

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
STANDARDIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
COUNTY CONTRACT SUB COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE
Sacramento, CA
Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2009**

Members

Jim Simonion
Mark Perez, Jr.
Kerry Whitson
Ruben Arroyo

CDFA Representatives

Steve Patton

ITEM 1: ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

ITEM 2: INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT LOCATIONS

Mr. Steve Patton described the current method of enforcement at most packing sheds and in the field, which was the direction of the Advisory Committee when inland inspection stations were closed. Now with the proliferation of roadside stands there may be a reason to revisit the enforcement focus.

Mr. Ruben Arroyo discussed the different types of farm stands. Does the committee want to look at larger retail type stands or only the small problem stands?

Mr. Kerry Whitson described a subculture of those who buy from packing sheds (gunny sacking) then resell to the same stores that legitimate packers are selling to, putting them at an unfair economic disadvantage.

Mr. Jim Simonion stated that there are many layers to buying and reselling. For example, some of the certified farmers' market producers are buying from sheds and reselling as their own product. Others are buying and selling at flea markets.

AGENDA ITEM: All members agreed to include the item on the agenda with the recommendation to the full board to direct the counties to spend some of their contracted money on roadside stands.

ITEM 2: COUNTY CONTRACT PROCESS

Mr. Patton discussed the increase in county contracts. He explained that there are a variety of reasons for the increases including cost of living adjustments, promotions, increased travel, and the number of counties requesting contracts.

With the current water shortages there may be a decrease in the amount of acres farmed, which would result in fewer assessment revenues. The sub committee does not propose to increase the assessment rate at this time but would rather cut back to meet budget demands.

Mr. Mark Perez stated that one county visits their shed a couple of times a year and feels since they already have a full time inspection program, the money would be better spent elsewhere. He asked if there could be an exemption set up for packers taking USDA inspection.

Mr. Patton stated that in fairness to all, the counties need the ability to check all phases of the process including packing sheds, wholesale and retail.

Mr. Patton stated the need to change the way county contracts are given. Currently the state asks how much the counties need and with committee approval, the funding is granted. Due to possible assessment shortages, counties will be allotted monies based on the prior year assessments and then have their scope of work approved by the committee. The only other solution would be to raise assessments.

All members agreed on not raising the assessments, but to ask the full board to change the way county contracts are approved.

AGENDA ITEM: County Contract Proposal Process

ITEM 4: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Steve Patton, Supervisor
Standardization Program
Inspection and Compliance Branch

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