

**Minutes of the National Farm Transition Network
Annual Business Meeting
May 20, 2004
Madison, Wisconsin**

Call to Order/Welcome	The meeting was called to order by Marion Bowlan, President of the National Farm Transition Network.
Present:	Marion Bowlan, Pennsylvania Farm Link
Affiliate Members	Gwen Garvey, Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture/Farm Link John Baker, Iowa State University Beginning Farmer Center Steve Schwartz/Reggie Knox, California Farm Link Bill Dickinson, Virginia Dept. of Agriculture/Virginia Farm Link
Associate Members	Scott Stothers, Manitoba Food and Agriculture
Guests	Peter Coughler, Ontario Food and Agriculture Kathy Ruhf, New England Small Farm Institute
Approval of Minutes	John Baker read the minutes of the last Annual Business Meeting which was held on July 27, 2003 in Burlington, Vermont. At his suggestion, a motion was made to amend these minutes to reflect the fact that the funds of the National Farm Transition Network were managed last year by the Coordinator of the Network, John Baker, not by Iowa State University Beginning Farmers Center as the minutes reflect. This motion was seconded and the minutes were approved with that amendment. Bill Dickinson was called upon to read the minutes of the last Board of Directors meeting which was held by teleconference on May 5, 2004. A question was raised by Marion Bowlan about the due date for membership dues. The last due date was reflected in the minutes as September 15. Bill Dickinson made a motion to amend those minutes to reflect the date October 15 as the date on which membership dues are due for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. A motion was made to second this amendment and the membership approved this change in the minutes.
Membership Report	Prior to giving the Treasurer's Report, Bill Dickinson provided a Membership Report, which listed the members by category as follows: <i>Affiliate Members:</i> California Farm Link, Iowa Beginning Farm Center, Center for Rural Affairs-NE, Minnesota Land Stewardship Project, Land Link Vermont, Pennsylvania Farm Link, Virginia Dept. of Agriculture, Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture.

Associate Members: University of Nebraska Extension, Virginia Farm Bureau, Manitoba Food and Agriculture, Law Firm of Jesse Richardson (Blacksburg, VA)

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported a balance of \$5,628.50, which is currently deposited in the Raccoon Valley Bank, an Iowa bank. At the completion of this report, Bill made a motion that it be accepted. His motion was subsequently seconded and the Treasurer's Report was accepted.

New Officers of the Board

Marion Bowlan reviewed the actions of the May 5th Board of Directors Meeting in which the following people were nominated for office: John Baker, President; Karen Stettler, Vice President; Deb Heleba, Secretary; Bill Dickinson Treasurer. To complete the slate of officers for the Board, Marion Bowlan was re-nominated to the Board and Gwen Garvey was nominated to serve a new three-year term in the place of Joy Johnson, whose term was expiring. This slate of officers was accepted by the membership for the fiscal year July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005.

After the election of officers, John Baker reported that the National Farm Transition Network had received its designation from the IRS as a 501(C) 3 organization. He indicated that in order to insure that there was no conflict between his now being an officer of NFTN and the "agent for service" for the organization, he would ask for a ruling from the Iowa State Bar. With the election of John as the new president, Marion officially transferred those responsibilities to him.

Old Business

Adoption of
Publication
Convention

Marion read the proposed Publications Convention which had been approved by the Board. A motion was made to accept this Convention and that was subsequently adopted by the membership. That motion was seconded and the Convention was adopted by the membership.

