

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
ANIMAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SERVICES (AHFSS)  
MEAT, POULTRY AND EGG SAFETY BRANCH (MPES)  
RENDERING INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD (RIAB)  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 28, 2024**

California Department of Food and Agriculture  
1220 N Street, Room 333  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Item

No. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Brad Fleeman, Acting Chair in Mr. Michael Koewler's absence, called the RIAB meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

(1) **ROLL CALL**

Roll was taken by Mr. Fleeman. A quorum was established at 10:03 a.m.

**Board Members Present:**

Brad Fleeman, Acting Chair  
James (Jimmy) Andreoli, II  
David Belt

D.O. "Spike" Helmick Jr.  
David Isen

**Interested Parties:**

Tristan Daedalus, Baker Commodities  
Pilar Lillo, UC Davis fellowship (invited by MPES)  
Andy Black, Reno Rendering Company  
Travis Goodpasture, Sacramento Rendering Company

**CDFA:**

Dr. Annette Jones  
Han Lai  
Brittany Cardoza  
Dr. Chandrasekar Venkitasamy  
Maribel Urtez  
Penny Arana

Paula Batarseh  
David Schurr  
Andrew Halbert  
Dr. Ricardo Gaitan  
Hilda Favela  
Sedona Quiroz-Lopez

(2) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Fleeman asked the board to review the meeting minutes from December 7, 2023.

**Motion #1:** Mr. D.O. "Spike" Helmick Jr. made a motion to accept the minutes and Mr. Jimmy Andreoli seconded the motion. All members agreed with no abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

(3) **BRANCH UPDATES**

Ms. Paula Batarseh began with updates on the emergency composting and training exercises. The California Dairy Research Foundation project will have multiple composting sites selected across the state, with pile building starting in late summer and early fall of this year. MPES is working with the Animal Health Branch to develop an emergency composting training and exercise project using the National Animal Disease Response and Preparedness grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The project will provide classroom/field demonstration and certification opportunities for subject matter experts to be deployed to future emergency disposal responses.

Shifting to Division updates, Dr. Annette Jones provided a status update for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in California. The surge of cases in poultry producers and egg layers from November through January is now under control, with only a few ranches finishing up environmental sampling before resuming normal operations. The presence of HPAI in egg layers posed an especially difficult challenge. Euthanization of such large flocks of birds is laborious and strategically challenging. Dr. Jones informed the Board that onsite composting was utilized for most of the impacted ranches. Landfill and transport to an offsite composter were also used as alternative methods of disposal, given the lack of onsite space or other specific considerations. All disposal was in compliance with environmental regulations and done under the oversight of CDFA and USDA as well as other agencies.

Dr. Jones also shared with the Board that HPAI was detected in dairy herds in Texas, Kansas, and New Mexico and in goats in Minnesota. The virus was detected in raw milk being tested. Scientific evidence indicates that the infection in dairy herds is likely associated with HPAI-infected wild birds; the goat infection was incidental as they were housed on a poultry farm that was also infected. Dr. Jones confirmed that while California has increased vigilance, no cattle cases have been identified within the State to date. She also explained that HPAI is not a food safety concern in both commercial milk supply chain and meat products, thanks to the existing state and federal regulations and industry practices which include but are not limited to milk pasteurization, segregating sick cows from milking, ante-mortem and post-mortem meat inspection system, and proper food handling and processing procedures.

The Board inquired about HPAI virus transmission via wild bird migration. Dr. Jones confirmed that the virus does travel across the country along wild bird migratory patterns in expected ways, and that keeping wild birds away from cattle has been a long-standing conundrum. However, the cattle do recover from HPAI and return to milking in approximately two weeks.

The Board then asked if trade had been impacted by HPAI infection. Dr. Jones replied that there is no scientific reason that the detection should impact international trade; CDFA will continue to monitor the situation and communicate with the industry as appropriate.

Mr. Andrew Halbert updated the Board on the changes to Bagley Keene requirements. Remote participation to the Board meeting remains an option in addition to the physical site. Board members attending remotely must announce anyone that is in the room over the age of 18. If connection fails at the physical host site, the meeting must be paused until

connection is resumed or rescheduled to another date/time. Finally, votes by remote attendees are by roll call.

Mr. Halbert moved on to bill AB 2721. The bill would extend the department's authorization to charge an additional fee for Inedible Kitchen Grease (IKG) transporters until July 1, 2030 and revise the Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) section 19315 accordingly. Mr. Halbert asked if the Board would agree to remove the sunset language in the FAC code that requires CDFA to reassess it every five years. Mr. Andreoli and Mr. Helmick Jr. commented that they would like to keep the sunset language to provide the Board the opportunity to review/renew CDFA's statutory authority and assess if any amendment or modification is needed. A motion was proposed and passed to keep the sunset language; the Board will reassess in five years.

