



Organic Stakeholder Working Group

Tuesday, May 31, 2016
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

California Department of Food and Agriculture
2800 Gateway Oaks Drive, Room 101
Sacramento, CA 95833

AGENDA

Meeting Purpose: Create mutual understanding of CDFA's current program budget and provide recommendations for improvements; receive updates on recent changes to the SOP database and NOP activities; offer suggestions on activities to help foster support for organics within the stakeholder community and review and approve all working group recommendations to date.

Item	Time	Topic	Presenter Handouts
	8:30 a.m.	Registration, coffee, and networking	
1.	9:00 a.m. (15 min)	Welcome, Meeting Purpose & Introductions Agenda and materials review	-Rick Jensen, CDFA -Jenny Lester-Moffitt, CDFA -Sue Woods, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) ✓ <i>Agenda packet</i>
2.	9:15 (15 min)	Summary Overview of Past 3 Meetings and Outcomes (Where we've been)	Sue Woods, CCP ✓ <i>Meeting Notes</i> ✓ <i>Summary of presentations</i> ✓ <i>Draft recommendations</i>
3.	9:30 (15 min)	Database Updates and Changes-presentation ▪ Q&A	Scott Renteria, CDFA ✓ <i>Handout</i>
4.	9:45 (25 min)	Presentation-NOP Functions & Activities ▪ Q&A	Miles McEvoy, (by phone) USDA National Organic Program (NOP)

Item	Time	Topic	Presenter Handouts
5.	10:10 (20 min)	Presentation-SOP Program Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q&A 	Danny Lee, CDFA ✓ <i>Budget Pie Charts</i>
6.	10:30 (10 min)	Break	
7.	10:40 (30 min)	Group Discussion and Suggested Recommendations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We heard at the first meeting that CA doesn't receive its "<i>fair share</i>" from the NOP. How would you characterize <i>fair share</i>? 2. Can you identify what the <i>fair share</i> is? 3. How do we collectively work to ensure California gets their <i>fair share</i>? 	All
8.	11:10 (30 min)	Support for Organics (small and large group discussions and brainstorm) <i>"What are some of the activities that you can identify to help foster support for more organics within the stakeholder community?"</i>	All
9.	11:40 (35 min)	Working Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritization activity on results of <i>Support for Organics</i> brainstorm (all) 	Box lunches provided by CDFA
10.	12:15 p.m. (75 min)	Review / approval of Working Group Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data Collection and Usage ▪ Registration ▪ Outreach & Communication ▪ Enforcement ▪ Inspections & Training ▪ COPAC ▪ Funding ▪ Support for Organics 	Sue Woods, CCP All ✓ <i>Working Group Recommendations</i> ✓ <i>Meeting notes from past 3 meetings</i> ✓ <i>Results of today's discussions</i>
11.	1:30 (20 min)	Stakeholder Recommendations: Next Steps by CDFA and COPAC (Where we're going and how we'll get there)	-Jenny Lester-Moffitt, CDFA -Melody Meyer, COPAC
12.	1:50 (10 min)	Meeting Evaluation and Wrap-up	-Sue Woods, CCP -Jenny Lester-Moffitt, CDFA -Rick Jensen, CDFA ✓ <i>Meeting evaluation handout</i>
13.	2:00 p.m.	Adjourn	



Organic Program Stakeholder Working Group, Meeting 3

Meeting Summary, by the Center for Collaborative Policy

Thursday, May 5, 2016, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

345 Westridge Dr. "345 Boardroom"

Watsonville, CA 95076

Introduction

In the third meeting of the Organic Stakeholder Working Group, collaborative efforts continued to maximize the efficiency and responsiveness of the State Organic Program (SOP) to industry needs. The purpose of the meeting was to create a mutual understanding of CDFA's current training and inspections programs and CDFA's current outreach and communication efforts and provide recommendations for improvements in each area. The meeting also provided members with an opportunity to meet in small groups and as a full group to discuss potential modifications to the processes and prioritize their recommendations.

Action Items & Next Steps

Task	Lead	Estimated Timing
Circulate Doodle Poll for final meeting	Mr. Danny Lee	Week of May 09 (done)

Key Meeting Outcomes

Welcome

Mr. Rick Jensen, Director, Inspection Services Division, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and Ms. Jenny Lester Moffitt, Deputy Secretary, CDFA welcomed work group members. They reviewed the content of the final meeting and reiterated that decisions would not be made until after all the working group meetings are held. CDFA encouraged member feedback and noted that COPAC and CDFA will utilize this feedback in the final decision-making process. The final meeting of the group will be held Tuesday, May 31st.

Sue Woods, lead facilitator with the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP), led introductions and reviewed the agenda, meeting purpose and materials in participant's meeting packets.

Melody Meyer, COPAC chair, provided information on the role of COPAC, recognized the need for COPAC improvement and appreciated the participant's feedback.

Legislative Update

Taylor Roschen, Legislative Manager, CDFA, provided the group with an update on the document, "Status Quo of the State Organic Program (SOP) v. AB 1826 (Stone)". She reviewed the handout and highlighted the changes.

- Changes included a name change to the bill, clarifications to the purpose of the SOP, COPAC membership, COPAC's consultative role, fee caps, registration requirements, record requirements and availability of the records.

Question and Answer on Legislative Update

Following the brief presentation, member questions and CDFA responses included:

Q: What if a group has more than one of the categories of commodities, how is it reported?

A: The regulations will have to flush those out. Conceptually, the regulations would be able to adapt to that.

Q: Is there a schedule yet for appropriations?

A: Not yet, it will be scheduled on a flow basis.

CDFA's Outreach and Communication Efforts

COPAC's Role, Responsibilities and Membership

Ms. Meyer provided a brief overview of COPAC. The committee has 15 members. There has been an issue of vacant seats, and there is room for improvement on outreach and training as well as other areas.

- There is a need for a training or mentorship program for new members and a need for a succession plan to groom new chairpersons.
- Meetings occur on a regular basis, but better notification would be beneficial.
- Meeting materials:
 - All COPAC supporting meeting documents should be sent out far enough in advance of meetings so members don't use meeting time to read but rather to comment.
 - Meeting minutes are sent with agenda items prior to all meetings, but participants would like to have them sent out further in advance of each meeting.
 - The SOP indicated that meeting minutes could not be sent out in draft form.
 - A suggestion was made that action items should be sent out/posted shortly after each meeting.
- There have been alternates that desire a primary seat but are unable to attain it. There should be a succession plan for alternates to learn about the process and appointments.

Question and Answer on COPAC

Following the brief presentation, member questions and CDFA responses included:

Q: Is it not typical for a vice chairperson to become the chairperson?

A: No, members can be elected, and then run the same meeting. Ms. Meyer was elected chairperson and wasn't in attendance at the meeting. There needs to be a mentorship.

Q: Which advisory committees are subject to Bagley-Keene?

A: All advisory committees in Inspection Services are subject to Bagley-Keene.

Q: As a part of the AB 1826 expansion of COPAC's role, will there be additional resources?

A: The language is permissive, but COPAC is not held to it.

Discussion Questions and Group Responses

- What suggestions do you have for recruiting new COPAC committee members?
 - Make the meetings more desirable to attend by being outcome driven.
 - Make COPAC responsible; have an agenda item for vacancies.
 - Make the role of COPAC more influential and provide better recognition and rewards for serving members.
 - Improve the CDFA website.
 - Outreach to the next generation.
- How can attendance be improved at COPAC meetings?
 - Topics must be outcome driven and impact the public.
 - Consider having meetings in different locations.
 - Offer a place on the website for public feedback and discussion.
 - Meetings should be scheduled one year in advance to improve attendance; send out notifications and reminders early on.

