

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the  
**LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY**  
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library  
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from electronic originals  
(may include minor formatting differences from printed original)

**BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**  
Annual Report to Maine State Legislature and  
Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System

January 18, 2019

Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333

University of Maine System Board of Trustees  
Mr. James R. Erwin, Chair  
Board of Trustees Office  
15 Estabrooke Drive  
Orono, ME 04469

c: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
James H. Page, Chancellor, University of Maine System  
Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President, University of Maine

Dear Senator Dill, Representative Hickman and Distinguished Committee Members and Chair Erwin and Board of Trustees,

As Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of Agriculture, it is our pleasure to provide the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the University of Maine System Board of Trustees our annual report on the activities of the Board of Agriculture.

To begin we would like to refresh the memory of those who know the history and inform those who do not know the history regarding the formation and duties of the Board. The Board was created by the Legislature in 1997 during a time of shrinking budgets and extreme pressure on the University of Maine in its efforts to maintain agricultural research, teaching and outreach, all functions which given its land grant status should be integral to its mission. The Board was created within the University System to advise the Chancellor of the University of Maine System and the President of the University of Maine on matters concerning the operation and management of agricultural research at University Experiment Station facilities and farm based programs, including University of Maine

Cooperative Extension. The Board is to assist the Chancellor and the President in articulating the mission of the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station as it pertains to agriculture. This is a direct call to the agricultural community to support University agricultural programs in the Legislature. The Board is unique in that it is the only business sector with a legislative mandate to work with the Chancellor and the President.

The twenty members of the Board of Agriculture are a cross section of agriculture and aquaculture representatives, University personnel and government representatives whose goal is to create a partnership between the agricultural community, the Legislature and the University.

The Board met twice in the past year. In April the meeting was held in Augusta in order to facilitate meeting with Legislators at a lunch reception which was well attended by Senators and Representatives. John Rebar, Executive Director of Cooperative Extension, updated the board on the financial situation concerning Extension and relayed positive news that there are no planned budget cuts for the second year in a row. He also reported on one of the Board's concerns regarding hiring: the Board feels there should be some overlap between incoming faculty and outgoing faculty to insure continuity in research and outreach.

The Board was updated on a survey we requested from the University Extension. Dick Brzozowski, Food System Program Administrator, reported on the results of a questionnaire sent to farmers about their needs for agricultural engineering support. It was brought to the attention of the Board that the survey was not sent to aquaculture people, this will be corrected. Along with the discussion of the agriculture sector's general needs for engineering support, a request for an agriculture engineering position was discussed and approved by the Board, with more discussion and involvement of the College of Engineering to follow.

The Board was addressed by Dean Servello about faculty hires, current staffing at the University, the University's Blue Sky Plan and implementation of the initiatives identified in the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agricultural Roadmap. We noted the retirement of John Rebar from the Position of Executive Director of Cooperative Extension, thanked him for his service and wished him well.

The Board of Agriculture was represented at the Grand Opening ceremony of the University of Maine Extension Diagnostic and Research Laboratory in Orono. The members of the Board toured the facility last year and support the project.

Our November meeting was our introduction to the new President of the University of Maine, Joan Ferrini-Mundy. She expressed interest in the Board's activities and in the University's status as a land grant institution. She also mentioned a new initiative called Strategic Vision and Values: Defining Tomorrow at the University of Maine, intended to succeed the Blue Sky Program.

The Board met with and had extensive dialogue with Dean Humphrey of the College of Engineering about the agricultural engineering needs identified by the Board. The consensus is that such a need exists and the Board will work with Cooperative Extension and with the College of Engineering to move forward with this project. Cooperative Extension will create a job description for further discussion at a future meeting. The Board was also addressed by Chancellor Page who thanked the Board for our advocacy on a voter approved bond to help fund facility and infrastructure needs on the University system campuses.

The Board of Agriculture will continue to be an advocate for research and outreach at the University, understanding that a vibrant agricultural sector is important for the State of Maine and its people. Thank you for your interest in Maine agriculture, forestry and aquaculture in all its forms.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Meyerhans, Chair

Don Marean, Vice-Chair