Summary of
Committee Reports

As a way of demonstrating how much the organization has accomplished and progressed over the past year, Marion presented a committee report summary which showed each of the committees formed at the 2003 session, the strategies that they were to undertake in 2003 – 2004 and the actions taken to accomplish those strategies. This report covered activities of the Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Finance Committee, Education Committee, Research Committee, and Policy Committee. At the completion of her report, Bill Dickinson indicated a need to amend this report to show the other actions taken by the Finance Committee and offered to supply that material to Marion for

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New Business

inclusion in an amended report. Steven Schwartz noted that the Policy Committee, which he chairs, had developed a proposed process for dealing with policy issues which he intended to present later in the business meeting. The Board and Membership noted with pleasure the progress which the NFTN has made in accomplishing the various strategies over the given year. (A copy of the amended accomplishments report is attached to these minutes.) After concluding the Old Business, the Membership moved to discuss items of New Business, the first of which was the further development of the NFTN website and communication tools which will be required to better communicate with states interested in forming farm transition programs. A general discussion ensued as to what should be included in an updated website. Among the suggestions were Minutes of the Annual Meeting, network/member accomplishments and key dates and events for the network, the results of the Annual Meeting and annual meeting announcements. In concluding the discussion on possible inclusions on the website, John agreed to establish a website address to respond to inquiries from new programs and individuals.

Following this discussion, the group also talked about additional ways of communicating with potential new farm link programs and beginning farmer programs including the possible development of a brochure on the network. Among the potential outreach tools identified in the discussion were articles for the NASDA newsletter, development of a speakers bureau, development of a recruitment letter and the solicitation of ideas from others on the listserv about potential communication strategies.

At the conclusion of this discussion, John appointed two committees the first of which is to develop a proposal on the desired components and attributes of the new website by the next quarterly Board of Directors meeting. This committee is comprised of Peter Cougler and Gwen Garvey. The second committee was charged with looking at other potential communication tools including brochures, slide presentations, etc. on the network. This committee is comprised of Marion Bowlan and Karen Stettler and they were asked also to report at the next quarterly Board of Directors meeting.

2004-2005 Budget

Bill Dickinson presented the 2004-2005 Budget, as approved by the Board of Directors. A discussion followed about the allocation of funds among the various budget items. Steve Schwartz took exception to the amount budgeted for website development with the position that more money was needed for new member recruitment

Increasing Membership	<p>and several other budget items. After further discussion, Bill moved that the budget be adopted; the motion was seconded and the budget was approved with one negative vote.</p> <p>Following the adoption of the budget, John opened a discussion on various strategies for increasing membership in the NFTN. Members present at this session identified a potential list of new members and explored the concept of mentoring these new members. John asked members of the organization to share any contacts with potential new members with others on the Board. This discussion concluded with a promise by Steve Schwartz to call potential new programs to express an interest on the part of the National Farm Transition Network in working with them. Members also agreed to call potential new members or new programs prior to the annual meeting. (This strategy is to be accomplished by the host state organization.)</p>
Protocols for Policy Positions	<p>Steve then presented a proposed protocol for adopting policy positions on matters before bodies of government. A discussion then followed about the ability of individual member organizations to advocate for policy positions vs. the ability the NFTN (which is comprised of some government agencies as well as non-profits) to advocate for a certain position. After extensive discussion, Steve made a motion to adopt the protocol as written. This motion died for lack of a second. However, John offered to work with Steve to develop a policy advocacy protocol by the next quarterly Board of Directors meeting based on the draft presented by the Policy Committee. Members who have concerns about policy advocacy are asked to relay that information to Steve Schwarz by July 16.</p>
NFTN Acting as a Host for the VISTA Program	<p>Steve then presented a proposal to have the National Farm Transition Network serve as a host organization through which its members could obtain VISTA volunteers. Bill Dickinson made a motion to pursue this idea. John asked Steve and Marion to develop a note to be sent to the Listserv seeking NFTN members who are interested in and willing to share the cost of developing and administering the NFTN/VISTA Program.</p>
Conference Call Payment	<p>Bill Dickinson made a motion to pay Conference America \$78.15 for the call associated with the Policy Committee work. That motion was seconded and adopted by the membership.</p>
Next Annual Meeting	<p>An invitation was extended by Pennsylvania Farm Link to host the 2005 annual meeting. The membership concurred. Marion Bowlan will be the host of the 2005 session.</p>
Adjournment	<p>The 2004 Annual Business Meeting of the National Farm Transition Network adjourned at 10:03 p.m. May 20, 2004.</p>