CDFA's Current Outreach and Education Efforts

Mr. Danny Lee noted that the SOP fact sheet is available on the website and is sent out with registration documents. On the website, there are links to the fact sheet and other resources. CDFA recently started attending and distributing the fact sheets at trade shows.

Question and Answer on CDFA's outreach and education

Following the brief presentation, member questions and CDFA responses included:

Q: Does CDFA have a social media presence?

A: CDFA has a Facebook and Twitter and can link to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) account. SOP could feed the CDFA information to be posted. It would be beneficial to communicate with the counties and have a CDFA presence at the meetings.

Discussion Questions and Group Responses

- Who should CDFA target in their outreach efforts?
 - Registrants (handlers and growers)

- Commissioners
- Foodie media
- Certifiers
- Are there any recommendations for conducting more outreach?
 - The SOP could give an annual update at the EcoFarm Conference and other grower meetings, such as CCOF's annual meeting.
- Should COPAC and CDFA play a role in sending a strong consumer focused message regarding CA Organic and what it means?
 - Members need more information on what the message would be.
 - If the message was around growth or accomplishments, then yes.
 - The message should not make judgments or pit conventional products against organics.
- Could the message be educational as well?
 - People do want to buy organic and studies show confusion around 'natural'.
 - Stay fact based. Should not disparage non-organic.
 - One value speaking to enforcement is reinforcing and protecting consumer trust in the label, a driving value to the farmers.

Overview on the Visibility of Spot Inspections for the Accredited Certifying Agencies (ACA's), by Scott Renteria, Special Investigator, CDFA

Mr. Renteria reviewed the database access.

- ACA's have an account within the SOP database.
- The account is established when registered.
- Registration and enforcement data is available for all operations that they certify and are anticipating certification.

Discussion Questions and Group Responses

- What are ways that CDFA can improve the current approach and visibility of enforcement activities?
 - There is an opportunity to increase enforcement activities as the budget allows.
 - Visibility of the sampling and testing could be improved.
 - Circulate an annual summary of achievements and post achievements online.
 - Publicize and report regularly.
 - Consider streaming meetings
- How are partners currently using the database?
 - Only one stakeholder in attendance at the meeting is currently using the database; it is underutilized.
 - Growers use it to register and download registration forms.
- What are the opportunities for broader sharing?

- The database is not yet integrated to the NOP database but CDFA hopes it can be in the future.

Inspections and Training

The group concentrated its focus on six brief presentations followed by another set of discussion questions.

Inspections: How and why they are conducted, by Scott Renteria, CDFA

- The surveillance enforcement allows for the constant verification of compliance in all aspects of the supply chain.
- Inspections and sampling can be conducted any time a claim is made.

NOP Auditor Evaluation Tool, by Lars Crail, Lead Auditor, National Organic Program (NOP)

- Mr. Crail reviewed the NOP Auditor Evaluation Checklist.
- Members agreed that the tool was too in depth for application at the State level.

Discussion Questions and Group Responses

- Does it provide value for the SOP to incorporate the NOP evaluation tool?
 - The tool does not provide value; it would not be applicable to the data.
 - If the SOP is not audited under this protocol or one similar, it should be.
 - The tool goes above and beyond the necessary data.
 - There is an existing document at the county level that may be more applicable.

Training for Counties, by Scott Renteria, CDFA

- CDFA provides annual training to each county that is contracted to perform enforcement.
- CDFA also provides online Go-to-Meeting style trainings and individual onsite trainings when requested.

County Evaluations/Audits, by Danny Lee, CDFA

- The group reviewed the County Audit checklist handout. It is available online and changes can be made in real time. CDFA also provides all counties with a copy of its Quality Systems Manual (QSM), which is the program's procedures manual. Counties are required to follow these procedures when they contract with CDFA. This is an electronic document and changes can be made in real time. Any changes made to the QSM are sent to the NOP for approval prior to implementation.

County Training/Licensing Requirements, by Tim Pelican, San Joaquin County Agricultural Commissioner

- Biologists are trained in investigative techniques and have five different exams they must pass.
- The counties provide additional training through oversight and ride-alongs.

The CDFA Exam, by Rick Jensen, CDFA

- The exam is 120 questions, 30 are based on the organic program.
- A passing grade is 70 percent.
- Technically, someone could flunk the whole section on organics and still pass the exam.

Discussion Questions and Group Responses

- Is the current training for inspectors adequate and effective? What improvements could be made in the trainings?
 - Members did not think the current training was adequate.
 - Members previously brought up the hindrance of office inspections versus field inspections; there should be correct expectations of what an inspection should look like on certified and uncertified operations.
 - It would be beneficial to have county spot inspectors attend organic inspections and learn the application.
- Is the current exam segment on organics adequate?
 - It might be beneficial if the organic section is incorporated throughout the entire exam.
 - There could be a separate exam for onsite inspections.
 - Members supported the concept that backgrounds and qualifications be reviewed prior to onsite inspections.
- If CDFA develops on-line training, what topics should be included?
 - The letter of the rules does not capture the nature of what it means to be an organic farmer. Incorporate training segments that get to the heart and soul of organic farming.
 - The organic literacy initiative should be a requirement.

Prioritization Activity

The group reviewed their initial responses to the discussion question, ‘*Who should CDFA target in their outreach efforts*’, added several categories and then prioritized the targets for outreach.

Response:	# Of Votes:
Registrants (all handlers, growers)	6
Certifiers	3
Consumers	2
Ag Commissioners	1
Outside California	1
Foodie media	1
NGOs	0

Post Prioritization Discussion

Members discussed their thoughts overall to the prioritization results, the themes they noticed and raised valuable points.

- ‘Certifiers’ is a misnomer; there is a lot of communication between the CDFA and certifiers.
- Certifiers that operate in the State of California interact often.

Meeting Evaluation

Prior to adjourning, group members shared their thoughts on what worked well during the meeting and suggestions for future meetings. Process-related feedback included:

What worked:

- Good facilitation and time
- Good engagement and energy
- Format and amount of information and discussion
- Table discussion
- Staff has been very positive and responsive
- Creativity
- Helpful handouts

Suggestions for next time:

- Didn’t like the physical setup of the room.

Suggestions for next meeting’s agenda:

- Information on what we are paying for with the fees
 - Priorities and costs of above
- How should outreach be provided?
- Priorities in the policy realm
- Suggestions for getting the word out

Closing Remarks

Ms. Jenny Lester Moffitt, Deputy Secretary, CDFA and Mr. Rick Jensen, Director, Inspection Services, CDFA thanked the members for their valuable participation and feedback and informed them that the topic of fees would be covered at the next (and last) meeting of the group.

(Updated note: The Organic Stakeholder Working Group will meet again May 31, 2016, at 9 am at the CDFA offices in Sacramento.)

Meeting Attendees

Attendee	Organization
Emily Adams	Center for Collaborative Policy
Blake Alexandre	Alexandre EcoDairy Farms

Carmela Beck	Driscoll's
Katherine Borchard	Agricultural Services Certified Organic
Tom Chapman	Clif Bar
Noelle Cremers	California Farm Bureau Federation
Kelly Damewood	California Certified Organic Farmers
Rick Jensen	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Patrick Kennelly	California Department of Public Health
Natalie Krout-Greenberg	CDFA Inspection Services Division
Danny Lee	California Department of Food and Agriculture Organic Program
Jenny Lester Moffitt	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Jake Lewin	California Certified Organic Farmers
Mark Lipson	Molino Creek Farm
Melody Meyer	United Natural Foods, Inc.
Tim Pelican	San Joaquin County Agricultural Commissioner
Silvia Popescu	CDFA
Scott Renteria	California Department of Food and Agriculture Organic Program
Taylor Roschen	CDFA Executive Office
Chris Van Hook	Global Culture
Sue Woods	Center for Collaborative Policy
Gail Young	Agricultural Services Certified Organic

Phone Attendees

Attendee	Organization
Lars Crail	National Organic Program

Appendices: Meeting agenda, Meeting Presentations and Handouts



Organic Program Stakeholder Working Group, Meeting 4

Meeting Summary, by the Center for Collaborative Policy

Tuesday, May 31, 2016, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
California Department of Food and Agriculture
2800 Gateway Oaks Drive, Room 101
Sacramento, CA 95833

Introduction

In the fourth meeting of the Organic Stakeholder Working Group, collaborative efforts continued to maximize the efficiency and responsiveness of the State Organic Program (SOP) to industry needs. The purpose of the meeting was to create a mutual understanding of CDFA’s current program budget and provide recommendations for improvements, receive updates on recent changes to the SOP database and NOP activities, offer suggestions on activities to help foster support for organics within the stakeholder community and review and approve all working group recommendations to date.

