



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
CALIFORNIA ORGANIC PRODUCTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (COPAC)**

**January 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes
800 Asilomar Ave., Pacific Grove, CA 93950**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Blake Alexandre
Wendy Reynolds
Erin Raser
Jeff Chean
Amanda Felder – Vice Chair
Matthew Grieshop – Chair
Stefan Parnay
Kaley Grimland
Phillip LaRocca

MEMBERS ABSENT

Will Daniels
David Will

INTERESTED PARTIES

Nick Woodrum, California
Department of Public Health
(CDPH)
Thu Dinh, CDPH
Houston Wilson, UC Organic
Agriculture Institute (OAI)
Krista Marshall, UC OAI
Rebekah Weber, California
Certified Organic Farmers
(CCOF)
Rob Milner, Monterey County
Christina Sandoval, Monterey
County

CDFA

Danny Lee
Marcee Yount
Jefferson Scott
Andrea Cano
Scott Renteria
Pamela Rodriguez
Sarah Cardoni

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by Sarah Cardoni. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and self-introductions were made.

ITEM 2: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Cardoni opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

MOTION: Amanda Felder nominated Matthew Grieshop for Chair. Jeff Chean seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Cardoni opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

MOTION: Matthew Grieshop nominated Amanda Felder for Vice Chair. Jeff Chean seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ITEM 4: REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Matthew Grieshop requested a motion to approve the September 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes as presented. Phillip LaRocca asked about the topic of regenerative agriculture as it was discussed at the previous meeting. The topic was requested by the committee to be placed on the next meeting's agenda. Blake Alexandre responded that CDFA has been hosting listening sessions and will be forming an advisory committee whose role will be to define regenerative agriculture. Alexandre added that the most controversial part will be whether it is considered organic. LaRocca asked that the topic be placed as an agenda item for the next meeting.

MOTION: Chair Matthew Grieshop moved to approve the September 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes as presented. Amanda Felder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with Wendy Reynolds abstaining.

ITEM 5: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATES

Wendy Reynolds provided a CDPH Organic Program update. For organic complaints received for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023/24, 12 were completed and 15 remain open. Ten complaints remain open from other fiscal years. For 2023, there were 2,802 licenses issued for organic processors of which 326 were new and 2,476 were renewals.

Thu Dinh provided an overview of the CDPH Organic Program's budget and revenue reports. For FY 2023/24, projected expenditures for salaries and benefits total \$560,855, total direct costs are projected at \$97,675, total indirect costs are projected at \$205,395. Year-end projected expenditures total \$863,925 with revenue projected at \$1,109,048.

ITEM 6: FUND USE RECOMMENDATIONS/STATUS OF STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA CONTRACT UPDATE

Houston Wilson, Director of the University of California (UC) Organic Agriculture Institute (OAI), provided an update on the UC OAI contract. Two academic coordinators were hired last year, Rob Straser who is focused on coordinating extension and outreach efforts and Krista Marshall who is focused on research, policy, and partnerships. Two additional academic coordinators will be hired, one focused on education and mentorship and the other focused on training and technical assistance. New resources were added to UC OAI's website about organic certification and the compliance process, resources where growers can look for support. Much of the work is aggregating resources that already exist to provide a navigational component for stakeholders. Four in-person extension events were held; the first in July focused on organic rice production in the Sacramento Valley; the second in September focused on vegetable crops in the Humboldt and Del Norte region; the third in October focused on citrus and avocado in Ventura; and the fourth in November focused on organic soils management and testing in the north coast. Lastly, California organic acreage data continues to be examined to gain a better understanding of the geography of organic production in the State.

Danny Lee provided a report on behalf of Joji Muramoto, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Organic Production Specialist, on the UC ANR contract. Muramoto reported that he visited the top 20 production counties to conduct needs assessments.

