

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)

The Board of Agriculture
5782 Winslow Hall
Orono, Maine 04469-5782
207/581-3202

January 3, 1999

Representative Wendy Pieh, Chairman
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture,
Conservation and Forestry
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0002

Dear Representative Pieh:

I am writing to you as the recently elected Chairman of the Board of Agriculture which was established by action of the 118th Legislature. This letter constitutes the Board's 1998 report to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry as required by statute.

The Board of Agriculture was formed over the summer and fall of 1998 in accordance with requirements set forth in the law. A membership list is attached.

The Board held its first meeting on November 10, 1998. We were briefed on the overall operation of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture and the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station. These units of the University of Maine operate in tandem and are closely interrelated.

The Board of Agriculture discussed the new research and development funds received by the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture. We examined 23 R & D proposals related to agriculture and expressed our views on the proposals. The Board suggested that some of the proposals be restructured to more clearly focus on agriculture-related opportunities and problems. Dean Wiersma agreed to the recommendations of the Board.

The Board also provided the University with suggestions and comments on its planning effort related to the formation of a Center for Agriculture at the University of Maine. The Chancellor's Task Force on Agriculture recommended the formation of the Center in its report to the Chancellor in May of 1998. After being briefed on the current status of the planning process, the Board of Agriculture suggested the Center be entitled the "Maine Agricultural Center" and that the planning for the Center should continue. The Board also asked that the overall concept for the Maine Agricultural Center be presented to the Chancellor's Task Force on Agriculture prior to its submission to the University of Maine System Board of Trustees for approval.

The next meeting of the Board, which will take place in February, 1999, will be devoted to a discussion of the issues and trends affecting Maine agriculture, with the goal of establishing broad guidelines that can be used to evaluate future research needs and priorities.

On behalf of the Board, I am requesting that the date for submitting a long-range plan for the Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension programs be extended to a later date. We believe that a comprehensive process to identify research needs must be undertaken before such a plan can be developed. We will begin this process at our meeting in February and expect that it will continue through the spring to allow commodity and other groups related to Maine agriculture time to provide input.

We are very enthusiastic about the outcome of our first meeting and we believe that we will be successful in strengthening the critical ties between our industry and the University of Maine System. We look forward to your support and will keep you fully informed as we proceed.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Judy Dimock", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Judy Dimock, Chair