

November 2021

Bylaws for the Emerging Farmer Working Group

Part 1. General Provisions

Section A. Vision/Values of the Working group

The Emerging Farmer Working Group vision is “Minnesota is made stronger by our diversity.”

Core agreements are:

- * *Everyone is heard*: practice active listening, build connections to others before and after meetings, and include opportunities for stakeholder input.
- * *All voices are honored*: practice compassionate accountability and withhold judgment.
- * *Have integrity*: practice honestly, put aside personal gain, prioritize attending meetings.
- * *Empower people*: practice speaking up courageously; reach out to other communities and each other for input.
- * *Embrace tension*: practice addressing issues where there isn't clear agreement, spend time and opportunity ensuring everyone feels safe to discuss their point of view.

Values:

- * Be consistent, proactive, and represent diverse communities.
- * Celebrate and know that within communities there is diversity.
- * Dig deep into the root issues and possible solutions.

Section B. Creation of the Working Group

Laws of Minnesota 2020, Chapter 89, Article 17.055 established the Emerging Farmer Working Group. The purpose of the working group is to advise the commissioner and legislature regarding the development and implementation of programs and initiatives that support emerging farmers in this state.

Section C. Emerging Farmers Work Group. The Working Group must consist of:

- * Executive Sponsor: Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture (*ex-officio*)
- * Chair: Elected
- * No fewer than 15 and no more than 20 members appointed by the commissioner of agriculture.
- * The working group must consist, to the extent possible, of persons who are, and organizations that represent, farmers or aspiring farmers who are women, veterans, persons with disabilities, American Indian or Alaskan Natives, members of a community of color, young, and urban, and any other emerging farmers as determined by the commissioner.

The commissioner shall direct the development of guidelines defining the membership of the working group; setting out definitions; and developing duties of the commissioner, the working group, and working group members.

Section D: Duties of the Working Group

The Emerging Farmer Working Group shall:

- * The work that members of the Working Group do is essential and much needed to help remove historical barriers, however the beneficiaries is not people in the room. The recommendations will make the entry into agriculture easier. It's for people that you will never see who are looking for entry into Agriculture and you would make the process easier.
- * Make recommendations to the commissioner of identified policies for review in the Department of Agriculture that maintain and create barriers for emerging farmers.
- * Identify issues regarding barriers for emerging farmers by engaging diverse communities in Department of Agriculture programs.
- * Engage in mutual learning essential for achieving equity in Minnesota's agricultural economy.
- * Raise awareness about barriers and opportunities for emerging farmers to the legislature and media.
- * Provide guidance as needed for technical assistance and consultation support to build capacity throughout the Department of Agriculture.
- * Contribute to an annual update to be made by January 15 of each year for the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over agriculture regarding the working group's activities and recommendations.

Section E. Governance and Decision Making

The working group will strive to make decisions on a consensus basis. We have come to an agreement that Fist to Five would a way to make decisions.

- * Decisions and votes will be reflected in the meeting minutes. Meeting minutes will be taken at time of meeting. The meeting minutes will be sent out a week after the monthly meeting and will be sent out to members.
- * Decisions will be voted as long as there is a quorum and only if a minimum presence of 51% of members are present, inclusive of participation by web- and tele-conferencing.

Section F. Meeting Schedule

The working group will meet 5 times per year.

Nov. 12. Feb 11 April 8, Aug. 12 and Oct. 14. 2021 - Mark your calendars

- * Five meetings per year annually though the expiration date.
- * The meeting schedule will attempt to allow time for task completion.
- * A quorum is established with a majority (minimum of 51%) of the voting members are present.
- * The agenda and meeting materials, including meeting minutes, will be sent to at least one week prior to scheduled meetings.
- * From time to time, we will ask one of you to help with putting monthly agenda together.

Section G. Distribution of Meeting Materials

Agendas, approved meetings and adopted group documents will be published on the Department of Agriculture website.

Section H. Expiration - The working group expires on August 1, 2025.

Part 2. Working Group Members

Section A. Working Group Membership

Members must be appointed with priority for the following groups:

- * Women
- * Veterans
- * Persons with disabilities
- * American Indian or Alaskan Natives,
- * Members of a community of color
- * Young
- * Urban
- * Any other emerging farmers as determined by the commissioner.

Section B. First appointments and first meeting.

The commissioner shall appoint at least 15 members. The first meeting will be held on November 12, 2021

Section C. Terms for first appointees

All members shall serve two-year appointments starting (November 2021). The remainder shall serve two-year appointments (November 2022). These members shall be determined by the commissioner or designee.

Section D. Terms

A term shall be for two years and appointees can be appointed to serve two terms. The commissioner shall make appointments to replace vacating members by October 15 every year.

Section E. Duties of working group members

The members of the working group shall:

- * Be respectful to one another in that each person has a right to be heard.
- * Attend and be on time to participate in ALL scheduled meetings and be prepared by reviewing meeting notes.
- * Communicate with staff in a timely manner regarding working group business.
- * Maintain open communication channels with respective constituencies.
- * Identify and communicate issues and risks that could impact the timely completion of tasks
- * Collaborate on efforts to support emerging farmers in conjunction with the Emerging Farmer office.
- * Participate in any activities the working group members deem appropriate and necessary to facilitate the goals and duties of the working group.

Section F. Compensation

The MDA recognizes that your participation in this working group has value and sees your contributions as critical expert consultation. The MDA will provide a stipend to each participant at a rate of \$30 per meeting for the first year. Please note that we will offer this one time to get your paperwork in,

Part 3. Duties of the Commissioner

Section A. The commissioner of agriculture or the commissioner's designee shall:

- * Maintain the working group established in this section.
- * Consult with the working group and receive recommendations from the working group.
- * Supervise and coordinate policies for emerging farmers who experience disparities in access and outcomes.
- * Identify rules or statutes affecting emerging farmers that may need to be revised.
- * Investigate and implement cost effective models of programs and policies to serve emerging farmers.
- * Based on recommendations of the working group, review identified department policies that create or maintain barriers for emerging farmers and make adjustments to ensure those disparities are not perpetuated.

Part 4. Code of Conduct

- * Working group members will adhere to MDA standards of Ethics and Conflict of Interest and will comply with all pertinent state laws and regulations.
- * If a member has a conflict of interest in a matter before the working group, the member shall declare the conflict, refrain from discussion and will not vote on the matter.
- * If a working group member misses three meetings or more consecutively, the working group staff will note and inform the commissioner. The commissioner will contact the member and discuss the potential dismissal of the member.
- * Please read and be familiar with the Open Meeting Law which is found here:
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13D>