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## Emerging Farmers Working Group Meeting 1.8.2021

### Presentations

1:10 p.m. Sia Her, Executive Director of Council of Asian Pacific Minnesotans: Asian pacific islander (API) council created in 1985, longest serving ED (Executive Director) of an ethnic council. In law given the authority to advise the governor on issues relating to the ethnicity. This one represents 85 ethnicities. Duty is to put forward legislation on behalf of ethnicities. Much of the community is a refugee experienced community. Survey is deployed statewide of API citizens to see what is important issues for those people- becomes cornerstone of legislative agenda

Sia: historically until now we haven't had the capacity to do the work that is expected of us to represent the communities that we do. Most councils only have 3-5 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent), so they all support each other. Minnesota is unique with the ethnic councils. No other state has them. Ethnic councils can always be called on to facilitate conversations of fairness and unequal power. Many refugees feel that they were made helpless when they came to America. Farming has allowed a sense of control and autonomy over their lives. They are experts regardless of the language barrier. Farming is about self-sufficiency. Community members don't want to access government programs because they don't like to rely on someone else. Many in the API community say the application process is way too much, taking too much from me and the likelihood of getting the services is not worth it. For those in government we need to make sure that those we are trying to help can walk through the application processes we put in place.

1:50 p.m. Deputy Commissioner Andrea Vaubel (presented info slides 1-7): The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) does a lot of the behind the scenes work on implementing programs- HR, communications, budget process. We are currently in fiscal year 21. Our budget is less than 1% of the state budget. Very small portion comes from the general fund. Most of it comes from licensing fees and federal pass-through. Budget has changed a lot because of Covid. 2021 will have surplus, 2022-2023 has deficit forecast. The base budget are dollars that continue from year to year. The budget is made up of Agency Appropriations and Pass-Through funds. Pass-throughs include: (see slide 7) AGRI (Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation), AGREETT (Agriculture Research, Education, Extension, and Technology Transfer), MAELC (Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council), Second Harvest, Healthy Eating, Farm Advocates, Mental Health.

Lucas Kruse: what federal money is MDA getting from the recent stimulus bills? Is MDA getting some of the \$13 B to Agriculture from stimulus? And is the PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) for the second round going to help farmers?

Andrea says the first round of Cares Act, money went to the states. Minnesota used it for PPE (personal protective equipment), testing, and sent to pass-throughs like Second Harvest to fight food insecurity, grants to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) farmers and grocery stores for PPE. The new

stimulus money is being administered by USDA through CFAP (Coronavirus Food Assistance Program), some money will go for depopulation and those producers who lost markets. She reminded them that there is no control over the PPP at the state level, but they did work to make sure farmers were eligible. Money from first stimulus went to State Agencies, Hog depopulation. \$500K went to LEDC (Latino Economic Development Center) and MEDA (Metropolitan Economic Development Association). with new money it will come through USDA. No money is actually going through State departments of Ag.

Emily Reno: Specific Line item pesticide and fertilizer, \$41 million. Where does soil health fall into that? Are there plans to support soil health work more? How much of PFMD (MDA Pesticide & Fertilizer Management Division) money is going to soil health versus soil destruction?

Andrea says some of the money goes to Clean Water programs and climate programs. MAWQCP (Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program) – works with local level water districts. Some of the fees coming in from fertilizer licensing are going to soil health and climate. These will be an increasing priority for the Governor’s office and the MDA. We get clean water funds and legacy funds to do soil and climate health work. MAWQCP is the program that we are looking to expand the work to do the new program. Soil health and climate will be one of the top issues that we talk about at the legislature. It is a top MDA priority.

Kaitlyn: What are user-funded fees? Is there any way to not be so reliant on those things? where do they come from?

Andrea explained the fees are licensing for retail food operators like delis, grocery stores, breweries, wineries. They pay fees for their licenses. It would be nice to get more general fund dollars to cover the services that are fee-funded. Sometimes the entities will help us lobby for a fee increase, sometimes not. They are necessary to help us cover costs.

Emily: I have worked with farmers in west central Minnesota that have encountered cultural competency issues with MDA employees. Would like to see cultural liaisons to help ease that transition.

Andrea: we are putting dollars towards training and line items towards translation services. Increasing communication to the communities we aren't serving.

Erika: more support for small farmers and emerging farmers, budgets that work with specific communities, new programs and new initiatives to the budget. What is the process for MDA advocating for or against decisions being made at the state level, in anticipation of budget increases that could be avoided? For example I'm thinking about the damages to water quality that could be caused by Line 3, and whether advocacy against its construction would be a priority of yours, if you have a direct line to decision makers in that case and whether or not you would advocate against its ongoing construction?

