

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

Location: Zoom Webinar

Contact:

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MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 23, 2024

Attendees: Anna Nakamura Knight
Josefina Lara Chavez- Subcommittee Chair
Thea Rittenhouse (left at 4:20pm)

Absentees: Patrick Miller

Note Taker: Carmen Carrasco

Item No.

(1) Call to Order

Josefina calls meeting to order 3:04 PM

(2) Action Item

Member Knight moved to approve June 26th, 2024 meeting minutes.

Chair Lara-Chavez seconded motion to approve minutes. Motion passes, June 26th minutes approved.

No public comments were made.

(3) Definition of Emergency- Introduction

Chair Lara-Chavez referred participants to the [list](#) of items that can constitute an emergency for small scale farmers/ranchers as a working document that the committee will continue to edit.

Comments

Member Knight commented that the group should consider adding freeze and hail emergencies to the list, as well as price fluctuation, since these adverse weather events are included in some of the Emergency Relief Programs (ERP) through the USDA.

Chair Lara-Chavez mentioned that the comment from member Mitchell submitted via email to add to the definition has been added to the document, as well as language to include pandemic events to the list.

(4) Definition of Small-Scale Farmer/Rancher

Chair Lara Chavez referenced a comment from CDFA Small Farm Business Liaison staffer Carmen Carrasco made at the start of the meeting to ask if the sub-committee had engaged with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) during the open public comment period the agency had to help define of a small-scale farmer/rancher with the purpose of determining

farmers that will be eligible to receive technical assistance related to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

Comments

CDFA Farm Equity Advisor Thea Rittenhouse commented that the DWR would be happy to make a presentation on the subject of technical assistance (TA) related to SGMA to the full Small Scale Producer Advisory Committee.

Member Knight said that the DWR's definition of small- scale farmer is problematic and is she does not feel comfortable with this definition therefore, she suggested the topic be discussed with the full SSPA Committee, as was originally suggested during this sub-committee's June 26 meeting.

Action Item

Sub-committee agreed to bring this item to the full committee by having DWR present to the whole group.

(5) Definition of Emergency- Discussion

Member Knight commented that although having the definition of an emergency as a list format is challenging, having it organized by topic provides better understanding of what each item entails. As the list is a work in progress, sub-committee members agreed to go through the list of emergency items to edit or remove items. Member Knight commented that instead of having an item such as #22, listed as *Unknown: Unforeseen risks or emergencies*, the language should be included at top of the list to say, 'included but not limited to' ensuring the *unknown* is covered.

Chair Lara-Chavez went through the list of emergencies. On item #3, Farm Equity Advisor Thea Rittenhouse asked committee members for clarification on how detailed they want to go about listing specific diseases affecting livestock and suggested to encompass all under contagious diseases.

(6) Agricultural Operations/Livelihoods

Member Knight commented on the introductory language that mentions 'agricultural operations and livelihoods' wondering if this applies to farmers that receive supplemental income from off-farm activities, since their livelihoods are not only exclusively tied to farming. Member Knight asked if perhaps clarifying language is necessary.

Chair Lara-Chavez said that she sees farming as a full-time occupation that impacts a farmer's entire family and time, 24/7 occupation and doesn't believe that farmers do farming as a side job.

Action Item:

Further clarification on this language is suggested as the committee continues to work on narrowing definition.

(7) Next steps on emergency item list

Items on the list that need to be reviewed and redefined have been highlighted as work in progress.

Action Item:

Members are asked to review the list individually before the next meeting and make any edits that best address the concern.

(8) Emergencies vs. Challenges

Member Knight commented that some of the items on the list appear to be more long-term challenges instead of immediate emergencies for small farmers.

Action Item:

Chair Lara-Chavez agreed and suggested that each committee member review each item and add their initials at the end of each item they consider a challenge and not an emergency. The sub-committee can revisit the list during the next month's meeting.

(9) Sub-Committee Presenters/ Speaker Requests

Members of the sub-committee expressed an interest in requesting presentations from CDFA Programs and other agencies/presenters. Details of the list can be found here: [Suggested list of speakers](#)

For next month's meeting, member Knight suggested a presentation from CDFA's CUSP Program (high Priority) to learn more on how this emergency relief program for drought related expenses has worked for small farmers to date.

Other suggested speakers/presenters from Anna Knight:

OEFI- HSP/SWEEP (medium priority)- To understand how small farmers can access this kind of program and challenges reaching small scale producers.

Animal Health and Food Safety (medium priority) – Since the members of the committee have less experience with programs and resources available to livestock producers and ranchers, it would be helpful to know more about what constitutes an emergency for family ranchers and learn how they can receive assistance or resources.

Chair Lara-Chavez- If CDFA has contacts in Ag or Emergency Response Depts in the Southern States, she would like to know how these states prepare for and manage emergencies like tornadoes and hurricanes. If they have a preparedness plan for farmers, this presentation would be high priority on the list.

Comments:

Carmen Carrasco commented that the Farm Equity Office will reach out to CUSP Admin Staff to see if they are available to present during the next meeting, given the changes the program is currently undergoing staffing changes and update in funding.

Next meeting proposal: August 26 or 27 from 3-5p pending confirmation from Patrick Mitchell, Josefina to reach out.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.