

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
FERTILIZER INSPECTION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Fresno, California
October 31, 2007**

MINUTES

MEMBERS

John Salmonson
Brad Baltzer
Thomas Beardsley
Bob Duckworth
David McEuen
Tim McGahey
John Peterson
Sanford Simon
Steve Spangler

CDFA

Nate Dechoretz
Asif A. Maan
Frank Delgado
Jenna Dibble
Amrith Gunasekara
Chris Hansen
Avnee Jivabhai
Kent Kitade
Stan Kobata
Natalie Krout
Dale Rice
Carolee Riley
Nirmal Saini

INTERESTED PARTIES

Steve Beckley – S. Beckley &
Associates
Renee Pinel – WPHA
Jay Yost – Independent
Agribusiness Professionals

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Salmonson called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. A quorum was established.

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Salmonson called the meeting to order earlier than scheduled, but noted that no motions were to be made until after the set meeting time of 1:00 p.m.

DEPARTMENT/DIVISION UPDATE

Inspection Services Division Director Nate Dechoretz informed the board that the Department is currently dealing with water and irrigation issues, the infestation of invasive species such as fruit flies, as well as the leafy green issue. He informed the board that if the State Pro-Rata (Indirect charges from the Governor's office) figures changed drastically, we would keep the board informed of the changes.

Mr. Dechoretz noted that the leafy green field and processing audits are ongoing. So far overall the industry has complied very well. As a result, the division is considering a similar program for tomato, carrots melon and possibly strawberry growers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Salmonson asked the Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board members to review the minutes of the July 20, 2007 meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. David McEuen to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Steve Spangler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

BRANCH UPDATE

Dr. Asif Maan notified the board of Program Supervisor vacancies for Feed and Fertilizer programs, as well as a Registration Specialist for the Lab Desk. He noted that an exam for Registration Specialist is scheduled in January of 2008.

Dr. Maan also informed the board that a consultant has been engaged to help with the database initiative. Currently, the "as is" portion of the process is underway, after which the consultant will make a recommendation for the database. He noted the possibility of using the Lab Information Management System (LIMS) for the branch. Dr. Maan is also informed the board that our goal is to develop a web-enabled database with online license renewal and payment options.

Dr. Maan briefed the board regarding the use of the Adulterated CAN 17 liquid fertilizer on almond and walnut orchards in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties. He informed the board that the fertilizer company involved has voluntarily taken the responsibility to purchase all nuts from the implicated fields.

FUND CONDITION STATUS

Dr. Maan called the board's attention to Attachment #1, which showed Fertilizing Material Inspection Program Fund Conditions. He explained as of June 30, 2007 the ending balance of \$3.8 million that includes \$1.5 million that were moved into a CD account as per the board's recommendation.

Attention was then brought to Attachment #2, which listed Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP) financial summary with an ending balance of \$1.66 million after accounting for encumbrances as of June 30, 2007.

ORGANIC FERTILIZERS UPDATE

Mr. Kent Kitade updated the board that two producers' product labels are in the process of being confirmed as organic, while five or six others need major review. Each review takes more than three months in order to verify the claims. The process is becoming complicated because some producers are spraying their products with oil, which disqualifies them from the organic category.

Dr. Maan informed the board that the representatives of the newly formed Organic Fertilizer Association of California met with him to introduce themselves and to inform him about the association.

It was brought to the board's attention by Mr. Steve Beckley that the industry is committed and wants to maintain progression but they need to know the guidelines for organic qualification.

REGULATORY/REGISTRATION ISSUES & UPDATE

Mr. Kitade informed the board that the registration process is being facilitated as best as possible considering the increased volume of label registration. Discussion ensued about hiring a new Registration Specialist and the qualifications necessary to fulfill such a position.

FERTILIZER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM (FREP) UPDATE

Ms. Carolee Riley reported that the FREP Technical Advisory Sub-Committee (TASC) selected research proposals that should receive funding for next year's research projects. The TASC agreed that the research emphasis should be on nitrogen and phosphorus efficiency in high production systems and nutrient requirements for high value specialty crops. She called attention to Attachment #4, and explained the status of current FREP funded projects.

APPROVAL OF NEW FREP PROJECTS AND FUNDING

Ms. Riley then called attention to Attachment #5, which lists the nine project proposals that the TASC is recommending for funding totaling \$988,014 over three years. Dr. Maan informed the board about the project selection process. Ms. Riley explained that all proposals were reviewed by peers and the TASC members. Discussion ensued detailing the various projects.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Steve Spangler to accept the proposed FREP projects' funding of \$988,014. Mr. Bob Duckworth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VACANCY ON FREP TECHNICAL ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Thomas Beardsley announced that for personal reasons he is resigning from the Technical Advisory Subcommittee. He requested that the board should consider a replacement with a Certified Crop Advisor's license. Discussion ensued about the make up of the TASC and its functions including: qualifications of the TASC member, the number of committee members, and whether a representative from the organic fertilizer manufacturing industry should be included on the committee.

Dr. Maan thanked Mr. Beardsley for his service as Chairman of the FREP Technical Advisory Subcommittee.

LABORATORY UPDATES

Mr. Stan Kobata informed the board that a bid was closed on October 29, 2007 for purchasing of ICP. Mr. Kobata also informed the board that a seasonal employee was hired to work 30 hours a week on wet chemistry, since it is the most time consuming, to expedite the analyses. He noted that between January 1, 2007 and September 2007, 646 fertilizer samples were completed. Mr. Kobata mentioned that usually 860 samples are usually completed during this period of time, with a goal of 1,000. However, considering how busy field staff has been with melamine and other issues, 646 is a fairly good number.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS, NEXT MEETING

The next Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board meeting has been scheduled for January 18, 2008 from 8:30 a.m. to noon in Fresno. There may be a change depending on the strategic planning schedule.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Bob Duckworth to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Steve Spangler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Asif A. Maan, Ph.D., Branch Chief
Feed, Fertilizer, Livestock Drugs and Egg Regulatory Services
Inspection Services

Date