Andrea: agencies are often siloed; this administration has done a good job of interagency dialogue about issues that affect multiple agencies. At the end of the day, we work for the governor, and the commissioner wouldn't advocate against a position that the governor has taken. There are no formal processes

2:16 p.m. Legislative Director Peder Kjeseth shared slides 8-11

Policy proposals come from request from Commissioner to Division Directors.

Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) checks for fiscal impacts. Anything with fiscal impact can't go into a policy bill. If there is a fiscal impact, it must go into a budget bill.

The Chairs will author the bill. Sundin – House Chair, Westrom – Senate Chair

## Chat

Hi Sia, making you a panelist for when you present!

from Emily Reno to everyone: 1:18 PM

What does data disaggregation mean?

from Kajsia Beatty to all attendees: 1:35 PM

Hello, If you have any public comment to make, please put it in the chat. You will be called upon during the public comment period in order of request.

from Kaitlyn Walsh to everyone: 1:37 PM

testing\

from Hannah Bernhardt, Medicine Creek Farm (she/her) to everyone: 1:40 PM

I'm curious about any data on which groups are currently farming or have an interest in farming, and also whether MDA has data on whether these groups are accessing and using state programs/funding

from Kaitlyn Walsh to everyone: 1:47 PM

Miigwech, thank you, Sia, for sharing your knowledge. You talked about how we can use the councils as a resource. How can we support your work? (Especially considering API people are integral to Minnesota's food system)

from Gina A to everyone: 1:47 PM

Thank you, Sia!

from Hannah Bernhardt, Medicine Creek Farm (she/her) to everyone: 1:48 PM

Yes thank you, Sia

from Elizabeth Bryant to everyone: 1:48 PM

Thanks so much, Sia

from Jessika Greendeer to everyone: 1:48 PM

Sia, thank you for sharing

from Kaitlyn Walsh to everyone: 1:48 PM

Thank you again, Sia. So appreciate you

from Erika Legros to everyone: 1:48 PM

thank you Sia

from Janssen Hang to everyone: 1:48 PM

Thank you Sai.

from Andrea Vaubel to everyone: 1:48 PM

Please don't apologize! Thank you so much, Sia!

from Kaitlyn Walsh to everyone: 1:59 PM

Andrea - could you possibly speak slower? With the background sound, it's hard to understand everything you're saying

from Gina A to everyone: 1:59 PM

Actually for me the sound quality is such that I'm not catching anything.

from Erika Legros to everyone: 2:00 PM

the power point is to small

from Emily Reno to everyone: 2:00 PM

I second the ppt. and audio challenges. Sorry :(

from Gina A to everyone: 2:00 PM

Andrea your sound was better briefly when you said "i wonder if" and then you went silent.

from Gina A to everyone: 2:02 PM

yes

from Hannah Bernhardt, Medicine Creek Farm (she/her) to everyone: 2:08 PM

What's the difference between marketing and advancement?

from Miah Ulysse to everyone: 2:09 PM

Hi everyone! Joining late as I ran programming today.

from Shannon Kesner to everyone: 2:16 PM

This is helpful. Thank you DC Vaubel!

from Melissa Hyslop to everyone: 2:31 PM

If there are any questions or comments from the public, please submit them through this chat.

from Hannah Bernhardt, Medicine Creek Farm (she/her) to everyone: 2:32 PM

Thanks!

from Elizabeth Bryant to everyone: 2:42 PM

What is the process for MDA advocating for or against decisions being made at the state level, in anticipation of budget increases that could be avoided? For example I'm thinking about the damages to water quality that could be caused by Line 3, and whether advocacy against its construction would be a priority of yours, if you have a direct line to decision makers in that case and whether or not you would advocate against its ongoing construction?

from Gina A to everyone: 2:44 PM

I echo Elizabeth's questions.

from Kaitlyn Walsh to everyone: 2:52 PM

Are we going to get more information on how we interact with the Ag Committee?

from Kaitlyn Walsh to everyone: 2:54 PM

As much info as we can get ahead of time on Ag Marketing, I'd appreciate it. I appreciate time to review and process ahead of time

from Gina A to all panelists: 2:54 PM

sending only to panelists bc i didn't want to take up a lot of space with it. i want to address a comment i made about "white and white-passing" people dominating the conversation in December's meeting. i just want to clarify that i was referring to myself and only myself when i added "white-passing."

from Kaitlyn Walsh to everyone: 2:55 PM

Thanks, that's helpful