

NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets

Labor Management Meeting

December 16, 2022

Steve McGrattan (First Deputy Commissioner), Jennifer Trodden (Deputy Commissioner)
Mark Lansing (HR Director), Lisa Brooks (Fiscal Management Director), Dan McCarthy (Food
Safety & Inspection Director) Ashlie Bloomfield (HR Assistant Director) Stephanie Baird, John
Arnold (PEF L/M Chair), Caitlin Janiszewski (PEF Statewide FieldRep)

Introductions: Management and Labor

- 1. Old Business – SFS Automobile and State Car Expense Reports – Lisa Brooks, Finance Director has requested more time as she is reviewing a system that would use GPS tracking and a credit card app to compile acceptable State Car Expense Reports.**

Management Response:

Lisa Brooks advised not much has developed since our last meeting. She has explored a system used by other agencies that utilizes GPS and integrated purchase cards to produce monthly reports. The concern is older State cars do not have GPS and the system is not designed for personal use vehicles, thus it would have limited use.

Lisa mentioned the program created to produce an A/C 160 form from the Food Safety daily program, could be printed and attached to the State car provided all require stops are listed.

PEF Response:

The AC 160 process was good news and will be examined and forwarded to Food Safety However. It is unclear if any other division can produce the same form from their dailies. We requested permission to speak with other divisions and IT on a program that could take the information already provided by the daily/LATS program to produce acceptable forms.

Action Item:

John will speak with other divisions and IT to explore a possible internal IT resolution for State and personal use vehicles.

New Business:

- 1. High Mileage and Area Appropriate Vehicles Concerns for Veterinarians:**

- a) Has any money for cars been appropriated for the rural area, i.e. 4-wheel or all-wheel drive, since we last discussed this matter?
- b) If not, can the department explore a roadside assistance program?

Management Response:

A) Lisa Brooks stated the department is having a difficult time purchasing any vehicles due to supply shortages. Once supply becomes available, at the price we can pay for vehicles, then rural type vehicles based on employee needs will be pursued.

b) Why the P-card and tax-exempt forms are not accepted by tow companies is unclear. Management believes they should be and asked for greater details on what companies and where this is happening. For now, towing with p-card is what we will proceed with.

PEF Response:

PEF will explore further with members who have had issues. PEF recommends we explore joining a roadside service currently used by other State agencies, such as what the State Police use.

Action item:

Tabled until additional information can be gathered.

2. Safety Gear:

- a) Section 18.9 of the contract requires that the State provide any safety gear which is mandated for use by State employees including safety shoes, hardhats, etc. We understand the department is not requiring the use of coveralls and rain gear however we feel if budget allows, these items should be provided for employees that work outside at times and on-farms.

Management Response:

Lisa Brooks and Mark Lansing confirmed that the individual divisions are responsible to purchase safety gear as they determine it is required. The department is willing to explore what safety gear is being requested and asked for a list.

PEF Response:

Caitlin Janiszewski mentioned some of the clothing and gear being requested but stated she would send over a list soon.

Action Item:

PEF will send list to Mark for review. (completed)

3. New Food Inspector Title, Grade 21-Preventative Control Inspectors:

- a) At present a group of Food Inspector 1 personnel were asked and/or told to take the Preventative Controls training and are now assigned on a regular basis the most complex inspections the department conducts. Under Civil Service job details, the most complex inspections are to be conducted by Food Inspector 2 positions. If the department agrees to move forward with this new position we would gladly collaborate to help move this through the process.

Management Response:

Mark stated they are aware of a couple of Out of Title work grievances that were filed by Food Inspector 1 titles who are conducting PC inspections. The department defends their position that the Grade 18 Food Inspector 1 title is an appropriate title to conduct PC inspections. Even though they will defend that position, the Department is examining the Food Inspector title series. This process has just begun.

PEF Response:

PEF believes there should be a new title for Food Inspectors that conduct primarily complex inspections, such as Preventive Controls inspections. PEF will assist in the process if possible and requested.

Action Item:

Management will move forward with process. We will keep item on Labor Management agenda to provide periodic updates.

4. Food Inspector Inspection Expectations:

- a) Earlier in the year we asked for clarification why Food Inspectors were informed they need to conduct 546 inspections in a year. We are aware different amounts are expected of Food Inspectors In-Training and for Preventative Controls Inspectors. We were told these numbers were considered performance expectations and were reasonable. We asked for more information regarding what were the average inspection numbers for the past 5 years and in the past 5 years how many inspectors achieved 546 inspections for each of those years.
- b) We are concerned that these numbers are negatively affecting morale within the department. Furthermore, the situations that cause these numbers to change are not widely known and therefore do not allow an inspector to self-monitor themselves. Also, these expectations have yet to replace the 400-500 inspection expectation stated in the Supervisors Manual.

Management Response:

Dan McCarthy addressed this item. He stated the 546 was set at an aspirational goal. Previously no goal had been set. He further stated he has attended meetings across the State and by now it is clear to all, that this is a goal, and, as long as an inspector's weekly plan is approved by their supervisor, the amount of work performed is also approved.

PEF Response:

The number 546 is well above the average and since 2018 there have been 8 or less inspectors that have achieved that number. To set a number so high, devalues the hard work of so many that cannot reach that number for a variety of reasons. Also, circumstances that alter the 546 number, such as special assignments, are not known so self-monitoring is not possible.

The current Supervisor's Manual states inspection totals should be between 100-125 per quarter, which extends out to 400-500 per year. We feel a range is far more acceptable than a single, very high number.

In addition, it was mentioned that if management wishes to covert this goal into a performance standard, they must use the lowest acceptable number not an aspirational goal number.

Action Item:

It was agreed upon that information should be uniform, thus management will work to have the same inspection expectations match across all available written materials, i.e. weekly planning worksheet instructions, Supervisors Manual, etc.

Next meeting is scheduled June 7, 2023 at 2:00PM



John Arnold – L/M Chair (PEF)



Mark Lansing – Director of Human Resources