Action Items & Next Steps

Task	Lead	Estimated Timing
Circulate the draft final version of the recommendations to stakeholders for feedback.	Mr. Danny Lee	Week of June 06

Key Meeting Outcomes

Welcome

Mr. Rick Jensen, Director, Inspection Services Division, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and Ms. Jenny Lester Moffitt, Deputy Secretary, CDFA welcomed work group members. They reviewed the content of the final meeting and reiterated that decisions would not be made until after all the working group meetings are held. CDFA encouraged member feedback and noted that COPAC and CDFA will utilize this feedback in the final decision-making process. Mr. Jensen explained the outcomes of the meetings and the resulting Action Plan that will be developed over the next month.

Ms. Sue Woods, lead facilitator with the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP), led introductions and reviewed the agenda, meeting purpose, and the material in participant’s meeting packets. She also provided an overview of each of the previous meetings.

Summary Overview of Meetings and Outcomes

The group first met on March 2nd, 2016 and identified broad areas for improvement in the program. Several issues and questions were raised and put on future meeting agendas for

discussion. The Center for Collaborative policy was brought in as a third party neutral to facilitate the next three meetings and assist the group in a process that would result in a final action plan with recommendations on the high-priority topics. Through a combination of small table group and full group discussions, brainstorm activities, and prioritizations, the group arrived at a list of recommendations.

Database Updates and Changes, by Scott Renteria, special Investigator, CDFA

Mr. Renteria explained that previously, Accredited Certifying Agencies (ACAs) would have to access each individual operation's record to view that operation's enforcement data on line. Now, ACA's are able to see enforcement data on all operations they certify, without having to access each operation's records. There are now separate sections specific to ACA registration and enforcement information on the State Organic Program (SOP) website.

Question and Answer on Database Updates and Changes

Following the brief presentation, member questions and CDFA responses included:

Q: Is general information available on how many operations have applied for cost shares?

A: Each company that has applied will be listed and can be clicked on for more information.

Q: Would it be helpful for ACAs to be able to see those that haven't participated in cost-share?

A: An 'if-then' statement could be included to say, "If they have not participated, list them separately."

Q: How do you plan to roll this out and ensure that it is tested?

A: Once it is published, CDFA will send out a notification of the changes and offer assistance as needed.

Q: What information is public and what is only visible to a certifier?

A: CDFA provides certifiers registration information and enforcement data for operations they certify. Nothing is visible to the public, though much of the information can be accessed with a public record request.

Q: What is the predicted timeline for publishing the changes?

A: CDFA hopes to have the changes published within two to three weeks, depending on the difficulty of the 'if-then' statements.

NOP Activities, by Miles McEvoy, USDA National Organic Program (NOP)

Mr. McEvoy provided an overview of the NOP functions and actions to support the organic community. The group received a copy of Mr. McEvoy's power point presentation.

- The NOP develops and maintains the organic standards, implements international organic trade agreements, investigates complaints of violations, and supports the work of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB).

Question and Answer on NOP Activities

Following the brief presentation, member questions and CDFA responses included:

Q: The majority of complaints are on non-certified operations, is this correct?

A: Yes, and if the complaint regards an activity in California (CA) it is referred to the SOP.

Q: What percentage of the complaints goes to the SOP?

A: We referred 23 complaints to the California SOP in 2015. That represents about 4% of complaints received.

Q: Could you provide more information on the market surveillance work of the NOP?

A: There has not been a lot conducted thus far, though there is an ongoing project this year. Previously the NOP looked at six different commodities, sampling from a variety of different markets for residue analysis. The organic products were low residue products, and there were only a few products in violation. In later studies, the NOP conducted more follow-up investigations on items in violation. There is a need for more market surveillance in the industry.

Q: What is the NOP budget for enforcement?

A: Nine million dollars for all activities under NOP.

Q: Is the NOP collecting acreage data?

A: It is available in the NOP database as voluntary, but not mandatory.

- COPAC identified acreage data as a valuable tool. Certifiers collect it and submit it voluntarily to the NOP, so the data are not complete. Regulation changes would take time.

Q: There are many grains coming from other countries, what is the NOP doing to ensure safety of the products?

A: There are inspections to verify that the farm and the handler meet the USDA organic standards. If it is coming from the EU, it could be meeting the European organic standards and will come in on an equivalency arrangement. If it comes in under an equivalency arrangement an NOP import certificate must accompany it. The NOP is looking at a proposal to require import certificates for all imports. The certificates are issued by the certifier for each shipment.

SOP Program Budget, Mr. Danny Lee, CDFA Organic Program

Mr. Lee reviewed the handout and explained the breakdown of the budget distributions for both the CDFA Organic budget and the CDPH Organic budget.

Question and Answer on SOP Program Budget

Following the brief presentation, member questions and CDFA responses included:

Q: With regards to the appeals, what is the timeframe for the costs, and is that an internal personnel cost or an external cost?

A: That number is a five year average. These are costs for the CDFA legal office, and the Attorney General's office. CDFA has a hearing officer who reviews the cases, but does not directly charge the Organic Program to do that.

- the role of the hearing officers is to review the initial pleading and make recommendations should it move forward. The costs for initial review and correspondence have not been captured in the costs to the Organic Program. It is not coming out of the SOP budget.

Q: Mr. McEvoy noted that CA handles less than 25% of the claims sent directly to the NOP, but California also receives direct complaints as well, what is the comparison?

A: COPAC or the SOP could gather this information if needed, but the estimate of 25% from the NOP and 75% direct from California is a fair assessment.

Discussion Questions and Group Responses and Recommendations regarding the CA fair share from the NOP

1. We heard at the first meeting that CA doesn't receive its 'fair share' from the NOP. How would you characterize 'fair share'?

- The concept arose because California accounts for 40% of the national organic sales, but is the state getting 40% of the efforts back?
- Try to get the NOP to break out the enforcement budget.
- California is benefiting from the imported grain products.
- A fair, industry-wide, national enforcement strategy may be necessary.
 - California conducts spot inspections, but no other state does.
- What is the baseline that the NOP is doing in other states?
- There are two ways to look at fair share, the market share, and the baseline activities of work that the NOP would have to do if the CA SOP was not in place.
- What additional benefits is California getting and what is valuable?
- The goal of the enforcement program is to level the playing field; it would be beneficial to look at the inbound products into the state.
 - There is an opportunity for partnership on import and market surveillance sampling.

2. Can you identify what the fair share is?

3. How do we collectively work to ensure California gets their fair share?

- Seek higher representation on the National Organic Standards Board.
- Without the SOP there would be a significant strain on the NOP to conduct enforcement, perhaps propose an increasing allotment.

- The group could collectively justify an increase to NOP to work with the 2018 farm bill.
- A reasonable first step would be to advocate that the cost share is applicable to state registration funds as certification cost, which is different than getting money back from the state.

