



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
CERTIFIED FARMERS' MARKET ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CFMAC)**

**March 1, 2021
Teleconference
Meeting Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ben Palazzolo – Vice
Chair
Carla Rosin
Cynthia Ojeda
Ed Williams
James Murez
Joyce Chan
Karen Wetzel Schott –
Chair
Oscar De Leon
Portia Bramble
Spencer Wingfield
Suzi Grady
Tyler Thayer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Diana Martinez
Kurt Floren
Lulu Meyer
Phillip Rhodes

INTERESTED PARTIES

Matthew Martin –
Pyramid Farms
Ron Nicholas – Great
Valley Poultry

CDFA

Brandi Alston
Jennifer Leidolf
Marc Grijalva
Marcee Yount
Maria Tenorio Alfred
Mitchell King
Steve Patton
Thomas Osborn

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Mitchell King at 10:06 a.m. King called roll, introductions were made, and a quorum was established.

ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Karen Wetzel Schott, Chair, asked if there were any public comments.

Matthew Martin, Pyramid Farms, asked the Committee if Market Rules could be amended to allow certified producers to sell branded merchandise with their farm name at Certified Farmers' Markets. Steve Patton responded that this topic is not within the purview of the Committee, and that a rule change of this nature would require a regulatory change.

Ron Nicholas, Great Valley Poultry, voiced concern regarding the distinction between various poultry eggs in current regulations. Nicholas asked about whether a vendor can sell such products under a second certificate. Marcee Yount informed Nicholas that the Direct Marketing Program has submitted a legal referral to the CDFA Legal Office to determine the official interpretation of this regulation. Patton noted that the Direct Marketing Program will share the results of this legal referral with industry.

A period of discussion pertaining to the regulatory process and opportunities for public comment during that process.

There were no other public comments.

ITEM 3: REVIEW OF OCTOBER 5, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Schott asked for a Motion to approve the October 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: James Murez moved to approve the October 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes as presented. Suzi Grady seconded the Motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The Motion passed, with Spencer Wingfield abstaining.

ITEM 4: DATABASE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Maria Tenorio Alfred provided an update on the activities of the Database Subcommittee. Tenorio Alfred explained that since the Database Subcommittee met in November 2020, the Direct Marketing Program has continued to work with CDFA's Office of Information Technology Services (OITS) to move toward the launch of the database given the previously approved \$500,000 for the database project. Marc Grijalva also provided an update from OITS regarding the progress of the database project.

There was discussion of the functionalities of the database at launch. Grady expressed concern for farmers that may have limited access to technology and how such individuals are being considered in the development of the database. This led to discussion regarding efforts to ensure that training is available to individuals who will interact with the new database. Chair Schott and others noted that the database is designed to be similar to existing forms currently in use by industry, which should help to mitigate many user-end concerns. Murez also emphasized the utility of peer assistance among farmers and assistance from agricultural commissioners. There was also discussion of what functions the database will have at the time of launch, as well as functions that can be built in over time.

During the discussion about database functionality, Murez suggested that there be a meeting of the Database Subcommittee to revisit this discussion and provide another update to the Certified Farmers' Market Advisory Committee at its next meeting. Patton stated that the Direct Marketing Program will work to address the database concerns raised by committee members with Grijalva and OITS.

ITEM 5: REGULATION UPDATES

Tenorio Alfred explained that the Direct Marketing Program's new regulations went into effect on January 1, 2021. The Direct Marketing Program conducted five separate trainings for county staff throughout the state to train them on the regulatory changes. Tenorio Alfred went on to explain that the Direct Marketing Program has conducted outreach to provide education on the new regulations and opportunities for members of the public to ask questions.

Vice Chair Ben Palazzolo asked Tenorio Alfred for clarification on the status of Christmas trees and wreaths under the new regulations. Tenorio Alfred explained that Christmas trees are not considered agricultural products under the California Food and Agricultural Code for the purposes of direct marketing, and that wreaths are crafted and thus considered a value-added item. There was discussion between Ed Williams and Patton about the definition of nursery stock and how that relates to Christmas trees.

ITEM 6: MARKET MANAGER MANUAL UPDATES

Portia Bramble provided the Market Manager Manual Updates. Bramble stated that the updates to the Manual are expected to be completed by the end of March 2021. Bramble further stated that the updates were related to the new regulations, organic topics, and social media guidance for market managers.

ITEM 7: FISCAL YEAR 2021/22 PROPOSED BUDGET

Tenorio Alfred presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 Proposed Budget. Total proposed expenses include: \$775,011 for Personal Services; \$888,500 for Operating Expenses and Equipment; and \$446,038 in Departmental Services, for a total program cost of \$2,109,549, with a Gas Tax credit of \$30,399. The total Proposed Budget for the FY 2021/22 was \$2,079,150 with a projected revenue of \$1,359,679.

There was discussion regarding the Pesticide Pilot Project. Tenorio Alfred explained that this project will not be extended to the FY 2021/22. There was also discussion of the expenditures related to the database project. Thomas Osborn explained the difference between the proposed expenditures for the FY 2021/22 and the approved expenditures for FY 2020/21. There was also discussion about the possible impact of market closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic on revenue. Tenorio Alfred explained that due to the impact of market closures and the loss of some ancillary vendors at Certified Farmers' Markets, there had been a decrease in revenues. Tenorio Alfred cautioned that the information only represents one year and that future decisions should consider that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic appear to be temporary.

Joyce Chan asked about increases in the indirect charges related to Departmental Services. Osborn explained that these indirect expenses refer to CDFA departmental overhead, as well as statewide pro rata administrative costs, both of which are given to the Direct Marketing Program. There was discussion between Tenorio Alfred and Vice Chair Palazzolo regarding the decision to end the Pesticide Pilot Project. Vice Chair Palazzolo also asked Tenorio Alfred to provide information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Direct Marketing industry in the state at the next meeting.

Chair Schott asked for a motion to approve the FY 2021/22 Proposed Budget as presented.

MOTION: James Murez moved to approve of the FY 2021/22 Proposed Budget as presented. Vice Chair Ben Palazzolo seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 8: AIR QUALITY AT MARKETS

Yount presented information on air quality at markets. Yount explained that CDFA was asked what effects ash from fires might have on produce. Yount explained that in research done by Oregon State University and University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources found that smoke and ash were unlikely to penetrate fruits and vegetables and found no detectable amounts of substances such as arsenic or mercury. Yount also stated that different types of fires, for example building fires and forest fires, will contain different types of chemicals and consumers should practice their best judgement. Yount offered to provide further information upon request.

ITEM 9: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

Cynthia Ojeda asked that there be an agenda item regarding dairy products in the agricultural sections of Certified Farmers' Markets.

Grady asked that there be an item to discuss the creation of a subcommittee on outreach efforts.

Vice Chair Palazzolo and Chair Schott discussed an item relating to COVID-19 pandemic related issues. Vice Chair Palazzolo suggested that information on the state of the Certified Farmers' Market industry during and after the pandemic would be appreciated. Williams offered to help prepare a report on the county level impacts throughout the state.

Murez commented on the vaccination process in California and the difficulties faced by those working to navigate the process. This led to discussion of the tiers for vaccines and how members of industry can receive vaccinations.

A Database Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled prior to the next CFMAC meeting.

The next meeting of the CFMAC will be held on October 4, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:33 p.m. by Chair Schott.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Leidolf". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

for
Jennifer Leidolf, Program Supervisor
Direct Marketing Program
Inspection and Compliance Branch
Inspection Services