

CHAPTER 8-D

AGRICULTURAL AWARENESS

§241. Awareness program

The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall: [PL 1989, c. 194 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §6 (REV).]

1. Public awareness. Produce audio-visual materials, facilitate public service programming, prepare written materials, organize a speakers' bureau and otherwise educate the public. The commissioner, in carrying out these duties, shall address the following needs: maintaining a lasting and sustainable agriculture; protecting our critical rural infrastructures; guaranteeing continued and effective production and marketing of fresh fruits, vegetables and livestock; preserving prime farmland; conserving our soils and water; and generally ensuring the quality of life in rural Maine. [PL 1989, c. 194 (NEW).]

2. Agricultural literacy. Cooperate with the Department of Education to develop instructional materials, train teachers and teacher trainers and otherwise complete actions for utilizing agriculture as an exciting medium for educating students both about society and the natural world, while increasing their literacy by infusing basic agricultural concepts such as agriculture and economics, the dynamics of world hunger, agriculture and history within present subjects taught in Maine schools. [PL 1989, c. 194 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 700, Pt. A, §33 (AMD).]

3. Cooperation. Cooperate with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies and institutions, educational and farm organizations and interested individuals, including the Maine Ag in the Classroom Association, the Department of Education and the Cooperative Extension Service in carrying out this chapter. [PL 1989, c. 194 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 700, Pt. A, §33 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 194 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 700, §A33 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §6 (REV).

§242. Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council

1. Establishment. The Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council, established in Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 4-C and referred to in this section as "the council," has all the powers necessary to achieve the public purpose stated in subsection 2 and to carry out the powers conferred under this section.

The exercise of powers conferred by this section is held to be the performance of essential government functions.

A. Employees of the council may not be construed to be state employees for any purpose, including the state civil service provisions of Title 5, Part 2 and Title 5, chapter 372. [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

B. The council may not be construed to be a state agency for any purpose, including the budget, accounts and control, auditing, purchasing or other provisions of Title 5, Part 4. [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

C. Notwithstanding paragraphs A and B:

(1) Employees of the council may be state employees for the purposes of the state retirement provisions of Title 5, Part 20 and the state employee health insurance program under Title 5, chapter 13, subchapter 2; and

(2) For the purposes of the Maine Tort Claims Act, the council is a governmental entity and its employees and members are employees as those terms are defined in Title 14, section 8102. [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

D. Employees of the council are entitled to use the services of the Central Fleet Management Division in accordance with provisions established for state agencies under Title 5, section 1830. [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

2. Purpose. The purpose of the council is to promote an understanding of the food and fiber system in the State and the nation through the infusion of agricultural concepts into primary, secondary and postsecondary curricula. For the purposes of this section, "agricultural concepts" includes, but is not limited to:

- A. The importance of agriculture in the State and in the nation's history and development; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- B. The connections between geography, climate and agriculture; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- C. The relationship between technology and agricultural success and development; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- D. The economics of agriculture; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- E. The global aspects of agriculture; and [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- F. The relationship of the food and fiber system to public policy issues. [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

3. Membership. The council consists of 9 members, appointed as follows:

- A. One representative of the department, appointed by the commissioner; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- B. One representative of the Department of Education, appointed by the Commissioner of Education; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- C. Two members from the agricultural community with demonstrated interest in agriculture education, appointed by the commissioner; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- D. One registered or licensed dietitian with a demonstrated interest in agriculture education, appointed by the commissioner; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- E. One practicing kindergarten to grade 12 educator with knowledge of agriculture education, appointed by the Commissioner of Education; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- F. One educator who teaches or has taught agriculture courses at the secondary school level, appointed by the Commissioner of Education; [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- G. One representative from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension with a demonstrated interest in agriculture education, appointed by the Director of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension; and [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- H. One representative of the soil and water conservation districts, appointed by the chair of the State Conservation District Advisory Council. [PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

4. Term. Each member serves for a term of 4 years or until the member's successor is appointed. If a member is unable to complete a term, the appointing authority shall appoint a person to serve out the remainder of the unexpired term.
[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

5. Compensation. Members may be compensated for expenses as provided in the council's bylaws from money received under subsection 10.

[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

6. Chair. The council shall elect annually by majority vote one member of the council to serve as chair and one member to serve as vice-chair.

[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

7. Executive director; personnel. The council may appoint by majority vote an executive director who is the council's chief administrator and who serves at the pleasure of the council. The executive director may employ, as the council directs, additional staff who serve at the pleasure of the executive director. The salaries paid to the executive director and other staff are fixed by the council and are not subject to the personnel laws of the State.

[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

8. Powers and duties. The council shall expend funds received under subsection 10 to provide teacher training and educational resource materials, collect and distribute appropriate agricultural information and materials from industry and trade groups and incorporate new and innovative ideas and proven outreach strategies to increase agricultural literacy among teachers and their students. The council shall work cooperatively with state agencies, the University of Maine System, farm organizations, agribusinesses and private individuals and groups to collect, organize, develop and promote the use of agricultural curriculum materials in schools and learning centers.

The council may enter into contracts with any local, state, federal or private agency, department, firm, corporation or association as necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

9. Debt. A debt or obligation incurred by the council is not a debt or obligation of the State.

[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

10. Receipt of money and property. The council may accept grants or contributions of money or other things of value from any source, public or private. The council receives funds from the sale of agriculture education plates pursuant to Title 29-A, section 456-F. The grants, receipts and other contributions must be held by the council and used to carry out the purposes of this section, subject to any condition under which the grant or contribution was accepted by the council. Funds may be used to compensate members of the council for expenses in accordance with the council's bylaws. Funds received under this subsection are not state funds.

[PL 2007, c. 703, §1 (AMD).]

11. Books and records. The council shall keep books, records and accounts of all its activities, which must be open to inspection and audit by the State at all times. An independent accountant shall conduct an annual accounting review of the financial records of the council and report the results of the review to the council, the commissioner, the Treasurer of State and the Legislature.

[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

12. Bylaws. The council may adopt bylaws to govern its functions.

[PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 703, §1 (AMD).

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