Prioritization activity on fostering more support for organics

The group discussed the question, ‘What are some of the activities that you can identify to help foster more support for organics within the stakeholder community?’ They next reviewed their initial responses then prioritized the listed activities with a dot voting exercise.

Response:	# Of Votes:
Include organic as an attribute on all agricultural data collection	7
Increased training for inspectors and verification	7
Utilize COPAC to ‘vet’ national policy on regulatory matters	5
Highlight and defend organics within other regulatory programs, activities and reporting processes.	5
Education to other agencies and personnel (e.g. NOP 101 and 102)	4
Do a better job sharing what the SOP is doing, including value added efforts	4
Support for transitioning farmers (cost share)	3
COPAC to agendize further discussion of today’s topics	3
Education on the environmental benefits of organic farming	1
Broad education on organics	1
Define research priorities relative to CA growers	0
SOP should continue to collect available market data	0
Education to consumers	0
Build consumer trust in organics (e.g. highlight enforcement in CA)	0
Create excitement around COPAC for recruitment purposes	0

Review and approval of Working Group Recommendations

The group held a real-time revision activity to review and make changes to the list of recommendations from each of the previous stakeholder work group meetings. The following is the most current version of each of the recommendations.

Recommendations for CDFA Data Collection and Usage

- **Reduce the burden for growers on data that CDFA collects. Collect information as few times as possible and use the information as broadly as possible.**
 - **As CDFA works towards a reduction in data collected, the following stakeholder priorities should be considered:**

(The group produced the following ideas in response to the question:

“Which pieces of information (data) that CDFA currently collects are of highest value and of most benefit?”)

- Crop/site combo for purpose of enforcement
- Gross Sales useful for general data collection
- Establish a minimum threshold acreage
- If all data is collected in one spot, it would carry a value outside of enforcement
- A requirement to keep records of handlers is important, but should it be required up front during the registration process? This information is already captured by certifiers and would be duplicative.

The following suggestions were offered but received no priority votes from the group:

- Site and commodity info for exempt operations
 - Dollar value by crop type is less valuable because it is already accessible data during an investigation
- **CDFA and the industry should effectively use the wealth of data collected by CDFA to provide benefits to the organic community by taking the following actions:**
 - Communicate data to the public and share enforcement data with certifiers
 - Open public access to organic data, while maintaining privacy to producers
 - Better publicize enforcement actions taken
 - Send a survey to the 28 certifiers to identify a format for information sharing
 - All CDFA information collected should have an organic checkbox
 - Publish and share information collected across CDFA programs. There is value in getting market pricing (quantity, acreage, value, crops)
 - Crop/site combo could be of benefit to pest prevention
 - Avoid duplication of data
 - Commodities and production sites used on a daily basis
 - Utilize data to influence research and gain research dollars
 - Ensure information is collected so that the producer enters the information only once
 - Encourage the transition from conventional to organic

The following suggestions were offered but received no priority votes from the group:

- Use data to stimulate tourism
- Consider groupings of commodities
- Determine how the NOP could use this data in the future for GMO testing
- List of buyers and sellers of commodities

Recommendations for Revising the CDFA Registration Process

- **Modify the existing CDFA registration process in the following ways:**
 - Collect site/commodity information from certifiers
 - Set a minimum threshold that doesn't require commodity acreage information below 'x' number of acres
 - Create a uniform database for producers so other entities can pull the information
 - If there is a tolerance at the low end, there should be a tolerance also at the top end. There are operations that are not small but are diverse that may want to aggregate.

The following suggestion was offered but received no priority votes from the group:

- Eliminate the requirement for providing handler information.

Recommendations for Improving the CDPH website

- Clearly publicize the benefits of protecting California businesses.
- Develop an on-line licensing system.
- Provide inspection location data to reduce duplication and increase transparency.

Recommendations for CDFA's Outreach and Education Efforts

- **COPAC and CDFA should play a role in sending a strong message regarding CA Organic and what it means, with the following criterion:**
 - Prior to going public with the messaging, allow stakeholders the opportunity for review.
 - Stay fact based and provide messaging around growth and accomplishments.
 - Messaging should reinforce and protect consumer trust in the label.
 - Clarify terminology, especially around the term, 'natural'.
 - The message should not make judgments or pit conventional products against organics.
- **CDFA should utilize multiple forms of social media for messaging:**
 - SOP should provide CDFA with information for posting to social media sites.
 - Improve the CDFA website.
 - Communicate with the counties and have a CDFA presence at the meetings.

- Consider streaming meetings.
- **CDFA should target their outreach efforts to:** (in order of priority)
 - Registrants
 - Certifiers
 - Consumers
 - Ag Commissioners
 - Outside California
 - Foodie media

Recommendations for Enforcement

- **CDFA should improve on the current approach and visibility of enforcement activities in the following ways:**
 - Publicize and report regularly. Follow NOP's lead.
 - Increase enforcement activities as the budget allows.
 - Improve the visibility of sampling and testing.
 - Circulate an annual summary of achievements and post those achievements online.
 - Encourage utilization of the database.
 - Educate on spot inspection expectations.
- **Seek opportunities for broader sharing.**
 - Integrate CDFA's database with the NOP database.

Recommendations for Inspections and Training

- **Improve the training for inspectors.**
 - Bring spot inspectors into compliance with NOP 2027 (personnel evaluations).
 - Set expectations and criteria for office inspections versus field inspections.
 - Create clear expectations of what an inspection should look like on certified and uncertified operations.
 - Review qualifications of inspectors prior to onsite inspections.
 - Encourage county spot inspectors to attend organic inspections, so they can see how the rules are applied.
- **Improve the CDFA exam:**
 - Incorporate the organic section throughout the entire exam.
 - Create a separate exam for onsite inspections.
- **If CDFA develops online training, include the following:**
 - The organic literacy initiative should be a requirement.
 - Incorporate training segments that get to the heart and soul of organic farming. The letter of the rules does not capture the nature of what it means to be an organic farmer.

Recommendations for Improving COPAC

- **Improve COPAC meetings and meeting attendance:**
 - Provide better notification for upcoming meetings; schedule meeting dates one year in advance.
 - Send out meeting minutes, agendas and supporting materials further in advance of each meeting.
 - Distribute/post action items shortly after each meeting.
 - Agenda topics should be outcome driven and impact the public.
 - Establish an agenda item for vacancies.
 - Meet in different locations throughout the state.
 - Offer a place on the website for public feedback and discussion.
- **Outreach to the next generation.**
- **Establish a training or mentorship program for new members.**
- **Create succession plans:**
 - To groom new chairpersons
 - For alternates who may desire a primary seat to learn about the process and appointments.
- **Make the role of COPAC more influential and provide better recognition and rewards for serving members.**

Recommendations to help inform future decisions for 'fair share' in California

(This group produced the following recommendations in answer to the questions: We heard at the first meeting that CA doesn't receive its "fair share" from the NOP. How would you characterize fair share? Can you identify what the fair share is? How do we collectively work to ensure California gets their fair share?)

- **Collect data from the National Organic Program (NOP) in the following areas:**
 - NOP breakout of enforcement budget
 - Baseline of NOP activities provided in other states.
 - What would the NOP do in California if the State Organic Program (SOP) didn't handle the responsibility? Would California get equivalent service from the NOP?
 - Understand the benefits to California from the NOP import enforcement efforts on grains.
- **Establish a fair, industry-wide enforcement strategy.**
 - Identify what the national strategy is.
 - Work on integrating California's strategy into the national enforcement approach.
 - Determine the added value the SOP provides in level of service.
 - Look at inbound products into the state so that in-state and out-of-state enforcement and inspections are more level.

