



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Milk Regulation Board Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, July 8, 2026

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Attendance

Members Present:

Bryan Hulburt (Commissioner), Jeff Cone, Carolyn Russell, Kimberly Holmes Talbot, Craig Sterns, Chris Casiello, Megan Hastings

DOAG Staff Present:

Jim Allyn, Kayleigh Royston, Leia Burns, Ally Hughes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:39 a.m.

2. Introductions

Introductions were conducted.

3. Correspondence

No correspondence was received.

4. Review of Recent Legislative Session

Commissioner Hulburt and Dr. Kayleigh Royston provided an update on the most recent legislative session, noting that the dairy industry received significant attention.

- A total of \$22.5 million in Federal Response funds was allocated by the legislature. The Department has already issued \$12 million to licensed cow dairy producers. A Dairy Farm Sustainability Working Group was also established within the Department of Agriculture under Public Act 26-75.
- There were discussions regarding tax credits; however, it was decided that the topic should be addressed within the working group to ensure accuracy and thoughtful consideration.
- The Commissioner and Dr. Royston expressed interest in receiving input during the working group process, noting that the group includes representatives from many sectors of the dairy industry and will foster important discussions. Commissioner Hulburt has several items he plans to present to the group for feedback on next steps.
- The next working group meeting is scheduled for July 10, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Additional information and the meeting schedule can be found on the Department's website:
<https://portal.ct.gov/doag/boards-councils-and-commissions/dairy-farming-sustainability-working-group/dairy-farming-sustainability-working-group>
- Meetings are open to the public.
- Following completion of the working group's work, a report is required to be submitted to the legislature by January 1.
- Members discussed the ongoing need to support milk production capacity within the state and to identify ways to assist smaller dairy farms.

- The Commissioner also noted that a study will be conducted regarding ways to increase dairy industry production. He will share contact information for the individual conducting the study with Craig and Chris.

5. Federal Rating Updates

- Jim completed the re-evaluation of the Agri-Mark 09-901 rating on May 11. All the farms passed with a significantly improved score. He acknowledged the substantial work completed by farmers and industry staff to achieve compliance.
- The Department's dairy inspectors have increased communication and documentation efforts and are issuing more warning letters for repeat violations to support compliance.

6. Dairy Grants

- **Dairy Sustainability Grant:** Seventy farms participated. A notice was sent to the industry. This is a one-time payment. The Department moved funds within two weeks of receiving them from the Office of Policy and Management, despite the challenge of the hard fiscal year deadline imposed by the Department of Administrative Services.
- Statutory requirements mandate that funds are spent by June 30, 2027.

7. Old Business

No old business.

8. New Business

• Grade A Pasteurized Milk Ordinance:

- A new version is now available. Updates were made following last spring's conference. The next conference is scheduled for April 20–25, 2027, in Missouri. Anyone wishing to submit proposals for changes or updates should contact James.Allyn@ct.gov before January 2027. The deadline for recommendations is January 15.

• Avian Influenza Updates:

- Members inquired about updates regarding avian influenza. Jim reported that the situation remains largely under control, with only a few states experiencing outbreaks. DOAG continues monthly silo sampling and routine testing. Some states have stopped monthly testing; DOAG will reevaluate in the fall. Silo testing will not take place in July due to staffing limitations.

• Milk Quality:

- The UConn CVMDL lab held a mastitis informational meeting last Wednesday for veterinarians. UConn is working to make changes based on producer needs. The lab has begun running more bulk tank sample tests, which may be used as a tool to initiate further testing. DOAG is looking to assist as appropriate.

• Farm Health and Safety Inspections:

- Kurt Nieminen, a dairy inspector for the Department of Agriculture, has completed FDA training to become a state rating officer. He is now certified to conduct ratings on farms that he does not routinely inspect. His certification is valid for three years.

- **New World Screwworm:**

- Dr. Morgan, the Connecticut State Veterinarian, issued a New World Screwworm response order last week. Connecticut is largely following the approach taken by other New England states. The Department of Agriculture is monitoring the situation closely and will provide updates as needed.

- **Management Meetings:**

- Jim will attend the NADRO Annual Conference in Virginia next week, where participants will discuss regulatory issues regarding Grade A and non-Grade A milk.
- Jim will also attend a public health meeting on July 31, to present information on the Department of Agriculture's protocols for retail dairy store inspections.
- Jim is participating in a working group reviewing the addition of ingredients prior to and following pasteurization.
- Members were reminded to contact Jim if they had items they would like to mention or addressed at these meetings.

9. **Public Comment**

No public comments were received.

10. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Next Meeting: Tentative — October 7, 2026