**Motion #2:** Mr. Helmick Jr. made a motion to leave the sunset language in AB 2721. Mr. Andreoli seconded the motion. All members agreed with no abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

(4) **SENATE BILL 1383 / PROCUREMENT TARGET**

Ms. Brittany Cardoza informed the Board that CDFA is continuing to reach out to counties, cities, and contracted waste haulers to correct their messaging to reflect that inedible materials or packinghouse waste cannot go into the organics bin. CDFA is also answering calls from companies inquiring what material can go into the bins provided by their city/county/waste hauler.

The Board alerted Ms. Cardoza to some inconsistencies they encounter with some companies, where they are told by their municipalities that they can discard inedible materials into the organic's bins. Ms. Cardoza asked the Board to send their information to CDFA so that they can reach out to the city and the company.

(5) **COORDINATION WITH REGULATORY AGENCIES**

Ms. Batarseh updated the Board on CDFA's coordination with industry and other agencies in response to the proposed food waste strategy from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). CDFA has submitted an official comment letter to USEPA regarding their Draft National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics and additionally, the Wasted Food Scale tool. CDFA has shared the comment letter with the Board and it is a public document. In the comment letter, CDFA highlighted the important role rendering plays in agriculture and organic recycling, urging USEPA to include rendering in the National Strategy and to clearly reflect rendering in the revised Scale as a prioritized and higher-ranked wasted food recycling pathway.

Ms. Batarseh also informed the Board that CDFA has coordinated with Cara Morgan, the new Deputy Director for the Organic Materials Recycling Program within CalRecycle. CalRecycle submitted an independent comment letter which noted that rendering is an important strategy to achieving the climate goals, recovering organic waste and ensuring a safe food supply for animal agriculture.

Mr. Andreoli added that Baker has also submitted comments and will continue to monitor the development with USEPA.

Mr. Helmick Jr. asked if sympathetic congressional or senatorial staff had been deputized to influence USEPA. Mr. Andreoli noted the upcoming North American Renderers Association meeting in Washington D.C., which will provide an opportunity for rendering industry representatives to meet with legislators to discuss the utility of rendering.

Ms. Batarseh continued to update the Board on the proposed new USEPA guidelines on effluent discharge limitations for the meat and poultry sector, including the rendering industry. Public comments were due on March 25, 2024. Mr. Tristan Daedalus from Baker Commodities shared the highlights of their comment letter to USEPA, noting the short timetable in which the public could submit comments. Mr. Andreoli shared his concerns that this regulation would create challenges for the industry. Board members may contact Mr. Daedalus or Mr. Andreoli if they are interested in receiving a copy of the letter.

Lastly, Mr. Andreoli referred to the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) proposed regulations and implementation schedules on Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF). He stated that he is now a member of the ACF implementation panel with CARB. Mr. Andreoli reiterated the industry's concerns about the proposed ACF regulations and implementation schedule that have been mentioned in previous Board meetings. The concerns include the lack of fueling infrastructure, available equipment and implementation challenges such as timeline and cost. Mr. Andreoli requested this topic be included for future agenda items.

**(6) ENFORCEMENT AND OUTREACH**

Ms. Cardoza informed the Board that CDFA is at the end of the 2024 renewal period. She noted that the Motor Carrier Permit (MCP) has been required for licensure since 2023. CDFA is giving license extensions for transporters on a case-by-case basis pending proof of their MCP renewal with the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Ms. Cardoza provided current license numbers:

- IKC (Commercial Inedible Kitchen Grease) Transporters = 319
- Total vehicles currently registered = 1,461
  - 20 companies with renewals still pending
  - 15 companies have not turned in renewals for 2024
  - 5 new transporters pending
- IKP (Personal Inedible Kitchen Grease) Transporters = 5
- Dead Animal Haulers (DAH) = 47
- Total vehicles currently registered = 103
  - 4 companies with renewals still pending
  - 3 companies have not turned in renewals for 2024
  - 3 new DAH pending
- Renderers (IKG) = 29
  - 2 renewals pending
- Collection Centers (IKG) = 47
  - 1 renewal pending
  - 2 companies have not turned in renewals for 2024
  - 1 new collection center pending
- Renderers (General) = 19

- Collection Centers (Animal) = 9

Ms. Cardoza has sent an email reminding rendering plants and collection centers to check licenses before receiving oil; if the license is not in the truck, managers can use the Rendering Enforcement website.