- Identify the area of focus; establish a minimum percent of enforcement efforts on out-of-state products to occur in California. Examine a potential partnership with the NOP on this effort.
- **Seek proportional representation from California on the National Organic Standards Board.**
- **Continue to work as a community to obtain baseline funds from the National Organic Program through the following:**
 - Direct ask of the NOP from California
 - 2018 Farm Bill
 - Unspent cost share funds
 - Continue to advocate that state registration funds are a cost and opportunity for cost share reimbursement as an additional scope.
 - CDFA to automatically reimburse all applicable parties

Recommendations on gaining support for organics

- **As CDFA works to increase support for organics, the following stakeholder priorities should be considered.**

(This group produced the following recommendations in answer to the question: What are some of the activities that you can identify to help foster support for more organics within the stakeholder community?)

- Increased training for inspectors and verification.
- Include organic as an attribute on all agricultural data collection.
- Utilize COPAC to 'vet' national policy on regulatory matters.
- Highlight and defend organics within other regulatory programs and activities reporting processes.
- Education to other agencies and personnel (i.e. NOP 101 and 102)
- Do a better job sharing what the SOP is doing, including value added efforts.
- Support for transitioning farmers (cost share).
- COPAC to agendize further discussion of today's topics (transition to organic, fair share, and more support for organics).
- Education on the environmental benefits of organic farming.
- Broad education on organics.

The following suggestions were offered but received no priority votes from the group:

- Define research priorities relative to California organics.
- SOP should continue to collect available market data.
- Education to consumers
- Education on the 'why' of organic farming.
- Build consumer trust in organics

- One way to create trust is to highlight enforcement in California.
- Create excitement around COPAC for recruitment purposes.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps by CDFA and COPAC

Ms. Lester Moffitt explained that the consolidated recommendations section would go to the Secretary and COPAC to be used as a guidance document. She thanked members for their valuable participation and input and stated that great information has surfaced from this group that will help to address the issues, the program and the department. She concluded by saying that it has been great to have a focused and detailed discussion on all of the topics discussed.

Ms. Melody Meyer, COPAC chair, stated that COPAC is conducting outreach and is excited about the work of this stakeholder work group.

Meeting Attendees

Attendee	Organization
Emily Adams	Center for Collaborative Policy
Blake Alexandre	Alexandre EcoDairy Farms
Carmela Beck	Driscoll's
Noelle Cremers	California Farm Bureau Federation
Kelly Damewood	California Certified Organic Farmers
Rick Jensen	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Patrick Kennelly	California Department of Public Health
Natalie Krout-Greenberg	CDFA Inspection Services Division
Danny Lee	California Department of Food and Agriculture Organic Program
Jenny Lester Moffitt	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Jake Lewin	California Certified Organic Farmers
Melody Meyer	United Natural Foods, Inc.
Tim Pelican	San Joaquin County Agricultural Commissioner
Judith Redmond	Full Belly Farms
Scott Renteria	California Department of Food and Agriculture Organic Program
Sue Woods	Center for Collaborative Policy

Phone Attendees

Attendee	Organization
Miles McEvoy	National Organic Program

Appendices: Meeting agenda, Meeting Presentations and Handouts



Organic Program Stakeholder Working Group, Recommendations from Meeting #2

Topics: Data Collection and the Registration Process

Recommendations for CDFA Data Collection and Usage

- **Reduce the amount of data that CDFA collects. Collect information as few times as possible and use the information as broadly as possible.**
 - **As CDFA works towards a reduction in data collected, the following stakeholder priorities should be considered:**

(The group produced the following ideas in answer to the question:

“Which pieces of information (data) that CDFA currently collects are of highest value and of most benefit?”)

- Crop/site combo? for purpose of enforcement
- Gross Sales useful for general data collection
- Establish a minimum threshold acreage
- If all data is collected in one spot, it would carry a value outside of enforcement
- A requirement to keep records of handlers is important, but should it be required up front during the registration process? This information is already captured by certifiers and would be duplicative.

The following suggestions were offered but received no priority votes from the group:

- Site and commodity info for exempt operations
- Dollar value by crop type, less valuable because it is already accessible data during an investigation

- **CDFA and the industry should effectively use the wealth of data collected by CDFA to provide benefits to the organic community by taking the following actions:**
 - Communicate data to the public and share enforcement data with certifiers
 - Open public access to organic data, while maintaining privacy to producers
 - Better publicize enforcement actions taken
 - Send a survey to the 28 certifiers to identify a format for information sharing
 - All CDFA information collected should have an organic checkbox
 - Publish and share information collected across CDFA



programs. There is value in getting market pricing
(quantity, acreage, value, crops)

- Crop/site combo could be of benefit to pest prevention
- Avoid duplication of data
- Commodities and production sites used on a daily basis
- Utilize data to influence research and gain research dollars
- Ensure information is collected so that the producer enters the information only once
- Encourage the transition from conventional to organic

The following suggestions were offered but received no priority votes from the group:

- Use data to stimulate tourism
- Consider groupings of commodities
- Determine how the NOP could use this data in the future for GMO testing
- List of buyers and sellers of commodities

Recommendations for Revising the CDFA Registration Process

Modify the existing CDFA registration process in the following ways:

- Collect site/commodity information from certifiers
- Set a minimum threshold that doesn't require commodity acreage information below 'x' number of acres
- Create a uniform database for producers so other entities can pull the information
- If there is a tolerance at the low end, there should be a tolerance also at the top end. There are operations that are not small but are diverse that may want to aggregate.

The following suggestion was offered but received no priority votes from the group:

- Eliminate the requirement for providing handler information.

Recommendations for Improving the CDPH website

- Clearly publicize the benefits of protecting California businesses.
- Develop an on-line licensing system.
- Provide inspection location data to reduce duplication and increase transparency.



Organic Program Stakeholder Working Group, Recommendations from Meeting #3

Topics: Outreach and Education, Inspections, Enforcement, Training and COPAC

Recommendations for CDFA's Outreach and Education Efforts

- **COPAC and CDFA should play a role in sending a strong consumer focused message regarding CA Organic and what it means, with the following criterion:**
 - Prior to going public with the messaging, allow stakeholders the opportunity for review.
 - Stay fact based and provide messaging around growth and accomplishments.
 - Messaging should reinforce and protect consumer trust in the label.
 - Clarify terminology, especially around the term, 'natural'.
 - The message should not make judgments or pit conventional products against organics.
- **CDFA should utilize multiple forms of social media for messaging:**
 - SOP should provide CDFA with information for posting to social media sites.
 - Improve the CDFA website.
 - Communicate with the counties and have a CDFA presence at the meetings.
 - Consider streaming meetings.
- **CDFA should target their outreach efforts to:** (in order of priority)
 - Registrants
 - Certifiers
 - Consumers
 - Ag Commissioners
 - Outside California
 - Foodie media

Recommendations for Enforcement

- **CDFA should improve on the current approach and visibility of enforcement activities in the following ways:**
 - Increase enforcement activities as the budget allows.
 - Improve the visibility of sampling and testing.
 - Circulate an annual summary of achievements and post those achievements online.
 - Publicize and report regularly.



- Encourage utilization of the database.
- **Seek opportunities for broader sharing.**
 - Integrate CDFA's database with the NOP database.

Recommendations for Inspections and Training

- **Research the feasibility of auditing the SOP under the NOP protocol / evaluation tool or one similar.**
- **Improve the training for inspectors.**
 - Set expectations and criteria for office inspections versus field inspections.
 - Create clear expectations of what an inspection should look like on certified and uncertified operations.
 - Review backgrounds and qualifications of inspectors prior to onsite inspections.
 - Encourage county spot inspectors to attend organic inspections, so they can see how the rules are applied.
- **Improve the CDFA exam:**
 - Incorporate the organic section throughout the entire exam.
 - Create a separate exam for onsite inspections.
- **If CDFA develops on-line training, include the following:**
 - The organic literacy initiative should be a requirement.
 - Incorporate training segments that get to the heart and soul of organic farming. The letter of the rules does not capture the nature of what it means to be an organic farmer.

