

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 the Maine State Legislature and to the
Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System

January 31, 2020

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 Dr.
Orono, ME 04469

C: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Dannel Malloy, Chancellor, University of Maine System
Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President, University of Maine

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

As Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of Agriculture, we are pleased to provide the
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the
University of Maine System Board of Trustees our 2019 annual report on the
activities of the Board of Agriculture.

The Board of Agriculture was created by the Legislature in 1997 during a time of
budget pressure within the State, pressure which directly impacted the ability of the
University of Maine in its efforts to maintain and expand agricultural research, teaching
and outreach. The University is a Land Grant university; research, teaching and
outreach are central to its mission. The Board's duties are clearly laid out in the statute
(attached for your information). The Board was created within the University of
Maine System and is charged with advising the Chancellor and the President on
matters concerning the operation and management of agricultural research at the

University of Maine Experiment Station and University of Maine Cooperative Extension. The Board of Agriculture is charged with assisting 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 agriculture community to support University of Maine agricultural programs in the Legislature.

The Board of Agriculture is unique as the only business sector with a legislative mandate to work with the Chancellor and with the President. The twenty members of the Board represent a cross section of agriculture, aquaculture, academic and legislative perspectives, working together to move business, the University and the Legislature forward to benefit all Maine residents.

The Board of Agriculture met twice in 2019 for regular sessions, once in April and once in December. The April meeting was held in Augusta to facilitate interactions between the Board members and Legislators. The Board was fortunate to meet with Governor Janet Mills on this day; explaining to the Governor the Board's charge and the Board's interest in funding for University of Maine Extension, research and teaching. Also on this day a lunch was provided for any legislator who could take time (it was a very busy legislative session) to visit and to talk with the Board members. During regular meeting hours, the Board heard from Richard Brzozowski, Food System Administrator at Cooperative Extension, regarding a draft job description for an Agriculture Engineering position at the University. This position is a high priority on the Board's list of needed positions at the University. President Joan Ferrini-Mundy joined the group for the afternoon session, discussing the University of Maine System Board of Trustees Declaration of Strategic Priorities and her plan for implementing the priority list, calling it the Declaration of Strategic Priorities to Address Critical State Needs. The Board expressed interest in helping move forward on the plan. Dean Fred Servello discussed new hires at the University, such as an agricultural economist, and he updated the Board concerning ongoing searches for other positions that the Board has prioritized, such as an agricultural entomologist, assistant professor of sustainable agriculture, and others.

The second meeting of the Board of Agriculture took place on December 20, delayed from the previous month due to snow. The meeting was held in Orono at the Buchanan Alumni House on the University campus. The majority of the morning was devoted to discussions of how the Board can effectively move forward with its mandate. The consensus was to form two committees, one to examine current capacity and future plans to support Maine agriculture on a big picture level and one to examine how the Board can best advocate for the needs identified by the first committee. At this December meeting the Board was introduced to three new hires at the University; positions previously identified as priorities by the Board. The positions are in animal science, economics and in the Dr. Matthew Highlands Food Pilot Plant. President Ferrini-Mundy addressed the Board with updates on financial stresses in the coming year budget. She also discussed the Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029 which includes "Food/Marine" as one of its 4 themes. Dean Fred Servello informed the Board of his June 2020 retirement, and

he discussed 2020 budget cuts. Dr. Hannah Carter, Dean of Cooperative Extension, was introduced to the Board and discussed her plan to develop a roadmap for Cooperative Extension initiatives and priorities.

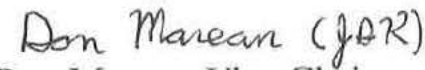
The Board of Agriculture has to take the long view of the University of Maine and its relationship to agriculture. There are immediate issues around infrastructure and staffing that have to be considered, but long term goals like new facilities, new labs, new programs and keeping staff up to date (fill positions before the previous person retires) also have to be addressed. For this reason, the Board of Agriculture has worked on a list of positions needing consideration; supported the new diagnostic lab in Orono; and advocated with the Legislature and with the Governor to prioritize the University of Maine System in its work to fulfill its work as a Land Grant University.

The agricultural community is acutely aware of the State's limited financial resources and is appreciative of the Legislature's continued support of the University and its Extension services. The need is great but the Agriculture, Aquaculture and Forestry sectors in Maine stand to be drivers of economic growth so money invested in these areas should return many fold what is invested.

Thank you for your interest and support for Maine Agriculture, Aquaculture and Forestry.

Sincerely,


Marilyn Meyerhans, Chair


Don Marean, Vice-Chair