



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

September 7, 2016

Meeting Minutes

2800 Gateway Oaks, Sacramento, CA

MEMBERS PRESENT

Melody Meyer
Patrick Kennelly
Vernon Peterson
Sean Graham
Christina Augustine
Heather Podoll
Jennifer Shawgo
Chad Sokol
David Will
Thomas Chapman
Stacy Carlsen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Garff Hathcock
Steven Sherman

INTERESTED PARTIES

Kim Diets - Smuckers Natural Foods-
OTA
Kelley Damewood - CCOF

CDFA

Steve Patton
Natalie Krout-
Greenberg
Carla Sanchez
Marcee Yount
Danny Lee
David Carlson
Scott Renteria
Laurel Rudolph
Dale Woods

ITEM 1: ROLL CALL

The Committee was called to order at 10:00 am by Mr. Steve Patton. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and self introductions were made. Ms. Melody Meyer reestablished chair at 10:15 am

ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Kelly Damewood had a few comments for the Committee. She first thanked the Committee and the SOP for all of their hard work with AB 1826. She also recognized the ongoing need to fill committee vacancies and stated that the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) has been actively advertising the vacancies through various publications and word of mouth. Ms. Damewood also mentioned she would like to discuss the Farm Bill with the committee and asked that the topic be added to the January meeting agenda. Ms. Damewood also talked about the new medical cannabis regulations and how CCOF has been looking towards the future, specifically at the organic industry's involvement in organic cannabis, and the implications of CCOF adding it as an organic crop.

ITEM 3: REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Patton asked for a motion to approve the May 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

MOTION: Ms. Christina Augustine moved to approve the May 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes as submitted. Ms. Mindee Jeffery seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

ITEM 4: VACANCIES / TERM LIMITS

Ms. Laurel Rudolph provided the vacancy report. Vacancies include: three producers; six producer alternates; one environmental representative; one environmental representative alternate; two processor alternates; two technical representative alternates; two consumer representative alternates; and one wholesale alternate.

Members whose terms will be expiring October 31, 2016, and are not eligible for reappointment are: Mr. Steve Sherman; Mr. Thomas Chapman; Mr. David Will; Mr. Steve DeMuri; and Ms. Melody Meyer.

Mr. Patton discussed with the committee the term limits and how it is important to keep continuity within the committee but also recognized the importance for new members with fresh outlooks.

Ms. Natalie Krout-Greenberg presented a recommendation regarding the term limits and the recent members who will be terming out. She proposed that one option would be for those current members who have expiring terms to extend their time an additional one full term. During that extended time, the Department and COPAC will work on outreach and recruitment for new members. It will also give time for new members to settle in and learn the ins and outs of the committee.

After much discussion, the committee decided to make a recommendation to the Secretary to extend the terms of those members who are currently expiring, if they wish to continue, to an additional one time, three-year term.

MOTION: Ms. Melody Meyer, Chair of the Committee, moved to extend current expiring terms to one additional, full three-year term. Ms. Mindee Jeffery seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 5: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Mr. Patrick Kennelly provided the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) update. He reported that currently there are 2,825 registrants, registered with CDPH. There have been 24 complaints so far in this year; 15 of those complaints have been completed, 8 were substantiated complaints, and 7 were found to be unsubstantiated.

Mr. Kennelly explained that the complaints that come into CDPH are either referrals from CDFA, received via email, or are received directly, via their complaint phone line.

ITEM 6: STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM REPORTS

I. Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) Testing

Mr. Danny Lee discussed the GMO testing pilot program. As of September 2016, the State Organic Program (SOP) has collected 20 blind samples to be tested for GMO's. Those samples include: alfalfa; blended cattle feed; chicken feed; and a variety of vegetable seeds. Sampling will continue throughout the rest of the year, and a report

with the findings will be released and presented to the committee once the project has concluded. If the committee finds that there is enough evidence to continue testing for GMO's, the SOP will include GMO testing with their routine surveillance.

II. Legislative Update

Mr. Lee provided the legislative update. Assembly Bill (AB) 1826 is currently waiting for approval. Once the bill passes, it will go into effect on January 1, 2017. The SOP will work to make the necessary changes that the bill requires.

ITEM 7: ORGANIC STAKEHOLDER WORK GROUP MEETING

Ms. Krout-Greenberg discussed the Organic Stakeholder Workgroup meeting report. There were four sessions and a total of 26 people participated. The meeting was designed to allow the participants to set goals that would define current benefits and challenges of the SOP. They also discussed further projects for CDFA's consideration, and recommendations for the Secretary and COPAC.