At UC Santa Cruz, two trials were conducted on biointensive no-till practices for micro farms and urban gardens. Collaborative research continues with UC Riverside nematologists to determine the impacts of organic amendment-based treatments, such as anaerobic soil disinfestation, for control of root-knot nematodes. Lastly, a study on disease management in anaerobic soil disinfestation to control soilborne diseases in strawberries is being conducted

ITEM 7: STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM UPDATES

i. Vacancies and Terms

Cardoni provided the Vacancies and Terms report. Current vacancies include: one producer; one processor; one environmental representative; one technical representative; one consumer representative; one accredited certifier representative; six producer alternates; one wholesale distributor alternate; two processor alternates; one retail alternate; one environmental alternate; two technical alternates; one consumer alternate; and one accredited certifier alternate. Members whose terms will end October 31, 2024, and are eligible for reappointment are Chair Matthew Grieshop, Vice Chair Amanda Felder, and Stefan Parnay. David Will has served two terms and will be terming out.

ii. Revenue from Registration/New Registrations

Andrea Cano presented information on organic registration fees collected by month and year. For FY 2023/24 through December 8, 2023, \$747,144 in registration fees were collected. A total of 4,110 operations registered with the SOP for 2022, in which 3,445 were producers, 1,034 were handlers, and 161 were processors.

iii. Fund Condition Update

Lee provided the Fund Condition update. As of November 30, 2023, the beginning fund balance for FY 2023/24 was \$2,169,868. Total revenue was \$745,194, making the available cash \$2,915,062. Total expenditures were \$966,089, cash adjustments were \$73,661, with an ending balance of \$1,875,312.

iv. Compliance and Enforcement/Appeals Summary

Scott Renteria provided the Compliance and Enforcement/Appeals Summary. For 2023, there were 173 total complaints of which 118 were investigated by CDFA and county staff; 25 were referred to Accredited Certifying Agents; 27 were referred to CDPH; two were referred to the Nation Organic Program; and one was referred to the Department of Pesticide Regulation. There were 1,779 total inspections: 1,150 of these were conducted at certified farmers' markets; 229 were conducted at production sites; 72 at handling facilities; 12 at processing facilities; 306 at retail facilities; and 10 at locations not within the above categories. A total of 443 samples were collected of which 383 were surveillance and 60 were investigative. Of the 383 surveillance samples, 36 samples had residues detected, with 15 containing residues above tolerance levels and 21 containing residues below tolerance levels. Of the 60 investigative samples, 29 samples had residues detected, with 19 containing residues above tolerance levels and

10 containing residues below tolerance levels. Eleven appeals were received, of which four have been closed and seven remain active.

v. Complaint Activity Report

Renteria provided the Complaint Activity Report for 2023. A total of 52 open complaints were active in which 23 were open for more than 120 days; 3 were open for between 90 and 120 days; 4 were open for between 60 and 90 days; 3 were open for between 30 and 60 days; and 19 were open for less than 30 days. An additional 119 complaints were closed.

vi. Complaint Summary Log

Renteria presented the Complaint Summary Log, detailing complaints and investigations that were assigned and closed for 2023.

vii. Surveillance Sampling Summary Update

Renteria provided the Surveillance Sampling Summary update, detailing the results of samples collected by the SOP during routine and investigative efforts. For FY 2023/24, there were 93 surveillance samples: 32 at certified farmers' markets; 30 at production sites; and 31 at retail wholesale facilities. Of the 17 samples with residues detected: 12 were at certified farmers' markets; one at a production site; and four at retail wholesale facilities.

viii. Cost Share Update

Cano provided an update on the Cost Share Program. There were 1,448 applications that have been reviewed and approved for 2023. Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope.

ITEM 8: STRATEGIC PLAN

Marcee Yount presented the Organic Stakeholder Work Group strategic plan for empowering and energizing COPAC as the committee continues to face low participation by industry despite targeted efforts to recruit members to fill longtime vacancies. Recommendations included conducting targeted outreach to the next generation of potential COPAC members and creating excitement around COPAC for recruitment purposes.

Yount shared the SOP webpage analytics for 2023, which showed that roughly 5,400 users visited the SOP webpage just over 9,100 times. The Cost Share Program webpage had the second most interactions at 6,000 views by 3,000 users. Lastly, the registration webpage was viewed 5,800 times by 3,100 users.

ITEM 9: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, May 8, 2024, in Sacramento, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and will be a hybrid in-person meeting with a Zoom option to attend. The meeting will be held at CDFA in Sacramento. The topic of regenerative agriculture will be included on the agenda.

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m. by Chair Grieshop.

Respectfully submitted by:

Danny Lee, Supervising Special Investigator
State Organic Program