

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

Location: Via Zoom Webinar

Contact: Josefina Lara Chavez, SSPAC Subcommittee Chair

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MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 26TH, 2024

Attendees: Anna Nakamura Knight
Patrick Mitchell
Josefina Lara Chavez- Subcommittee Chair
Thea Rittenhouse

Note Taker: Anna Nakamura Knight

Item No.

(1) Call to Order

Josefina calls meeting to order 11:11 AM

(2) Action Item

Member Knight moves to approve May 24th, 2024 meeting minutes

Member Mitchell seconds motion to approve May 24th, 2024 meeting minutes

Motion passes, May 24th minutes approved

(3) Purpose of the Subcommittee

The SSPA Sub-committee has formalized its purpose as *“defining ‘emergency’ for small scale farmers/ranchers and how CDFA and other agencies can enhance their response and efficiency in the delivery of emergency resources and programs.”* The Subcommittee will accomplish this by 1) defining a not-exhaustive list of what an “emergency” for a small scale producer is, and 2) drafting recommendations for CDFA to adopt.

The subcommittee agreed on the need for an increased focus on “preparedness,” not just “responsiveness,” while recognizing the value of both approaches.

Comments

- Member Mitchell expressed an interest in a more holistic approach to defining crisis - not just a list - and would like to focus on both preparedness and responsiveness.
- Chair Lara Chavez expressed her interest in crisis-response models (TA/services) that focus on preparedness vs responsiveness. TA/financial support has a long lead time and is not timely; a system that supports both TA providers and farmers and uses best practices to inform decision making

- Member Knight expressed an interest in examining existing (responsive) programs to see how they can be made more effective
- Farm Equity Advisor Thea Rittenhouse shared that CDFA/government has limited existing experience around preparedness vs responsiveness. There is an effort to establish an Emergency Services Coordinator to centralize responses to COVID-19, wildfire, drought, CAL OES, animal mortality, fire/smoke responses, CUSP, etc. At present, most of these responses are housed in different areas of government.

(4) Definition of Emergency

The SSPA Sub-committee began brainstorming examples of emergencies faced by Small Scale Farmers/Ranchers. These include biologic pressure - pest quarantine, animal disease; water contamination, quality, access issues; both direct and indirect climate related crises - storm/floods, fire, smoke, fire-residue, drought, extreme heat, heat illness, sunburn/sunblast, wind events; and earthquakes. Additional crises like Covid-19; policy developments - housing (including residential development pressure, rising cost of agricultural lands); labor cost/availability; immigration; fracking; SGMA; global unrest and elevated input costs; as well as land access (availability, farmer/landowner disputes) challenge small farmers and ranchers.

Comments

- Member Mitchell and Chair Chavez identified that the SSPAC Sub-committee may need to attempt a definition of small-scale producer in order to develop emergency preparedness/response protocols to support small farmers and ranchers. Member Knight suggested that this proposed task be brought up at the next SSPAC meeting, given its scale/importance to the committee, state board, and CDFA.
- Subcommittee members noted that different timelines/subcommittees may need to be convened to address the different emergencies identified thus far

(5) Action Items:

- Subcommittee members will work individually to populate additional examples of emergencies faced by Small Scale Farmers/Ranchers
- Subcommittee members will think about folks/experts they'd like to hear from
- Subcommittee members will begin thinking about their portfolio to establish what is addressable/not addressable
- Next meeting has been scheduled for July 23rd from 3:00-5:00 PM

(6) Meeting Adjourned at 1 PM