

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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University of Maine Board of Agriculture  
5782 Winslow Hall, Room 101  
Orono, Maine 04469-5782  
January 3, 2002

Senator Richard Kneeland  
Representative Linda McKee  
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
115 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0115

Dear Senator Kneeland and Representative McKee:

As the Chair of the University of Maine Board of Agriculture for calendar year of 2001, I am pleased to submit the attached report of Board activities. As you know, the Board is committed to working with the University to address the needs of Maine agriculture. The Board and the University have made substantial progress by working closely together to accomplish the results outlined in the report. As members of the Board, you have seen first hand the positive working relationship that has been developed and the progress that has been made. The Board is especially grateful for the three key agricultural-related research and extension positions filled during 2001. We are grateful to the University administration for their support of these positions. We will continue to work closely with the University during 2002 to carefully consider the potential impact that budget cuts could have on the University's ability to serve the needs of Maine agriculture.

Members of the Board would be happy to meet with the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry at your convenience to review this report and to answer your questions.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ford Stevenson".

Ford Stevenson, Chair  
Board of Agriculture

# University of Maine Board of Agriculture Annual Report for CY 2001

The University of Maine Board of Agriculture met twice during 2001 to discuss issues related to the agricultural research and extension programs at the University of Maine. The results of the meetings and highlights of the actions taken are summarized in this report to the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee of the Maine Legislature.

Several projects were completed at the experiment station farms that had been identified as high priorities in the long-range strategic plan. These include the construction of a livestock barn at the Witter Center, the drilling of a new irrigation well at Blueberry Hill Farm, and the completion of deer-proof fencing for the Lyle Littlefield Ornamentals Trial Garden in Orono. An irrigation well was also drilled at Highmoor Farm, but no water was found, even though the hole was drilled to a depth of 700 feet. In addition, the Maine Potato Board was successful in their grant applications to construct a state-of-the-art potato storage research facility at the Aroostook Farm in Presque Isle. The facility, which will cost around one million dollars, will be constructed in 2002.

The Board also met with Congressman Baldacci regarding the outlook for federal funding for agricultural extension and research programs. It was noted that the agricultural programs of the University are highly dependent on federal funding. Both "formula funds" and special grant funds are crucial to the agricultural programs, providing over \$4 million annually for agriculture and related research and extension programs at the University.

In 2001, the Board also conducted another survey of all known agricultural groups in Maine to determine their extension and research needs. Based on the needs identified and other needs identified a year earlier, the Board listed its priorities for new extension and/or research positions to address those needs. The highest priority was for an extension/research food science position. Other high-priority positions include an extension/research farm management position, a teaching/research landscape horticulture position and a teaching/research quantitative genetics position. The person filling the latter position would assist with the potato-breeding program and partially replace the loss associated with the unexpected death of Alvin Reeves, who was the potato breeder at Aroostook Farm. Some of these positions had been approved by the University to be filled, but action has been postponed due to a hiring moratorium at the University.

Considerable progress was made in 2001 to fill the positions recommended by the Board of Agriculture in 2000. The University administration approved three positions and hired people to fill them. The three positions are a livestock extension/research position, a vegetable extension/research position, and a teaching/research position in entomology.

Ford Stevenson was re-elected as chair of the Board of Agriculture for 2002. The Board will continue to work on innovative ways for the University to meet the research and education programs of the Maine agricultural community.