

MINUTES

NW OHIO GREENHOUSE CLUSTER MEETING

Thursday, October 13, 2005

8:00 am – 9:30 am

TBG – Stables Room

- Dean Krauskopf called the meeting to order at 8:05 am
- Attendance: (20)
 - Dean Krauskopf, Neil Reid, Mike Carroll, Joe Perlaky, Eileen Creque, Mary Donnell, Dick Bostdorff, Walt Krueger, Karen Johnson-Webb, Bob Feldstein, John Snyder, Timothy Ault, Larry Ohlman, Tony Keil, Beth Fausey and Judy McFarland.
- Report: Champion
 - Dean visited about 30 growers last month. Although most growers had heard about the cluster several were still not entirely sure how they would benefit by participating. Only one person was not interested.
 - Dean left a "Cluster Handout" brochure prepared by Thread for each grower to review. It explains what a cluster is and how area greenhouse growers can take advantage of it.
 - He also collected information from a few select survey questions. This data will assist in establishing benchmarks for future comparison and progress reports.
 - Dean would like to compile a newsletter for distribution before our next meeting. They will be distributed through e-mail and fax. No snail mail this time.
 - Attached is the NW Ohio Greenhouse Cluster Champion's Report. It explains in greater detail observations made and information obtained through these first rounds of visits.
- Report: Branding Project
 - Judy McFarland reported that they met with the same growers Dean did but only one week later. This strategy was effective in that it gave the growers a second chance to ask questions and think about how they can best contribute to the effort.
 - During their visit, they answered additional questions and gathered further input on a potential Cluster's Branding name, slogan and potential logo.
 - Presentation charts, graphs and text materials used to explain the branding rollout strategy are included in this monthly report. Buying and selling locally has value. Several discussions resulted in potential ways to reinvest a % of profit back into the community. Thread will research and evaluate these and other community examples for future recommendations. The growers feel strongly about doing their part in energizing the local economy.
 - Thread also randomly surveyed potential buyers (users) with several Cluster name, slogans and logos.
 - After several months of planning, acquiring data both statistical and subjective, surveying and visiting grower sites a motion was made by Dick Bostdorff, seconded by Larry Ohlman and unanimously endorsed by the remaining growers present. Only the growers had a vote. **The motion recommends that NW Ohio's Greenhouse Cluster be branded as the Maumee Valley Growers.** Judy then suggested that the slogan and logo icon be presented at the next Advisory Group meeting on November 3rd at Thread. Information, design and logo icons will be provided prior to the meeting to allow time growers to circulate the concepts with their peers.

- On November 18th, Representative Kaptur and UT's office of Research will sponsor an Ohio Wind Power Seminar at UT's Lake Erie's Research Center in Oregon. Wind technology and investment opportunities are available now to farmers, businesses and government leaders to share in long-term energy strategies within their communities. Whether it's a simple land lease or more involved Partnership/LLC arrangement, greater community awareness is needed. Joe will post the details of this event in about 10 days. Two nationally known speakers will explain several proven examples of how collaborating with agriculture, government and business leaders can...and have been extremely successful in other areas of our county. Addressing sound science practices as it pertains to the collection of wind monitoring data and historical and site specific avian influences and challenges.
- Report: Website Project
 - Tim Ault, Geographic Research Technician from UT's Geography Department will be posting our past agenda's, minutes and future meetings on our website at <http://ohiogreenhouse.utoledo.edu>
- Report: Other
 - Dr. Beth Fausey, Floriculture Program Manager at the Office Agricultural Business Enhancement Center was introduced by Mary Donnell. Beth is also visiting with our NW Ohio growers and introducing herself to them. As an Extension Agent, she will assist growers with their research concerns and plant quality issues. Her introduction letter is included in this report.
 - Dave Beck reports they are sponsoring a workshop featuring speaker John Bartok on November 14th. More information to follow.
 - Dave provided those Cluster members in attendance with Department of Agriculture energy grant information. He recommends they only be used as references until the next round of grant guidelines are available sometime in January 06. Any grower thinking about upgrading energy efficiency equipment or building new or retrofitting their existing greenhouse should contact him direct at CIFT (419) 535-6000 to discuss their specific needs and wants. CIFT also provides energy audits to identify inefficient energy usage or loss.
 - Michael Carroll and Mary Donnell will each be writing articles on the activities of the greenhouse cluster. It will be published in each of their newsletters this Fall.
 - Mike is working out details to bring in Eilan Smith, Executive Director of Ontario's Flower Growers Association to talk to our growers. Those of you may recall that Eilan spoke at a sponsored event at BGSU this past spring. It was suggested that either January or February would be months to consider. Beth Fausey will assist and check on available dates.
 - A sub-committee was set up to address future energy technologies and presentations. Those showing interest so far are Jeff Creque, Larry Ohlman, Bill Dearing, Jim Wolf and Don Schmidlin. Others are certainly welcome. Jeff has volunteered to chair the committee. Several growers wondered why Michigan is allowed to store natural gas underground and Ohio isn't? Is this political imposed or a geological constraint? Perhaps the Ohio Farm Bureau would know? Joe will contact Dale Arnold, Director of Energy Services.
 - As a reminder, on November 12th Toledo Grows will be sponsoring a meeting downtown at the main library in the McMaster Auditorium that will highlight urban planting opportunities. Call Michael Szuberia at (419) 936-2986 for more information.
 - On November 15th, a meeting sponsored by the ABE Center (419) 354-6916 will be held at Snook's Dream Cars Museum entitled *Green Industry: Policy and Outlook Program*. Some of the topics include Business Market & Production Trends and Energy-Natural Gas and Fuel Costs.
 - The next Advisory Group Meeting is November 3rd at Thread at 4:00 pm.
 - The next regular Greenhouse Cluster Meeting is November 15th. **Please note that is not on our regular 2nd. Thursday of the month rotation.**
- Dean Krauskopf adjourned the meeting at 9:40 am.
- Minutes submitted by Joe Perlaky