buy-ins are bad, she buys in blueberries but she does some of the labor yet they're still considered a buy in.

Hanne: is there some other method to quantify? Visual? Measurement of table space buy in items take up? Let's find a way to quantify without asking for daily sales. There may be vendors who don't have quantities recorded.

Jan: Folks must have some management system to be keeping track of that info.

Hanne: main issues here are 1) Identify what's a Buy-in and 2) Is it 25%? We just have to decide what that 25% measures. Hanne thinks it should be by the day.

Grace: In the spring, buys in lots of strawberries to help with cashflow to pay employees until their crop comes in.

Hanne: We need to consider what is best for the farmer. It needs to be enforceable.

Could it be 25% of potential gross sales for the day?

Simon: The market should not be a place where we take advantage of the customer. This is not a distributor market, and most customers believe we have grown everything we're selling. Our intentions should not only be about making money.

Mike: I disagree

Hanne: This issue requires a lot of trust between farmers and between farmer and customers.

David K: Can we have a sign available at the Info Booth that lists who is really growing items at market? To encourage shoppers to buy those items from the farms listed?

Hanne: That is why we created the orange Buy-In Tag. David does not have a computer to print the Buy-In Tags, can they be available at the Info Booth?

Hanne: would like to see farmers taking responsibility for their signage and printing them out themselves so the Info Booth doesn't have to be supplying that.

Jan: anyone buying in should take the responsibility of printing the signs.

Simon: will try to have copies of extra signs to help David out.

Jaime: maybe we can compile the list of approved buy-in products to be printed for the market managers to make their enforcement more efficient.

Recap: committee to propose updating the PFMA's definition of the 25% buy-in rule to be 25% of a vendor's potential gross sales for one market day.

Hanne: **(FOR COMMITTEE TO-DO)**: please comment and respond to the Google Doc of the draft proposal online so we can continue the conversation with as many voices and ideas as possible. The finished version will be brought as a proposal to the Membership Meeting, March 19th.

PFMA Enforcement Rules:

Simon reads the following aloud:

Violation Rule from current version of the PFMA Rules document:

12. Violation of the rules.

a. Upon receiving a complaint that a member has violated a rule, the market's steering committee members shall investigate the complaint. If the majority of these members find that a violation has occurred the member in question will be warned and asked to comply with the market rules. If the same member is found a second time to be in noncompliance with the same market rules such action will cancel the membership of the accused member. Any member subject to such action will be notified and given the opportunity to answer the charge at the meeting of market officers and Steering Committee called to consider such charges.

Simon also reads aloud a modified version that Hanne wrote up with suggestions of edits to the Violation Rule. To be finalized and included in full proposal at Membership Meeting.

(Reminder to the membership that your signature on your annual application states you have read and understand the PFMA Rules)

Minutes taken by Jaime Berhanu, Lalibela Farm