

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

**Location:** California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Main Auditorium  
1220 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Contact:** Thea Rittenhouse, Farmer  
Equity Advisor  
**Office:** (916) 202-9415

**MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 2023**

Item  
No.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at approximately 10:05 a.m., Thea Rittenhouse, Farmer Equity Advisor opening the meeting.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:**

- Beverly McKinney
- Patrick Mitchell
- Justin Miller
- Lovepreet Kaur
- Kerri McGrath
- Veronica Mazariegos-Anastassiou (Virtual)
- Sylvia Lucassians (Virtual)
- Anna Nakamura Knight (Virtual)

**Absent:**

- Josefina Lara Chavez
- Wendy Kornberg

**CDFA SECRETARY ADDRESS/ CDFA DIVISION DIRECTOR UPDATES**

Virginia Jameson, CDFA's Deputy Secretary for Climate and Working Lands welcomed committee members and addressed the group to acknowledge their work. Several Division Directors and other staff from CDFA also attended in person and provided a short overview of their roles and program. Among attendees were Arima Kozina, Deputy Secretary of Administration and Finance, Rachael O'Brien, Deputy Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Justin Hopper, Office of Civil Rights Chief, Tawny Mata, OEFI Director, Natalie Krout-Greenberg, Inspection Services Director (virtual), Kathy Diaz, Marketing Services Director, Victoria Hornbaker, Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program Director, Andrew Cline, Acting Director for Plant Health, and Pest Prevention Services.

**PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE: Bagley Keene Act**

Haig Baghdassarian, Lead Counsel from CDFA's Legal Office led a presentation to the Committee on the Bagley Keene Act for Public Open Meetings. The presentation included provisions that the BIPOC Advisory Committee must follow in order to comply with the Bagley Keene Act. These provisions require all state boards and commissions to publicly notice their meetings, prepare agendas, accept public testimony, and conduct their meetings in public unless specifically authorized by the Act.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

## **PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE: Farmer Equity Act 1348**

CDFA Farmer Equity Advisor Thea Rittenhouse presented the background and history of the Farmer Equity Act (AB 1348) enacted by legislature in 2017. The presentation detailed the importance of the Act, which directs CDFA to ensure resources, outreach, technical assistance, and decision-making power to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Both Small-Scale and BIPOC Producer Advisory Committees are a result of AB 1348 to help inform CDFA on how to better serve the needs of these producers.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

## **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM: Seeking nominations to Chairperson position of the Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee**

A discussion was held to inform Committee members of the importance and purpose of appointing a person to serve as committee chairperson. An overview of the chair's responsibilities, time commitment and term limits was presented to the committee. As a follow-up item, committee members were asked to submit nominations including self-nominations to the Chair position, including a brief description of their experience and interest. Secretary Ross will appoint the chairperson after reviewing the nominations received.

Speaker:

- Thea Rittenhouse, Farmer Equity Advisor

**Action Item:** Members of the Committee are to submit nominations including self-nominations via email by the deadline of November 13<sup>th</sup>. After reviewing the self-nomination emails received, Secretary Ross appointed Justin Miller, Owner and Ag Producer at Twin Peaks Orchards in Newcastle, CA to the position of Chairperson of the CDFA Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION/ ACTION ITEM: Identifying priorities of Committee. UC DAVIS Survey participation and/or Interview**

To help inform CDFA of Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee's priorities, CDFA partnered with a group of undergraduate students from UC Davis to conduct an anonymous survey and/or interview with Committee members. Participation is optional but the survey is important to better understand committee members' priorities moving forward.

Other items discussed were members' preferred weekday availability and time of day to meet quarterly.

Speaker:

- Thea Rittenhouse, Farmer Equity Advisor

**Action Item:** Committee members are asked to respond to UC Davis's request to complete anonymous survey and/or interview.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments made in person or virtually.

## **CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting concluded at approximately 12:15 p.m.