

**MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE-
SMALL SCALE PRODUCER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(ALL MEETINGS OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC)**

Location: Via Zoom Webinar

Contact: Thea Rittenhouse, Farmer Equity Advisor

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MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 23, 2024

Item No.

(1) CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order on Thursday, May 23, 2024, at approximately 1:08 p.m., Thea Rittenhouse, CDFA Farmer Equity Advisor opened the meeting.

Members of the committee introduced themselves.

Undersecretary Christine Birdsong welcomed the committee and provided a brief update on the fruit fly quarantine. As of now, in 2024, 25 fruit flies have been detected. The number of quarantined regions has decreased from seven to six, and each of the quarantines could end on specified dates during the summer months if there are no finds in the region. Provided an update on how CDFA is engaging on the Farm Bill in coordination with other California State Agencies.

The rest of the CDFA staff introduced themselves. The CDFA staff in attendance were Karen Ross, Secretary, Christine Birdsong, Undersecretary, Virginia Jameson, Deputy Secretary of Climate and Working Lands, Arima Kozina, Deputy Secretary of Administration and Finance, Thea Rittenhouse, Farm Equity Advisor, Carmen Carrasco, Small Farm Business Liaison, Nina Bingham, Environmental Scientist, and Margaret Phipps, Executive Fellow.

Ms. Carrasco provided a departmental update on the Southwest Regional Food Center (SWRFBC), a USDA-funded project led by UCANR. The Center is looking for applicants to the Stakeholder Advisory Council.

Deputy Secretary Jameson provided department updates on two CDFA projects to the group. The first was on CDFA's Climate Resilience Strategy for California Agriculture. The second was on CDFA's process to develop a draft definition of "Regenerative Agriculture" to submit to the State Board of Food and Agriculture. CDFA is supporting this process through the facilitation of public listening sessions, tribal listening sessions, and informational support. Deputy Secretary Jameson described the background, process, and status of both projects.

(2) ROLL CALL

Present:

Anna Nakamura-Knight
Beverly McKinney

Absent:

Wendy Kornberg
Justin Miller
Kerry McGrath
Lovepreet Kaur
Josefina Lara Chavez (joined at 1:20 p.m.)
Luis Elizondo
Patrick Mitchell
Veronica Mazariegos-Anastassiou (joined at 1:40 p.m.)

(3) DEPARTMENT UPDATES

(4) CALL TO ORDER: Committee Chair Justin Miller

Committee Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

- **Approval of minutes-February 22, 2024**
Member Luis Elizondo made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22 meeting. Kerry McGrath made a second.
Voting outcome: All present committee members approved. (Veronica not present)
Public comment: None.
- **Approval of minutes-April 22, 2024**
Patrick Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 22 Ad-Hoc meeting. Josephina Lara Chavez made a second.
Voting outcome: All present committee members approved. (Veronica not present)
Public comment: None.

(5) PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE: Governor's Budget Overview

Arima Kozina, Deputy Secretary for Administration and Finance, provided an update on the budget following the May Revise. The update included background on the budget process with an emphasis on the May Revise process. Deputy Secretary Kozina then described the current deficit situation at both the state-wide and CDFA level, including the implementation of early action solutions as well as proposed solutions. Deputy Secretary Kozina provided specific information about changes in funding to CDFA programs.

The committee asked clarifying questions about updates to program funding and discussed funding challenges. Member Nakamura-Knight noted that she would like to revisit the topic of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) shifting in a future meeting.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None.

(6) PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE: Small-Scale Producer Data Collection/ Definitions

Ms. Rittenhouse presented to the committee on Small-Scale Producer Data Collection and Definition at CDFA.

The committee had a discussion on the benefits and challenges with data and data collection. Comments included that need for data on how resources are being allocated across farm sizes, the burden on small-scale producers to collect data with limited time and capacity, options to utilize existing data sets, and the importance of locally collected data.

Action item: Ms. Rittenhouse proposed an action item to address this discussion. Either (A) invite an external presenter to share on surveying methods in the next meeting or (B) form a subcommittee to continue this discussion of surveying.

Chair Miller makes a motion to have this added for future discussion at committee meeting. Member Elizondo seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

(7) PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE: CDFA Boards & Commissions

Ms. Rittenhouse provided a brief presentation on the boards and commissions at CDFA. The presentation described what boards and commissions exist as well as how to find information about CDFA boards, commissions, and advisory groups. It was noted that the purpose of this item is to provide information to committee members in case they want to coordinate with or learn more about the activities of other advisory groups. Ms. Rittenhouse also provided demographic statistics on CDFA's boards and commissions.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None.

(8) PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE: Challenges with Farm Insurance

Chair Justin Miller led a discussion on the challenges for small farmers to get farm and crop insurance. Provided a summary on personal experience with difficulties accessing insurance. Asked the committee members if anyone else has or knows of similar experience.

There was a short discussion on engagement by CA Farm Bureau on these issues and Chair Miller commented that he would reach out to someone at the Farm Bureau to get additional information.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None.

(9) PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE: SSPAC Subcommittee Updates

Subcommittee Chair, Member Chavez, provided an update on the Emergency Subcommittee. The subcommittee is working on creating a preparedness plan for small farmers to increase their resilience. Member Chavez noted that the committee has met once.

Ms. Rittenhouse provided a reminder on the process of the subcommittee and described how the subcommittee will coordinate and discuss with the advisory committee.

Public comment: None.

(10) ACTION ITEMS

Member McKinney made a motion to add a standing agenda item to receive updates on the BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee. Member Chavez seconded the motion.

Voting Outcome: All present members approved.

Member McKinney made a motion to have a joint meeting with the BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee in January/February. Member Mazariegos-Anassiou seconded the motion.

Voting Outcome: All present member approved.

Public comment: None.

(11) PUBLIC COMMENT

The Committee heard public comments for items not on the agenda. There were no public comments.

Comments from the committee:

The committee had a short discussion on how to ensure that committee meetings are productive and result in actionable recommendations. The committee will start to do this by identifying key barriers/challenges faced by small-scale producers.

(12) CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at approximately 4:14 p.m.