Since the December 2023 meeting, there have been (10) Notices of Violation (NOVs) issued for IKG theft, unlicensed collection centers, unsanitary conditions, failure to manifest, and unlicensed DAH. The total civil penalty assessment for Dec. 2023 – Feb. 2024 NOVs is \$32,093.

Ms. Cardoza went into detail about the Compliance and Enforcement Unit's current cases. There has been an increase in illegal animal slaughter cases in Southern California. There has also been an increase in IKG theft cases in the central valley, which are being investigated by a new member of the Unit. Ms. Cardoza noted an increase in complaints from the public, counties, cities, and water boards associated with unsanitary conditions at some facilities; these are addressed alongside county representatives to enforce compliance.

Ms. Cardoza updated the Board on changes to the current penalty matrix used when assessing notices of violation for a civil penalty, as was discussed in the last RIAB meeting. CDFA is actively drafting the proposed regulations to put into practice. Mr. Halbert presented the projected timeline for publications, public hearings, and Office of Administrative Law (OAL) review. Once regulations have been submitted to OAL, there is a minimum 45-day public comment period, after which any substantial changes are made and given a 15-day comment period. When finalized, the regulations are submitted to OAL, which has 30 calendar days to review, approve, and submit to the Secretary of State. It would then become effective according to a quarterly schedule.

Mr. Helmick Jr. asked if Board members could receive the Enforcement presentation data in future meetings. Ms. Cardoza agreed and will e-mail the PowerPoint presentation as well and include a printed data sheet at the next meeting.

Mr. Helmick Jr. proposed that CDFA should coordinate with California Highway Patrol (CHP) to instruct CHP staff on identifying illegal IKG trucks as they pass through weigh stations. Ms. Cardoza replied that due to staff changes, it would be beneficial to provide a refresher on what to look out for (license, IKG sticker); her unit will be coordinating with CHP to propose that training.

Mr. Helmick Jr. asked if IKG transporters are required to list their offload location. He also inquired about trucks transporting septic waste and IKG in the same vehicle. Ms. Cardoza confirmed the offload location is listed on the application and is required to be a licensed renderer, collection center, or publicly owned treatment works (POTW). She also informed the Board that all new transporters are subject to inspection and meet with an investigator to review codes and regulations, including penal codes forbidding the mixing of septic material and IKG.

The Board inquired about following up with individuals involved in illegal activity or noncompliant activity that then become relicensed. Ms. Cardoza explained that there is

follow up on individuals in the future to ensure they are compliant, by way of targeted audits on facilities with known past illegal activity. Ms. Cardoza also encouraged industry to reach out when they witness noncompliance or questionable business practices based on industry experience.

Mr. Fleeman suggested adding an intent to receive material form in IKG transporter applications. Ms. Cardoza noted that transporters are already required to report where they offload material and that some transporters use multiple offload sites. Mr. Andreoli suggested the application be signed by the designated offload site confirming their intent to receive material, or include a letter from the offload site stating the same. Ms. Cardoza confirmed they will consider changing the application to include a signature line for offload sites.

Mr. David Belt inquired about POTWs that accept IKG being licensed as rendering plants. Ms. Cardoza informed the Board that POTWs are typically exempted, but CDFRA will reach out to remind POTWs of CDFRA regulations and requirements for transporters to be licensed.

The Board inquired if CDFRA monitors any international imports of IKG material. Ms. Cardoza clarified that CDFRA does not regulate imported IKG, only IKG entering California from border states.

Mr. Andreoli commented that he anticipates new EPA regulations requiring cradle-to-grave tracking (using Renewable Identification Numbers, manifest lists) will help curb illegal IKG transport and practices. Mr. Andreoli asked about providing information for restaurant owners on the CDFRA website to ensure those servicing their traps and picking up their used cooking oil are licensed. Ms. Cardoza informed the Board that the information is on CDFRA's IKG theft webpage, but they will look into updating and clarifying it.

(7) **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made.

(8) **FUTURE RIAB MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

- Regulations Update
- CARB: Advanced Clean Fleets discussion
- SB 1383
- Coordination with Regulatory Agencies
- Enforcement & Outreach

(9) **UPCOMING RIAB MEETING DATES**

Mr. Andreoli requested RIAB hold an additional meeting in 2024, suggesting one in summer and one in autumn. The Board agreed.

The next board meeting will be scheduled for July 2024. CDFRA staff will send a Doodle poll to determine the date and will notify all concerned once it is finalized.

(10) **ADJOURN**

**Motion #3:** Mr. Fleeman made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Andreoli seconded the motion. All members agreed with no abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Sedona Quiroz-Lopez