



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

July 7, 2015

TO: CALIFORNIA ORGANIC PRODUCTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (COPAC)
INTERESTED PARTIES

A teleconference meeting of the Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) Subcommittee has been scheduled. Enclosed is the agenda.

Date: Friday, July 17, 2015
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: 2800 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833
Room 267
(916) 900-5030

Any member of the public may join the conference call by going to any of the following locations:

Melody Meyer, 4710 Rodeo Gulch Ln., Soquel
Chino Valley Ranchers, 331 W. Citrus St., Colton
Good Earth Natural Foods, 720 Center Blvd., Fairfax
University of California Berkeley, 3 Giannini Hall, Berkeley
81 4th Street, Hollister
Straus Family Creamery, 5600 Marshall Petaluma Road, Marshall
Non-GMO Project, 1155 State St., Suite 502, Bellingham, Washington
Fruitalicious Farm, 47 Linden Rd., Watsonville

Notification of committee meetings and their agendas can be found via the Internet at the following website address: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/meetings.html>

Please find the enclosed agenda. If you have any questions regarding this meeting, please contact me at the number listed below.

Sincerely,

Danny Lee
Supervising Special Investigator

Enclosure

cc: Gary Leslie



**California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
California Organic Products Advisory Committee (COPAC) Meeting**

**Friday, July 17, 2015
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Teleconference

AGENDA

1. Roll Call/Introductions
2. GMO Testing Project – Attachment A
3. New Business
4. Public Comment
5. Next Meeting
6. Adjournment

All meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you need reasonable accommodation as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, or if you have questions regarding the public meeting, please contact Susan Shelton at (916) 900-5030. Requests for reasonable accommodation should be made no later than three (3) days before the meeting.

<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/meetings.html>

GMO Testing Pilot Project

Attachment A (Revised)

Description of Tasks

Upon request of the organic community, CDFA is considering a pilot project to expand existing State Organic Program (SOP) pesticide residue testing to include GMO testing of raw agricultural organic products. The collection and testing of raw agricultural organic products, with known risks for genetically modified organisms (GMOs), (also known as genetic engineering (GE)), will be implemented as a one year pilot program; beginning August 2015.

During the pilot program, all samples for GMO testing will only be collected by CDFA staff. If the pilot program is implemented as a permanent program; the collection of GMO samples will then be expanded to county, agricultural staff. The collection of samples for GMO testing shall follow the protocols similar to those currently in place for pesticide residue testing.

CDFA may determine which samples shall be collected; including, but not limited to the type, amount, size, or volume. A duplication of each sample may be taken. Each sample collected shall include an identifying number, the date and time collected, the name of the individual collecting the sample, the address where collected, a detailed description of the product, its location on the premises, and any other identifying information determined to be necessary. Individual samples shall be enclosed in containers appropriate for the type of sample collected, utilizing methods that prevent direct contact with contaminants.

Samples may be collected randomly or as part of an investigation. Sample collections shall be conducted at, but not limited to, production and handler sites; certified farmers' markets; retail locations; and points of entry. Sampling will focus on organic commodities in California, and those brought in from out-of-state, that are most likely to contain GMOs* such as:

- Alfalfa
- Canola
- Corn (except popcorn)
- Cotton
- Papaya
- Soy
- Sugar beets
- Zucchini and yellow summer squash

Additionally, cattle feed will be tested prior to processing; since the feed contains a number of these raw inputs.

The CDFA Center for Analytical Chemistry (Chem Lab) doesn't currently have the capability to conduct GMO testing. It would take approximately 12-14 months to establish GMO testing capabilities and another 6-12 months to complete additional GMO testing requirements under the ISO 17025 accreditation. Since the Chem Lab is not established to conduct GMO testing at this time; GMO samples will be submitted to Genetic ID NA, Inc. labs in Iowa for testing. Genetic ID NA, Inc. is an accredited lab that conducts GMO testing on products with the USDA, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Branch's approved, Non-GMO Project Verified label. Genetic ID NA, Inc. also conducts GMO analysis for USDA accredited organic certifiers.

There are other labs that may conduct GMO analysis; however, CDFA is using Genetic ID NA, Inc. in Iowa, as they are the only lab that has officially completed their annual review by the Non-GMO Project. Additional labs may be considered, such as Genista Biosciences in San Jose, if GMO testing continues past the pilot project, and testing is expanded to the counties.

The goal of this pilot program is to collect approximately 60 samples during the one-year testing period.. Since qualitative analysis only shows whether GMOS are "Detected" or "Not detected," (down to a limit of 0.01%); all samples will be submitted for DNA, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) quantitative testing. This quantitative test will show the actual percentage of GMO in the sample.

The National Organic Program (NOP) has not established threshold limits for GMO testing. The National Organic Program (NOP) proposed rule (2000) excluded the use of biotechnology, genetic engineering or genetically modified organisms (GMOs); in organic production and handling.

The use of genetic engineering, or GMOs, is currently prohibited in organic products; under 7 CFR § 205.105, "Allowed and prohibited substances, methods, and ingredients in organic production and handling." Additionally, NOP Policy Memo 11-13 addresses GMOs in organic production and handling. In addition to reiterating that the use of GMOs is prohibited under the NOP regulations, Policy memo 11-13 also states:

- *"Compliance with the organic standards entails that operations have verifiable practices in place to avoid contact with GMOs. Since organic certification is process-based, presence of detectable GMO residues alone does not necessarily constitute a violation of the regulation. The NOP relies on organic certifiers and producers to determine preventative practices that most effectively avoid contact with GMOs on an organic operation."*

*Source: Non-GMO Project

Since there are currently no established NOP thresholds for GMOs, the SOP will use the European Union's GMO threshold limit of .09% to determine if additional actions are needed. If the presence of GMOs are detected **below** the .09% threshold; the SOP will report the findings to the NOP, certifier (if certified operation), and to the operation.

If GMOs are detected at the .09% threshold or higher; the SOP will follow NOP protocols and initiate an investigation to determine how the presence occurred, and whether the presence of GMOs is intentional or inadvertent. Results will be shared with all applicable parties after the investigation is completed.

A final report on all samples collected will be issued upon completion of the pilot project.