Mr. Lee presented the recommendations of the Organic Stakeholders Working Group. The participants arrived at the following actions: streamline the CDFA registration process; enhance data collection and maximize data utilization; improve enforcement activities and enhance training; expend outreach and communication to stakeholders; empower and energize COPAC; integrate organics throughout CDFA and other state agencies; and leverage California's SOP and California organic producers on a national scale.

After much discussion, it was decided to form a subcommittee to meet and examine the report's recommendations and prioritize them. Those on the Organic Workgroup Subcommittee are: Mr. Stacy Carlsen; Mr. Vernon Peterson; Ms. Heather Podoll; Ms. Mindee Jeffery; Mr. Chad Sokol; and Ms. Jane Sooby.

ITEM 8: NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Ms. Melody Meyer discussed new member recruitment. The committee discussed ways to help recruit members through different media sources. Some sources will include adding an increased presence on social media, sending out a press release to industry, and advertising at various industry conferences throughout California. Other ideas were to schedule all committee meetings a year ahead of time, that way the public and those interested in sitting on the committee can plan in advance to attend the meeting.

ITEM 9: ORGANIC INPUT MATERIALS UPDATE

Mr. Dale Woods gave an overview of the CDFA Organic Input Materials (OIM) program. He explained that any organic fertilizer material that is being distributed in California must be registered with the OIM program. Currently the program has 1,186 registrants and expects that number to increase to 2,000 by the end of the year. The OIM program also inspects production sites of organic fertilizer, and in turn, provides certifiers with the information the State has gathered.

Mr. Woods also gave an update on the complaint filed against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Organic Program (NOP). The complaint states that in 2010, USDA improperly issued the Contaminated-Compost decision as a "guidance" document without providing public notice or comment opportunities. The Contaminated-Compost decision should have been subject to the Administrative Procedure Act. It has since been decided that the NOP did violate the procedures when they released the new guidance documents and was, in turn, ordered to rescind those documents. The NOP is currently working on developing new guidelines. In the meantime, the industry has continued to do business as usual, and OIM will work to uphold the standards as they currently exist.

ITEM 10: FALL NOSB MEETING UPDATE

Ms. Meyer gave an update regarding the upcoming National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting in November 2016. This year, one of the discussion items is whether to allow hydroponic, container growing, and aquaponics to register as organic. Ms. Meyer also encouraged the committee to get involved with the NOSB, to comment on the issues, and to encourage others from the industry to do the same.

ITEM 11: ORGANIC CHECK OFF UPDATE

Ms. Meyer gave an update on the Organic Check off program. The Organic Trade Association (OTA) has formally petitioned the USDA to begin steps to conduct a vote on, and implement a research and promotion check off program for the organic industry. The current petition should be released to the public in October 2016 and be available for public comments for 60-90 days after the release.

ITEM 12: ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS AND CA STATE VET COMMENTS

Ms. Meyer discussed the Animal Welfare Standards and the California State Veterinarian's comments. The NOP issued proposed rules to amend the organic and livestock poultry practices. Some of the proposed changes to the rule are: changes in requirements for indoor and outdoor space for poultry; clarity on justifications for confinements indoors for livestock and poultry; and a proposed implementation timeline following the issuance of a final rule.

The committee discussed the letter written by Dr. Annette Jones, CDFA State Veterinarian, regarding NOP's rules. The committee decided to write a statement to the Secretary expressing their agreement with the NOP's animal welfare safety rules, and to ask that she consider consulting with COPAC when ruling on organic issues within the Department.

The Committee then decided to make a motion to ask the Secretary to consider COPAC's input in matters of state organic policy and decision making.

MOTION: Mr. Thomas Chapman expressed that COPAC represents diverse perspectives within the organic community, and moved to recommend that when taking positions on state organic policy matters, we ask that Secretary Ross please consider

the expertise of the committee. Mr. Vernon Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 13: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting will be held January 26, 2017, during the Eco-Farm conference in Monterey, CA. Some of the Agenda items will include: a discussion on the Farm Bill; an update from the Organic workgroup subcommittee; an update on the organic check-off program; current vacancies; and officer elections.

ITEM 14: RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Lee presented Mr. Thomas Chapman with a resolution, celebrating his time and commitment to the committee.

ITEM 15: ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Melody Meyer adjourned the meeting at 12:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:



Danny Lee, Supervising Special Investigator
State Organic Program