

**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
September 22, 2021**

*****Minutes are considered “draft” until approved by the RIAB at their next meeting*****

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Michael Koewler, Chair, called the RIAB meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and a quorum was established.

(1) ROLL CALL

Roll was taken by Mr. Michael Koewler

Board Members Present:

Michael Koewler
D.O. “Spike” Helmick Jr.
James (Jimmy) Andreoli, II
Jared Trawick

Brad Fleeman
David Belt
Chris Friberg

Interested Parties:

Kevin Abernathy
Jessica Billingsley
Mark DeBie
David Isen
Paulina Lawrence
Martin Perez

Nick Pisca
Paul Sousa
Terry Wigglesworth
Kate Wilkins
Ashlee Yee

CDFA:

Paula Batarseh
Marc Shaw
David Schurr
Han Lai
Ricardo Gaitan

Paul San Gregorio
Penny Arana
Andrew Halbert
Tuan Nyugen
Logan Bartley

(2) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Koewler, Chair, asked RIAB to review the meeting minutes from April 13, 2021.

Motion #1: Mr. Andreoli made a motion to accept the minutes and Mr. Helmick seconded the motion. All members agreed with no abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

(3) **INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr. Koewler introduced David Belt and Chris Friberg as new Board Members. Each new member provided a brief self-introduction.

(4) **BRANCH UPDATES**

Paula Batarseh began by informing the Board that the MPES Branch recently completed their move to the CDFA Headquarters building at 1220 N Street in downtown Sacramento. Further, the Branch has been busy providing comments on the Federal Register Notices regarding investments and opportunities for meat and poultry processing infrastructure. She stated that U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is looking to expand markets, and that CDFA has been working on a similar project to expand markets for small harvesters. She stated that there is \$500 million in USDA funding programs to support and provide relief to small and medium-sized processors and harvesters. She concluded by stating that CDFA is working with the USDA and other stakeholders to better understand the challenges and provide opportunities for small processors and harvesters.

(5) **SENATE BILL 1383 / INEDIBLE MATERIAL**

Ms. Batarseh introduced this item by stating that because of the new regulations, which become effective in January 2022, it is very important to ensure that the regulations are understood by the industry and those within it. CDFA has been working with the City of Los Angeles Sanitation District and the City of Oceanside, as well as other municipalities, to ensure they understand CDFA's requirements and provide accurate guidance on their websites.

She explained that CDFA has distributed materials (flyer and message from Dr. Annette Jones) which indicates how packinghouse waste (inedible material) must be segregated and placed in distinct containers and ultimately recycled through CDFA licensed renderers. Packinghouse waste must not be mixed with other organic waste. CDFA has been working with California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) and providing suggested updates to the information contained on the CalRecycle website.

CDFA met with the California Restaurant Association (CRA) and solicited their assistance in getting the packinghouse waste information out to the restaurant industry. They agreed to provide whatever assistance they could to provide clear guidance to restaurants that generate inedible material and meat scraps, with the goal of ensuring those materials are being sent to renderers.

CDFA has drafted a presentation that will be distributed to stakeholders and placed on the CDFA website. The purpose of the presentation is to explain CDFA's expectations and requirements by using terms, videos, and frequently asked questions. Paul San Gregorio provided an overview of the presentation to the Board.

Mr. Koewler inquired if CDFA was receiving inquiries from restaurants with retail counters, who were cutting meat and producing inedible material or scraps. Mr. Shaw responded that the purpose of the presentation was to be proactive and accurately provide the information necessary so that the industry can handle their business in a proper fashion.

Mr. Andreoli inquired if the disposal containers for inedible material had to be a specific color and Mr. Shaw clarified that the containers can be any color, however, they must be clearly marked to indicate that they are for inedible materials only.

Mr. Andreoli raised a question regarding CDFA's focus on raw meat, rather than all meat products (including cooked meats). A discussion ensued regarding various definitions of meat, inedible materials, etc. There are a variety of definitions that pertain to the issue. CDFA staff will review the definitions and provide the Board with their findings.

(6) **ENFORCEMENT/OUTREACH UPDATES**

Mr. Shaw introduced this item by stating that the 2022 License Renewals should be sent out during the later part of October. He added that CDFA is making some final changes and additions to the renewal letters and documents.

Mr. Shaw advised the Board that CDFA will inform all commercial transporters of inedible kitchen grease (IKG) that the Department will begin requiring proof of a valid Motor Carrier Permit commencing with the 2023 renewal season. Both California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and California Highway Patrol (CHP) have advised the Department that possession of a Motor Carrier Permit is mandatory. Mr. Shaw will provide the Board with the documentation from DMV for their review.