Recommendations for Improving COPAC

- **Improve COPAC meetings and meeting attendance:**
 - Provide better notification for upcoming meetings; schedule meeting dates one year in advance.
 - Send out meeting minutes, agendas and supporting materials further in advance of each meeting.
 - Distribute/post action items shortly after each meeting.
 - Agenda topics should be outcome driven and impact the public.
 - Establish an agenda item for vacancies.
 - Meet in different locations throughout the state.
 - Offer a place on the website for public feedback and discussion.
- **Outreach to the next generation.**
- **Establish a training or mentorship program for new members.**



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

- **Create succession plans:**
 - To groom new chairpersons
 - For alternates who may desire a primary seat to learn about the process and appointments.
- **Make the role of COPAC more influential and provide better recognition and rewards for serving members.**

USDA National Organic Program

California Department of Food and Agriculture
May 31, 2016

Miles V. McEvoy, Deputy Administrator
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program



Subpart A - Definitions



USDA organic regulations

Definition of “organic production”:

A production system that is managed in accordance with the Act and the USDA organic regulations to respond to site-specific conditions by:

- integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that
- foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.

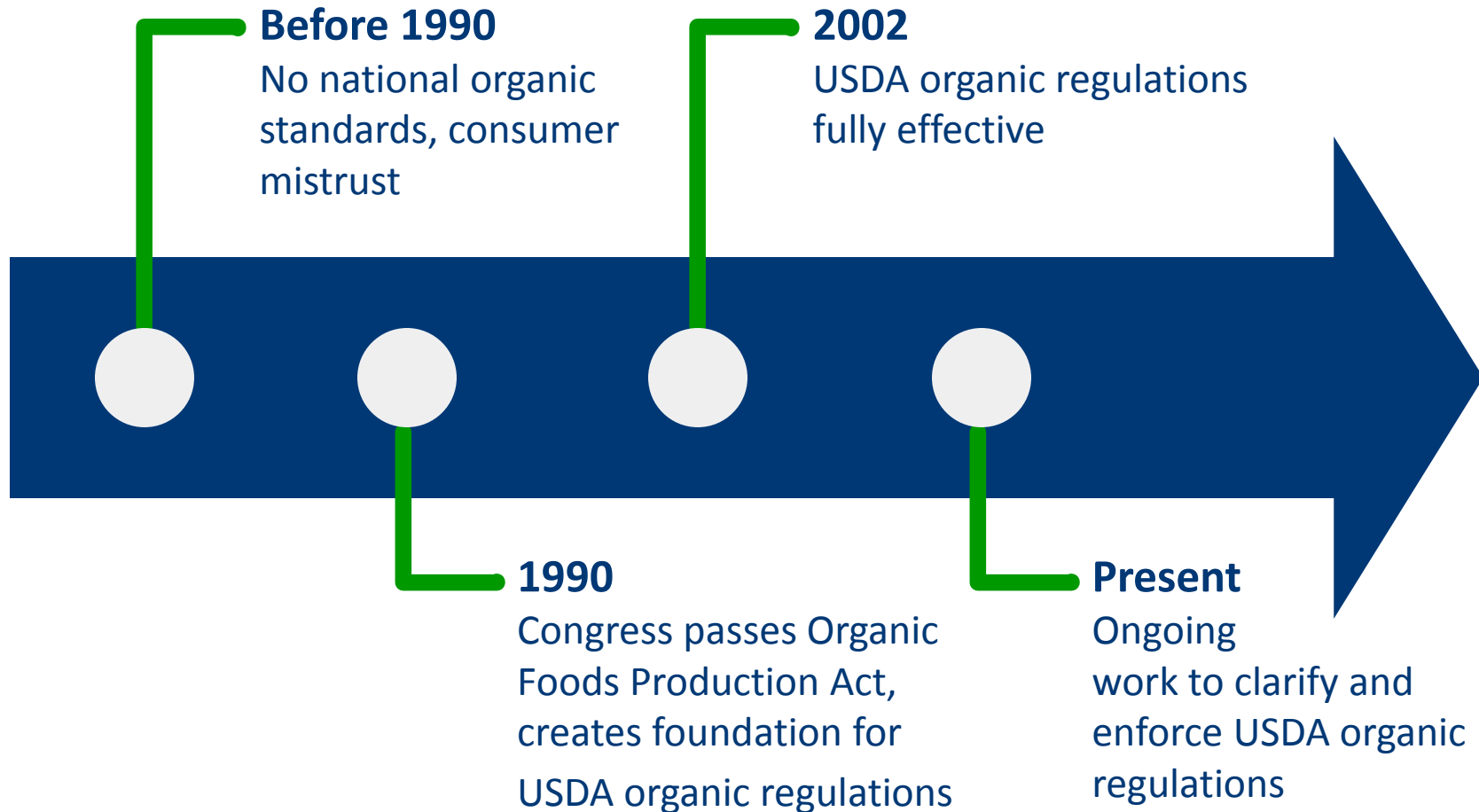
Why is Certification Important?



- Allows use of USDA organic seal and organic claim
- Empowers consumers to choose between production methods
- Gateway to USDA services for organic operations
- Verifies that products meet national organic standards
- Protects consumers
- Establishes level playing field for farmers, processors, and marketers



U.S. Organic: A Brief History



The National Organic Program (NOP)



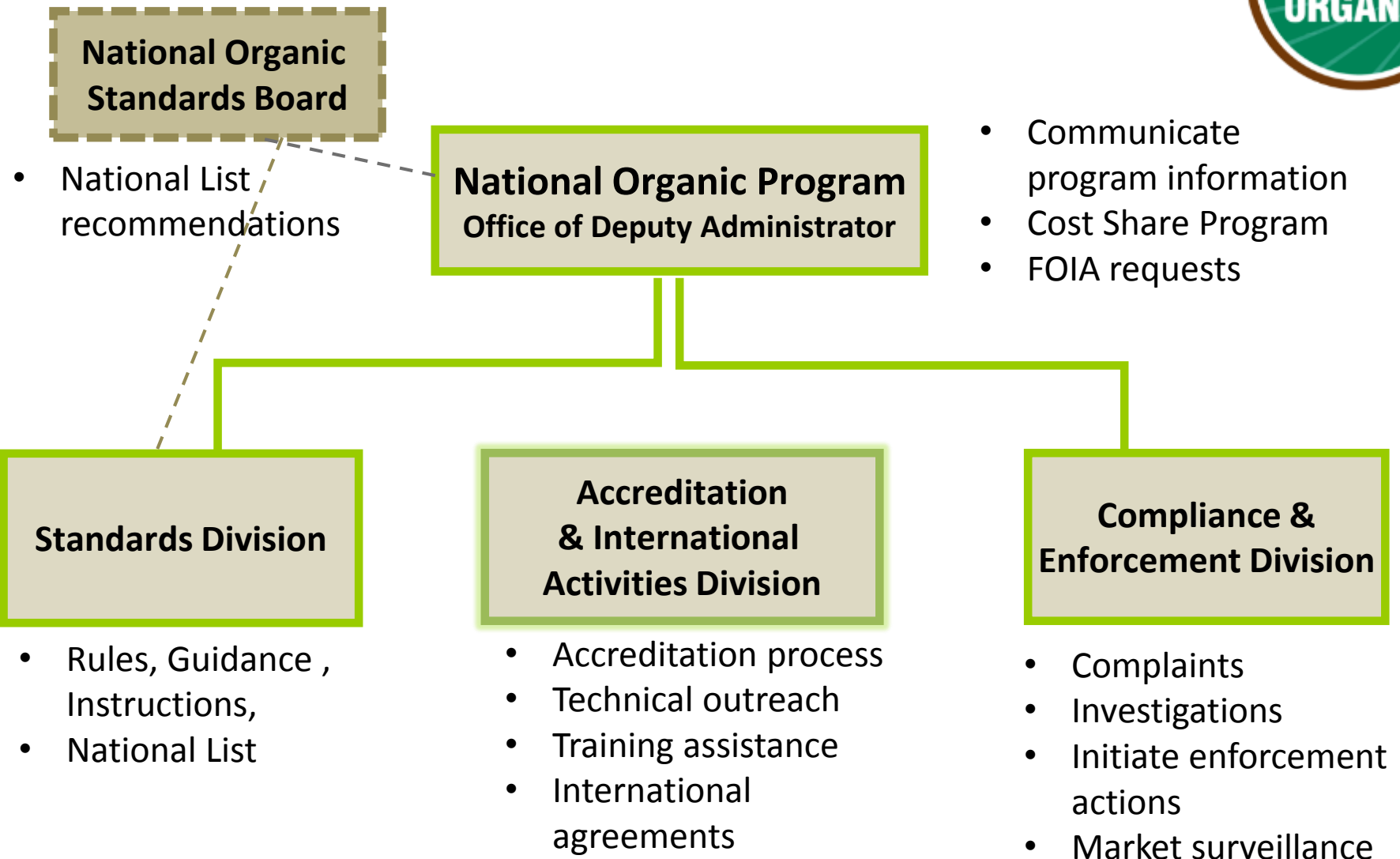
- **Mission:**
Ensure the integrity of USDA organic products in the United States and throughout the world
- **Vision:**
Organic Integrity from Farm to Table,
Consumers Trust the Organic Label
- **Core Role:**
Implement the Organic Foods Production Act and the USDA organic regulations

