

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

**Location:** Virtual via Zoom

**Contact:** Thea Rittenhouse, Farm Equity Advisor

[Thea.Rittenhouse@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:Thea.Rittenhouse@cdfa.ca.gov)

1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

**Office:** (916) 202-9415

**MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 14, 2025**

Item  
No.

**(1) WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Carmen Carrasco welcomed participants to the meeting

**(2) ROLL CALL**

**Present**

Josefina Lara Chavez (Chair), Patrick Mitchell, Lovepreet Kaur

**Absent**

None

**CDFA Staff in attendance**

Greg Schumaker, Carmen Carrasco

**External representatives**

None

**Public Attendance**

None

**(3) CALL TO ORDER**

SSPAC Subcommittee Chair Josefina Lara Chavez called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM

**(4) DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**ACTION ITEM:** Approval of February 21, 2025, meeting minutes- Motion passed. Minutes approved.

**Emergency Response Presentation-** Greg Schumaker, Program Manager, CDFA Emergency Management Program Greg provided an overview of the State's emergency response, which moves through different levels including regional, local County, State - through the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)- and Federal. The types of emergencies include natural disasters, chemical spills and pest outbreaks. During emergencies, CDFA's Fairs & Expositions facilities function as shelters and operation hubs. There are four stages of action for emergencies: Preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation/restoration.

Greg mentioned the Ag Commissioner's Office at the County level can support many aspects of emergency management. The Ag Commissioner's Office offers the Ag PASS program, which allows farmers and livestock owners to access their property to evacuate animals when the area has been closed off to the public. PowerPoint presentation from Greg to follow.

Subcommittee Chair Josefina Lara Chavez asked for data to see how much support small scale farmers received. Greg suggested the subcommittee work with the Ag Commissioner of specific counties to request data.

Greg said that if at the County level, there is damage of 35% of a certain crop, this opens a zero-interest loan program from the USDA. Farmers facing emergencies can go to [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) to find financial support. Input the County and Incident to find programs and support.

**Recommendations framework-** Josefina presented a framework for drafting recommendations to CDFA document, and a recommendations tracking spreadsheet for SSPAC subcommittee members, main SSPAC Committee members and others to provide their input. Once the list is completed, the subcommittee will discuss it with the Farm Equity Office. Josefina clarified that the current recommendations are only examples but one recommendation she would like to make is the creation of a small farms office within CDFA.

Josefina suggested gathering recommendations from members of the main SSPAC, BIPOC Advisory, as well as from other organizations through a survey that she can help create and asked for support from CDFA for its dissemination.

Subcommittee member Patrick Mitchell suggested that the survey includes questions on *how CDFA can respond better* and *how CDFA can support recovery more effectively*. These questions would focus on emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

Subcommittee member Lovepreet Kaur emphasized the importance of a clear message and the expectations the public should have after completion, what the subcommittee intends to accomplish, and how the information will be used.

Josefina said that the survey will ask input on recommendations and ask respondents to include: justification -why? implementation- how? And Responsible CDFA division- who?) It will also include language to address the expectations survey respondents should have.

Josefina will prepare a draft survey and outreach language to share with the Farm Equity Office for input. The plan is to have the form open for input for one month and present the findings to the main SSPAC Committee during the May quarterly meeting.

Carmen asked for clarification that the subcommittee would like input from the public on recommendations and how these will tie into the definition of an emergency for small-scale producers. Josefina said that one of the purposes of the subcommittee is to develop an emergency preparedness plan for CDFA to support small scale growers.

Josefina added that some recommendations will not be tied to emergency preparedness but will be oriented towards strengthening the CDFA as a whole agency.

Patrick Mitchell suggested that the full SSPAC committee get a chance to review the survey and provide input.

Carmen suggested the question regarding the public's opinion about CDFA's past emergency response is broad, and assumes the respondent is familiar with CDFA's responses to emergencies. Carmen asked for clarification if the question is related to a specific grant program or direct response from CDFA's Office of Emergency Management.

Josefina explained that the question will not focus on how CDFA has responded to emergencies in the past but rather on recommendations about how CDFA can better support small-scale growers, and in creating an emergency preparedness, response and recovery plan. Next steps:

- 1) Josefina will create the survey and the outreach language, stating the responses will help guide CDFA in preparedness, response & recovery plan.
- 2) The form will be open during the month of April 2025 and results presented at the main committee's May 2025 meeting.

**(7) TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Next meeting proposed for May 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM

**(8) PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**(9) CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 AM