

PFFA Spring 2009 Conference Survey and Future Conference Questionnaire Results

19 responses were received

Business Meeting

Overall: 5 5 10 4 3 3 2 1

Necessity: 11 5 6 4 1 3 2 1

Comments:

- * Good networking.
- * Doing better on time management.
- * Please look into doing a webinar (Penn State) for the PFFA meetings after the State Board meeting. It would be great to have the State Roundtable meetings on the webinar also.
- * Stayed on time & on task pretty well, good job.
- * Consent Agenda would help save time and repeating information.
- * Stayed on schedule/stayed on point - great!
- * Very efficient use of time.

Conservation Funding - Megan Hughes, Environmental Finance Center, Univ. of MD

Overall: 9 5 9 4 1 3 2 1

Necessity: 9 5 9 4 1 3 2 1

Comments:

- * Good info - could use more time for these discussions.
- * Really liked discussion that was part of the program.
- * Very professional presentation, good discussion.
- * Some interesting ideas.
- * Wonderful insight from a variety of locations dealing with our issues - very beneficial.
- * Great info.

PDA Update - Secretary Wolff and Doug Wolfgang, Director Bureau of Farmland Preservation

Overall: 16 5 2 4 1 3 2 1

Necessity: 16 5 2 4 1 3 2 1

Comments:

- * Electronic easement info is greatly needed, thank you!
- * State is doing a great job working with PFFA and the Administrators.
- * Always critically important to have the State present for updates.
- * Very relevant considering the budget issues, they each did a nice job answering questions.
- * Not good news, but good to know.
- * Fantastic - Doug's part. IT upgrade will be great.
- * Thank you for completing the agreements/guidebook/electronic application process - less time - less trees wasted!! Always an essential recap for counties who can't attend State Board meetings.
- * Doug and his staff are doing a great job with the development of tools that will make the program more efficient. (i.e., web-based application & documentation process.)
- * Always good to have the Secretary's support.

Legislation Reviews – Elizabeth Emlen

Overall: 5 5 9 4 5 3 ___2 ___1

Necessity: 11 5 7 4 1 3 ___2 ___1

Comments:

- * Needed House update too.
- * Not much information given since Kerry & Kristin weren't present and only had email from Kristin.
- * Thanks to Kristin for the email update.
- * Great job running the meeting, staying on focus and moving along in a timely fashion.
- * Would like more in-depth understanding of the updates.
- * Elizabeth did good with info she had.
- * We should provide this info to members prior to meetings so that action could be taken at gen. meeting.

NRCS Update – Barry Frantz

Overall: 5 5 11 4 3 3 ___2 ___1

Necessity: 8 5 8 4 2 3 1 2 ___1

Comments:

- * NRCS needs to fund its offices, not duplicate our program.
- * This is a confusing program so it is great to hear updates and clarification.
- * Thanks for Barry for always making time to be here.
- * This program needs to be more conducive to our efforts.
- * More information than time.
- * Good info.
- * Given the deadline is less than 30 days away, I would have loved more "accurate" details so we could tell what will actually qualify.
- * Enough said.

Funding Opportunities – Andy Loza, PALTA

Overall: 11 5 6 4 2 3 ___2 ___1

Necessity: 11 5 6 4 2 3 ___2 ___1

Comments:

- * Good info, need more time for his update, important info to present.
- * Always helpful.
- * Interesting.
- * Excellent information for those not up-to-speed with current Governor intentions.
- * Great support for FPP to have PALTA.

Accommodations at the Penn Stater Conference Center & Hotel

Meeting Room: 13 5 5 4 ___3 ___2 ___1

Food and Breaks: 10 5 7 4 1 3 ___2 ___1

Hotel Accommodations: 9 5 1 4 ___3 ___2 ___1

Accommodations at the Penn Stater Conference Center & Hotel (con't)

Comments:

- * Prefer doughnuts and coffee at start, not 9 a.m.
- * Meeting room was initially hard to find.
- * Always enjoy coming to Penn Stater.
- * Breakfast availability (time) – lunch great as always.
- * Breakfast (no more needs said.)
- * Nice beds! Know how to work the lights - otherwise this is an outstanding facility.
- * Really nice!
- * Penn Stater is always very welcoming & accommodating; great location.
- * Good spot.

General Comments:

- * Future of PFPA
- * Relationships with farm owners.
- * As always, could use more time for networking and info sharing.
- * PSU is general location.
- * More time for discussions.
- * Good agenda, good location, stuck to schedule.
- * This was my first PFPA meeting. I am a new board member from Beaver. I appreciate the opportunity to attend & it was very informative.

Future Workshop Sites and Dates

Fall 2009: Westmoreland/Indiana Counties co-hosting
October 21-22, 2009
Chestnut Ridge Conference Center, Blairsville, PA

Spring 2010: Blair County

Possible Topics for Future Workshops

Answers reflect average score of responses received

4 Funding (long term)

1. Options (has anyone done research on this they can share?)
 - a. Real Estate Transfer Tax
 - b. Plastic Recycling fees dedicated to conservation programs
 - c. Farmland Mitigation Fees
 - d. Impact Fees
2. Should the state consider allowing counties to use a portion of their funds for monitoring and enforcement costs?

3 Inspection & Monitoring Easements

1. What exactly is the State's role?
2. Legal Back-up (county or state?)
3. Enforcement Issues (who actually enforces, county or state?)
4. Creating a solid baseline and inspection report
5. Violations
 - a. What constitutes a violation?
 - b. What authority do we have? What are we actually enforcing?
6. Deed Issues
 - a. Transferred property - erroneous deeds recordings

3 Conservation Plans

1. Should Administrators receive basic NRCS Conservation Plan training?
2. What level of expertise is now in place to monitor conservation compliance?

4 Easements (General Issues)

1. Rural Enterprise - should this be consistent across the state?
2. Mineral Rights - what comes after Marcellus shale gas?
3. Property transfers - incorrect deed issues
4. Other easements or ROW on Preserved farms (trails, wells, etc.)
5. Trespassing Issues
 - a. Do we have any authority here?
6. Access, transportation and utility right-of-way easements

4 Promotion of Farmland Preservation

1. What to do, and how much?
2. Tourism & Farmland Preservation
 - a. What is our role in promotion?
3. Linking Ag Economic Development to preserved farms

- _4__ Notifications - PDA looking into the possibility of appeal
- _4__ Second generation farm owners' issues/stories/etc.
- _3__ Tax Strategies and easements
- _4__ Condemnation and eminent domain - When? Why?
- _2__ IRS Ruling when doing Bargain Sales (working with Land Trusts, etc)
- _4__ Farm Values - the future of easement prices
- _3__ ASA's when crossing county lines and the ongoing issue of correct recordings, etc.
- _3__ Appraisals - when there is ag zoning. How is FMV really determined?
- _4__ Other