What Does the Program Do?



- Develop and maintain organic standards
- Accredit and oversee third party organic certifying agents, who review, inspect, and approve organic producers and handlers
- Implement international organic trade agreements
- Investigate complaints of violations (example: uncertified farmer selling food as organic, selling conventional food as organic)
- Support the work of the National Organic Standards Board
- **Oversight Responsibility:**
 - 79 certifying agents worldwide
 - 31,000 certified organic operations in over 100 countries
 - \$43 billion in U.S. organic sales (2015)

NOP organization and activities



Accomplishments – 2009-2015



- Age of enforcement
- Access to pasture rule
- Residue testing rule
- NOP Handbook
- Increased audit consistency, and ensured all audits were conducted
- Responded to 4 Office of Inspector General audits

Accomplishments – 2009-2015



- International equivalency arrangements
- Improvements to the Appeals process
- Organic literacy initiative
- USDA Organic Insider
- List of certified organic operations
- Sound and Sensible Certification

AMS-NOP Strategic Plan 2015-18



Protect
Organic
Integrity

Market Access:
Local, Regional,
International

Clear
Standards

Build Technology that
Advances Organic
Integrity

People and
Process

Protecting Organic Integrity

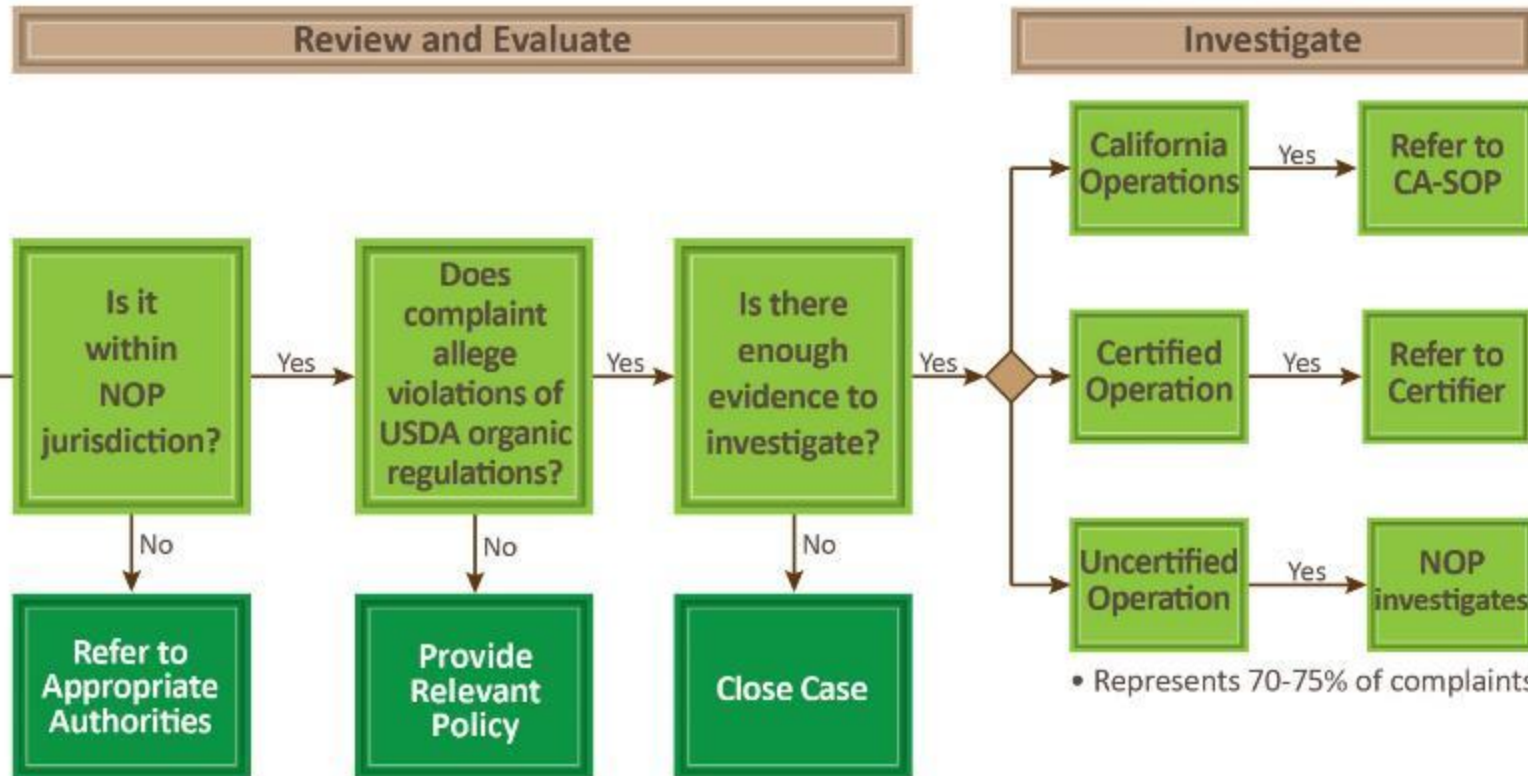


10 Points of Organic Integrity



1. Clear/enforceable standards
2. Communication
3. Transparency
4. Certification
5. Complaints
6. Penalties
7. Market surveillance
8. Unannounced inspections
9. Periodic residue testing
10. Continual improvement

Complaint Review Process



• Represents 70-75% of complaints

Examples:

- Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Food and Drug Administration
- State Public Health Offices



Proceeding #1

Type: Formal administrative complaint proceeding

Operation: Ernest D. Miller, d/b/a Stoney-M Farm

Concern: Applied prohibited substance during organic processes

Disposition: Suspended land from organic certification for 3 years

Proceeding # 2

Type: Consent decision and order

Operation: Organic Food Chain

Concern: Willful violation of USDA organic regulations

Disposition: Suspended accreditation for 2 years



Story #1: Who Needs to Be Certified

Background:

