1. The following subcommittee members were in attendance on the call:
   - Chair: Larry Shaw, MMG Insurance
   - Bob Dorko, Sappi
   - Sam May, Maine Harvest Federal Credit Union
   - Alan Perry, Farm Technologies Network
   - Steve Schley, FOR/Maine.
   - Staff and Support Experts:
     - Mary Grace Schley, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development
     - Hannah Carter, UMaine Cooperative Extension
     - Richard Qualey, Intern, University of Maine School of Law

2. Maine Agriculture:
   - Land value is based on the value of the crop. If the crop value is low, the land value will be respectively low, and an otherwise nutrient rich piece of land can become more valuable if used for housing or development.
   - Though current drought conditions are exacerbating the present agriculture challenges, rainfall is normally consistent/reliable and above regional averages, a unique asset for Maine agriculture.
   - The development of an agriculture roadmap (similar to the one FOR/Maine has produced) would be a key asset to creating a unified and effective development plan for Maine agriculture moving forward.
     - FOR/Maine is funded through a federal Economic Development Administration grant, which might be worth pursuing.
   - There is a need for succession planning across industries to help bring the next generation of participants into industry. For agriculture, this assistance can help working lands transition and be kept working rather than sold for another use. Emphasis should be placed on keeping working lands working, including through production incentives and easements.
   - Diversification of crops grown in Maine will help the industry that has been historically dependent on one crop and too vulnerable to market disruption become more resilient.
   - Marketing assistance:
     - Commissions are often based on sales volume not sales value which incentivizes sellers to simply sell the product at a cheaper price, which in turn has a detrimental effect on the market. Better education of consumers on the food supply system can help close the gap.
     - Though local food costs more, the “cheap” food alternative is often unhealthy for people and is damaging to the food market and producers who choose not to follow the cheap food model.
   - Infrastructure: Much of the transportation of goods for producers, such as fertilizer, goes through the Prince Edward Island port in Canada. If Maine ports could better compete and support this trade, more dollars could be kept in state.
   - Cross cutting themes fitting into Talent, Innovation, and Infrastructure:
     - Food Insecurity
o Climate Change
o Financial Support
  ▪ Producers need financial assistance to enter new markets, invest in value added processing, and diversify their crops, but they also need general business resources and assistance to help make new ventures successful and reduce financial risk.

o Increased Research
  ▪ Research should focus on answering the questions farmers and producers have, rather than fit to a specific grant/program proposal.
  ▪ UMaine’s Maine Economic Improvement Fund could be a valuable partner to tailor research for economic development.

3. Follow-Up Items:
  • Seeking real data (not just anecdotal) of what the COVID-19 pandemic impact has been on Maine’s agriculture industry.
  Hannah Carter
  • Create a powerful talking point which answers: What is the multiplier for value added processing?
  o How does this create/affect high paying jobs?

4. Next Meeting: Friday, August 28, 2020 at 9:30am.