

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)

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

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

Dear Senator Kneeland and Representative McKee:

As Chairman of the University of Maine Board of Agriculture for the year 2000 I am pleased to submit the annual report of Board activities. As you can see from the report, the Board continues to be committed to maintaining a strong relationship with the University. I am very pleased with the results of our efforts over the past two years. We have been able to more clearly identify industry needs and, with the help of University administration and staff, make significant progress in meeting those needs. The Board is to be commended for being able to look beyond commodity specific issues in order to assist the agricultural community as a whole. It has been very gratifying to see the progress that has been made in filling positions, in improvements at the research farms and, most importantly, in the recognition of the importance of agriculture to the Maine economy and to Maine people.

Ford Stevenson has been elected by the Board to be Chairman for the year 2001. He and I would be very pleased to meet with the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry at your convenience to review this report and to answer your questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Judy Dimock".

Judy Dimock

University of Maine Board of Agriculture Annual Report for CY 2000

The University of Maine Board of Agriculture had another busy and productive year in 2000. It accomplished several important goals during the year, which are highlighted in this report to the Maine Legislature.

The Board presented a long-range strategic plan to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry of the Legislature last spring. The plan addresses the agricultural mission of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station, including the experiment station farms located throughout the state. Members of the Board discussed the plan with the ACF Committee and indicated that the plan was an important step in solidifying the University's role in serving the needs of the agricultural community.

The plan addresses many of the needs that exist at the experiment station farms. Actions planned or ongoing at the farms include: the installation of new weather stations; a new barn and other building improvements at the Witter Center; new wells for irrigation at Blueberry Hill Farm and Highmoor Farm; leasing of additional land and plans to refurbish the old main building or construct a new one at Blueberry Hill Farm. Fencing has also been installed at the Lyle Littlefield Ornamental Trials Garden on the Orono campus to prevent damage caused by deer. Land purchases are also being considered at Blueberry Hill and Aroostook Farm and at the Witter Center.

Based on a 1999 survey of commodity groups and other agricultural organizations conducted by the Board of Agriculture, the Board identified high priority needs in extension and research required to serve the agricultural needs of Maine. A total of five positions were identified and representatives of the Board met with the University of Maine administration about the positions. The administration approved four of the five positions. The four positions are: a vegetable extension/research position; a livestock extension/research position; an entomology research/teaching position; and a potato pathology position to operate the potato seed certification laboratory in Presque Isle. The position at the seed certification Lab and the Entomology position have been filled and the searches to fill the other positions are in their final phases. The fifth position that was not funded is an extension/research position in food science. This position is designed to work with value-added producers and food processors in the development and production of new products and in the commercialization of the products. The University indicated that this position would receive high priority for future funding.

The Board also investigated the marketing needs of agricultural producers and processors in Maine. The Board identified the marketing programs available to agricultural growers and processors and has discussed ways to better inform growers and processors about the programs available.

One of the outcomes of the marketing discussion was the identification of the need for an extension position to work with growers on marketing and other management issues. This person would help inform people about existing marketing assistance programs and opportunities. In addition, the Board reaffirmed the need for the food science extension/research position to assist people in developing and testing new products and in helping in the transition from product testing to commercial distribution of the products developed. Finally, the Board also identified a need for an extension/teaching position in landscape horticulture.

During the coming year the Board will further refine its list of needs and the ways in which the University can contribute to meeting them. It will also meet with Congressman Baldacci to talk about the new federal farm bill that is being drafted and the research and extension directives it will contain.