- “Who Needs to Be Certified” instruction published
- Number of complaints filed regarding uncertified auction barns handling

Success:

- NOP initiated 11 complaint investigations
- Resulted in **6 certified** and **11 compliant** operations



Story #2: Uncovering Serious Violations

Background:

- Uncertified operation sells products as organic and offers organic certification consulting services
- In FY 2013, NOP initiates investigation
- State of Alabama identifies operation's criminal activity

Success:

- State AG partners with NOP to investigate operation for securities fraud
- In FY 2015, owner accepts plea agreement; receives 15-year prison term and fines

Compliance & Enforcement

FY 2015 Successes



- Compliance & Enforcement: Overall Summary
 - Incoming Complaints: 549
 - Completed Complaints: 390
- Summary of Initial Actions Taken
 - Cease & Desist Orders: 36
 - Notices of Warning: 121
 - Investigation Referrals: 64
- Civil Penalties Issued via Settlement Agreements
 - Total Number: 8
 - Total Amount: \$1,872,875

Thank You

Organic Integrity from
Farm to Table,
Consumers Trust the
Organic Label

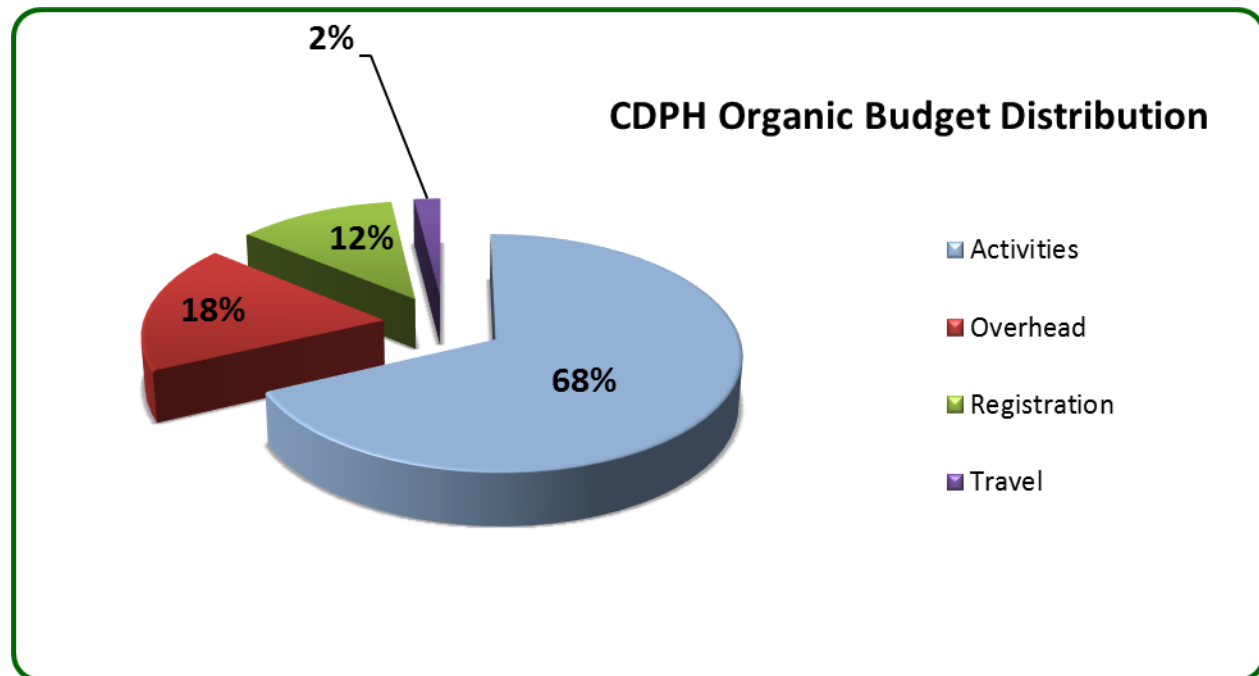
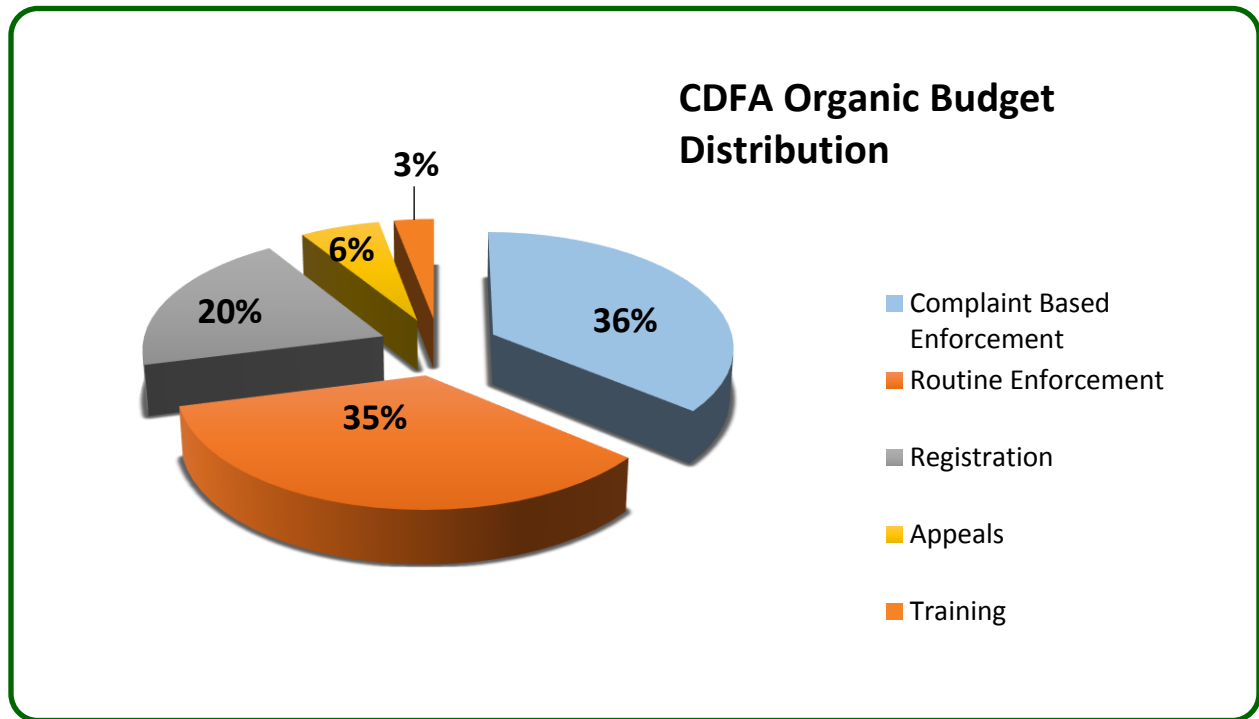
www.ams.usda.gov/nop



State Organic Program Budget Matrix

CDPH Total Budget: \$780,000		CDFA Total Budget: \$1,585,101	
Current Activities as Percentage of Budget		Current Activities as Percentage of Budget (Includes 16% admin cost per line item)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Activities (complaint investigations, enforcement, spot inspections)	68%	<input type="checkbox"/> Enforcement (complaint based)	36%
<input type="checkbox"/> Overheard	18%	<input type="checkbox"/> Enforcement (routine/surveillance)	35%
<input type="checkbox"/> Registration	12%	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration	20%
<input type="checkbox"/> Travel	2	<input type="checkbox"/> Appeals	6%
		<input type="checkbox"/> Training/Travel	3%
TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%

State Organic Program Budget Distribution Percentages



- CDPH Activities includes complaint investigations, enforcement, and spot inspections.