

**F CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
ANIMAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SERVICES (AHFSS)  
MEAT, POULTRY AND EGG SAFETY BRANCH (MPES)  
SHELL EGG ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 10, 2023**

California Department of Food and Agriculture  
1220 N St, Room 133  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Item  
No.

**(1) ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken by Mr. Michael Abbott, Egg Quality Manager, Egg Safety and Quality Management (ESQM) Program. A quorum was established at 9:01 a.m.

Mr. John Bedell was designated as a voting member.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Michael Gemperle, Chair  
David Will, Vice Chair  
Mike Sencer, Hidden Villa Ranch  
Kaliko Orian, Kaliko Farms  
Andrew Demler, Demler Family Farms  
Richard Breitmeyer, Public Member  
Steve Mahrt, Petaluma Farms  
John Bedell, Alternate  
Frank Hilliker, Alternate

**INTERESTED PARTIES:**

Debbie Murdock

**CDFA:**

Dr. Annette Jones	Dr. Elizabeth Cox
Dr. Fernando Umayam	Michael Abbott
Penny Arana	Casey Luna
Brittany Cardoza	Paul Roos
Kim Ellis	Logan Bartley

**(2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Michael Gemperle asked SEAC to review the meeting minutes from October 25, 2022.

**Motion #1:** Mr. Bedell made a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Glenn Hickman seconded the motion. All members agreed with no abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

(3) **BORDER STATION UPDATE**

Mr. Casey Luna introduced this update by stating that the hold on egg loads has remained consistent. Further, he stated that the industry has been doing a great job in keeping up with the Proposition 12 approved statements and the California Shell Food Egg Safety (SEFS) statements that are required on the bill of lading.

Further, he gave the following totals of egg loads:

- October 2022: 2,047 loads
- November 2022: 2,056 loads
- December 2022: 2,179 loads

Mr. Hickman stated that there have been widespread reports about egg shortages across California and wanted to know if CDFA had any insight regarding this issue. Mr. Abbott explained it is likely due to the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The Board expressed concern that the amount of egg loads being imported into California remained consistent, so there is confusion surrounding reasons behind the egg shortages. They requested that Mr. Luna provide a comparison of the previous year's loads compared to the current egg loads. This would provide some insight in determining if there is an actual egg shortage in California.

(4) **PROGRAM UPDATE**

Mr. Abbott began the update by stating that the ESQM program is conducting inspections during the HPAI national outbreak and will continuously monitor the situation in California.

ESQM was granted 15 inspections on the current FDA Agreement, of which, one has been completed. Additionally, the ESQM received an additional FDA Grant, which has the potential to last up to three years. As part of the agreement, the program has hired a Limited Term (LT) Environmental Scientist (ES) to work on the requirements for the egg regulatory program standards.

Further, the current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Shell Egg Surveillance agreement has no upcoming changes and will remain unchanged for this contractual year.

Upcoming County Contracts are currently being worked on with the program gathering the annual cases available numbers, which will help calculate the new fiscal year agreement budgets. ESQM will continue to offer new contracts to counties and to adjust new and existing counties that want to expand their contracts.

Mr. Abbott stated that Mr. Brandon Pleshek was promoted to a Fruit and Vegetable Quality Control Inspector and that Mr. Aiden Ward has accepted a promotion to the limited term Environmental Scientist (ES) for the new FDA agreement position. Additionally, Ms. Erika Marcelino was hired to fill another vacant ES position within the program.

Lastly, he introduced Dr. Fernando Umayam, who accepted the position of Assistant Branch Chief of the Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety Branch (MPES).

(5) **BRANCH UPDATE**

Dr. Fernando Umayam gave this update in place of Mrs. Paula Batarseh. He introduced this item with a brief introduction and provided his history within the Branch. He stated that the Branch has several positions to fill within the Investigations Unit and the Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) program.

Further, the Carcass Management Team is working closely with different programs and regulatory agencies regarding composting and carcass management within the State of California.

In addition, CDFA will have further updates regarding the Foster Farms Composting Project later.

(6) **DIVISION UPDATE**

Dr. Annette Jones introduced this item by disclosing that the HPAI situation has no big changes currently. Cases have recently increased again in the east, plaguing farms in Pennsylvania and other states. California continues to experience test positive wild birds throughout the state and recent domestic cases have been in small flocks with exposure to wild birds. She reminded everyone to continue practicing biosecurity and she commended the industry for their good practices in this regard.

Dr. Jones stated that the USDA moved forward with a policy proposal that would provide producers with a flat rate fee to conduct their own euthanasia and disposal with oversight of State and Federal employees or in collaboration with State and Federal employees.

Further, she stated that the California Animal Response Emergency System (CARES) has been activated due to the increased risk of flooding within California. The CARES system was activated five days prior to this meeting. This system allows CDFA to support animal needs for local farmers and to facilitate moving resources into counties that need them. She told the Board that if they start to struggle with outages, floods, or any other disasters to immediately let their Agricultural Commissioner know and their county emergency services will coordinate with other agencies to provide aid.

On the topic of HPAI, Mr. David Will inquired if there was a list identifying the most susceptible birds that are affected. Dr. Jones replied that there is and will get back to the Board regarding this question.

(7) **PROPOSITION 12 DISCUSSION**

Dr. Elizabeth Cox began by giving an update about the distributor registration applications (Form ACP-73-002), overseen by the Animal Care Program (ACP). The deadline for these applications was January 1, 2023, however, the ACP is still accepting applications.

Dr. Cox clarified that the definition of a “distributor” is any person, facility, or business that sells to an end-user in California. These registrations will be under the jurisdiction of

the ACP and will be in addition to the existing egg handler and producer registrations from ESQM.

Further, once registered the ACP license will last twelve months from the initial processing date, not by calendar year. For example, if a registration was processed on April 1, 2023, it would not expire until April 1, 2024.

Currently, the program has issued around 300 distributor registrations.

**(8) PROJECTION TOOL PRESENTATION**

Mr. Abbott introduced the Projection Tool Spreadsheet, a chart that assists in determining whether a company is being truthful in egg reporting. This spreadsheet is filled out by the producers during their respective Shell Egg Food Safety (SEFS) audit. He gave a brief demonstration of the spreadsheet and how it is operated.

The Board was concerned regarding how this additional process related to egg sales and egg load tracking at the border; however, Mr. Abbott explained that the financial audits conducted by CDFA, remediate these concerns.

**(9) ELECTIONS**

**Motion #2:** Dr. Richard Breitmeyer motioned to appoint Mr. Will to Shell Egg Advisory Committee as Chairman for 2023 and appoint Mr. Gemperle as Vice-Chairman for 2023. Mr. Glenn Hickman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

**(10) PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Bedell thanked CDFA for the out of state shipment reports being sent out in a timely routine manner.

**(11) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Enforcement Update
- Budget Subcommittee Report
- Financial Audit Overview
- HPAI Update

**(12) UPCOMING SEAC MEETING DATES**

The next Shell Egg Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 9AM via Zoom.

The SEAC Budget Subcommittee will be held at an undetermined future time, with the subcommittee consisting of the following Board Members:

- Andrew Demler (Chair)
- Lupe Gutierrez
- David Will
- Michael Gemperle

**(13) ADJOURN**

**Motion #3:** Dr. Breitmeyer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Mike Sencer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.  
Respectfully submitted:

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Logan Bartley