Mr. Shaw provided general updates relative to landfill permits, decals on dead animal hauler vehicles and the need for all transporters of inedible materials to be properly registered with CDFA. He advised the Board that during the second half of 2021, CDFA has levied approximately about \$18,000 in civil penalties, with the majority as a result of IKG theft.

(7) **CARCASS MANAGEMENT**

Ms. Batarseh shared that CDFA is resuming the planning for the University of Maine Emergency Composting Course. CDFA is drafting the project plan and in the process of getting all the different approvals from the local law enforcement agencies and other regulatory agencies. She explained that there will be two main events. The first event will be held in February of 2022 and will invite regulatory and industry decision makers and policy makers to observe the construction of the compost pile. The second event will be held in March of 2022, with detailed training on how to select proper composting

locations, calculate carbon to carcass ratios, and other considerations when choosing composting as an emergency alternative disposal method.

Ms. Batarseh stated that there are two ongoing livestock carcass composting research projects: Tulelake Project and Chico State Project. Both projects began in August of 2020. Additionally, she stated that the Edgewood Livestock Carcass Composting Project and Foster Farms Poultry Carcass Composting Project were approved by CDFA in June of 2021, and the project leads are working with other agencies on getting the approvals. Foster Farms will be evaluating composting of poultry as an effective rendering technology. Lastly, CDFA is currently reviewing a research proposal for a poultry blood recycling project, which was submitted by California Organic Fertilizers with the goal of rendering the blood into a liquid fertilizer.

Ms. Batarseh stated that CDFA is continuing working on the formal regulation package for marking of euthanized animal regulations. Ms. Batarseh asked the Board to share with CDFA any new information or concerns they have regarding barbiturates in rendered products.

Regarding rendering disruptions and heatwaves, Ms. Batarseh explained that this year renderers were able to handle the extra carcasses and that there was not a need to get emergency disposal advisories out. CDFA Animal Health Branch (AHB) has been contacting landfills and maintaining an updated list of landfills which accept carcasses. Paula stated that CDFA has been working with other state regulatory agencies on identifying regulatory pathways for onsite composting and use of the compost during rendering disruptions. The next step is to work with the county and local agencies with the assistance from AHB.

Mr. Andreoli inquired if the research projects include capturing greenhouse gases being released from composting. Han Lai responded that she would reach out to the research leads and find out. He also raised a concern about lack of funding for rendering technology compared to various grants available for composting and digestion technologies.

(8) CURBSIDE RESIDENTIAL IKG COLLECTION

Mr. Koewler initiated a discussion regarding the collection of residential IKG by contracted waste haulers. This issue was discussed during the previous RIAB meeting and public comments were submitted to the Department. Those comments were distributed to the RIAB members prior to the meeting. Mr. Andreoli commented that CDFA should explore a separate residential licensing program, similar to the existing IKG transporter program, with decals issued to all vehicles collecting residential IKG.

Mr. Koewler reiterated that the industry is concerned that products collected from residential waste haulers should be free of contaminants and that it would be difficult to have those assurances without proper manifesting of each residential collection location. He added that the likelihood of finding contaminants in a product picked up from a residence is significantly higher (such as motor oil, hazardous waste, etc). Mr. Koewler suggested that a testing requirement for oil collected from residences may reduce the

potential for contaminated loads. There was mixed sentiment on whether the oil should be tested as a batch or specific to each residence. Mr. Andreoli added that the waste haulers, at their expense, should be responsible for testing the product and providing a certificate of analysis stating that the materials are free of contaminants.

Mr. Pisca informed the Board that there should be an exemption for haulers transporting a minimal quantity of IKG. Several members reminded all in attendance that the Board spent several years implementing a robust licensing and tracking system to reduce theft and improve overall compliance and that creating exemptions would undermine those efforts.

Finally, Mr. Koewler and Mr. Trawick commented that in order to be granted rendering credits through the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the renderer must be able to track all product from its initial collection location – in this case, each residence. Mr. Koewler asked CDFG to contact CARB to see if they would entertain any exceptions to this rule.

(9) PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments, however, Mr. Koewler took the opportunity to thank Program Manager Laura Barlow for her hard work as the Rendering Program lead over the past several years. Mr. Koewler, on behalf of the entire Board, expressed his appreciation and presented Ms. Barlow with a Certificate of Recognition for her efforts. Ms. Barlow has promoted and transferred to a new state agency.

(10) FUTURE RIAB MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Future agenda items:

- Revisit Licensing Requirements for Rendering Facilities
- Funding for Rendering/Research
- Motor Carrier Permit Enforcement Update

(11) UPCOMING RIAB MEETING DATES

The next RIAB meeting will be scheduled in March 2022. A Doodle poll will be sent shortly.

(12) FUTURE RIAB MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Koewler asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion #2: Mr. Andreoli made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Trawick seconded the motion. All members agreed with no abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.