



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

January 19, 2023

Meeting Minutes

800 Asilomar Ave, Pacific Grove, CA 93950

MEMBERS PRESENT

Blake Alexandre – Chair
Will Daniels
Wendy Reynolds
Sean Feder
Amanda Felder
Matthew Grieshop
Stefan Parnay
Kaley Grimland
Phillip LaRocca – Vice Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT

David Will

INTERESTED PARTIES

Nick Woodrum, California
Department of Public Health
(CDPH)
Houston Wilson, UC Organic
Agriculture Institute
Joji Muramoto, UC Agriculture
and Natural Resources
Nora Carlton, Monterey County
Jane Sooby, California Certified
Organic Farmers (CCOF)
Stephanie Alexandre, Alexandre
Family Farm
Jill Hageman, Peaceful Valley
Farm Supply

CDFA

Danny Lee
Marcee Yount
Jefferson Scott
Andrea Cano
Scott Renteria
Mayze Fowler-Riggs
Pamela Rodriguez
Leslie Fernandez
Sarah Cardoni

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 12:37 p.m. by Sarah Cardoni. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and introductions were made.

ITEM 2: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Cardoni opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

MOTION: Phillip LaRocca nominated Blake Alexandre for Chair. Will Daniels seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with Wendy Reynolds abstaining.

Cardoni opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

MOTION: Will Daniels nominated Phillip LaRocca for Vice Chair. Sean Feder seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with Wendy Reynolds abstaining.

i. Purpose of COPAC

Danny Lee provided an overview of the purpose of COPAC, which is to advise and make recommendations to the CDFA's Secretary on issues related to organic standards

and enforcement, and on support for organic agriculture in California through education, outreach, technical assistance, and other organic industry activities. COPAC supports and helps promote the organic industry and its constituents. As representatives of the cross section of the organic industry, which is what membership is comprised of, COPAC works with industry and is the voice to bring up concerns, make recommendations, and help educate the public on organics.

ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Houston Wilson, University of California (UC) Organic Agriculture Institute (OAI), commented on the collection of organic production statistics in California stating that there is a heightened need for better collection of organic production statistics at the county level, in order to reach the Assembly Bill 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan proposed target that 20% of cultivated acres in California be organic by 2045. Current data sources from the State Organic Program (SOP), United States Department of Agriculture National Agriculture Statistics Service, County Agricultural Commissioners, and Accredited Certifying Agents all have gaps or contain private information. UC OAI is currently engaged in a 2-year contractual agreement with the SOP to create an improved analysis of organic acreage in California. Understanding the geography of organic production is necessary to create better metrics and to better target efforts. Wilson requested the formation of a subcommittee to work on a way to move forward with improved data collection.

Jane Sooby, California Certified Organic Farmers, commented that there were a number of vacancies on COPAC and asked about current outreach efforts. Sooby also requested a timeline by CDPH on the completion of the online registration system that will replace the paper-based registration system.

ITEM 4: REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Blake Alexandre requested a motion to approve the September 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes as presented.

MOTION: Will Daniels moved to approve the September 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes as presented. Amanda Felder seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with Vice Chair Phillip LaRocca and Wendy Reynolds abstaining.

ITEM 5: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATES

Wendy Reynolds, California Department of Public Health (CDPH), provided a CDPH Organic Program update. For organic complaints received for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022/23, 4 were completed and 9 remain open, one was referred to the National Organic Program and one was referred to an Accredited Certifying Agent. Five complaints remain open from previous fiscal years. From January 1, 2022, through December 13, 2022, there were 2,485 licenses issued for organic processors

Nick Woodrum, CDPH, provided an overview of the CDPH Organic Program's budget and revenue reports. For FY 2022/23 through October 2022, current expenditures total \$313,784 and revenue collected was \$408,841. Year-end projected expenditures total \$941,351 with revenue projected at \$1,163,039. Woodrum additionally clarified the allocation of its employees' salaries.

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

Wilson, UC OAI Director, provided an update on the UC OAI contract. The first of six key objectives, to provide a summary and detailed analysis of organic production data and organic acreage in California, is underway using data sources that are currently available. The second objective is to develop the California Organic Agriculture Knowledge Network and is the extension component. Grower-to-grower knowledge networks, such as CCOF Chapters, are being characterized to help inform how the extension will provide outreach efforts. The third objective, to provide a series of extension and training events, is in process with two Ag Coordinators identifying commodities, topics, and regions for meeting locations. The fourth objective of establishing organic demonstration plots is in motion with materials being put in place and crops being identified. Topics and individuals, which will include researchers, growers, and stakeholders, are being identified for video outreach materials; the fifth objective. The final objective, to organize a statewide conference for organic agriculture, is slated for 2024 and will most likely be held in the Central Valley.

Joji Muramoto, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Organic Production Specialist, provided an update on the UC ANR contract. Muramoto first discussed his peer review "Developing a Nitrogen Mineralization Model for Organically Managed Vegetable Farms on the Central Coast," which ties into the fourth contract objective of developing a nitrogen mineralization database. A taskforce was established to develop a tool for organic growers to manage nitrogen mineralization, a tool currently only available for commercial growers. Work will continue with collecting additional data and a target completion date has been set for the end of this year. Moreover, an Organic Agriculture Workshop was conducted on December 8, 2022, in Escondido and was well attended. The workshop discussed with participants the current status, regulations, assistance programs, and management of nitrogen, irrigation, pests, diseases, and weeds in organic production.

ITEM 7: STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM UPDATES

i. Vacancies and Terms

Cardoni provided the Vacancies and Terms report. Current vacancies include: two producers; one wholesale distributor; one processor; one environmental representative; one technical representative; one consumer 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. Cardoni also provided the names of those members who will be eligible for reappointment as of October 31, 2023.

ii. Revenue from Registration/New Registrations

Mayze Fowler-Riggs presented information on organic registration fees collected by month and year. For FY 2022/23 through November 2022, \$654,363 in registration fees were collected. A total of 4739 operations registered with the SOP for 2021, in which 4028 were producers, 1109 were handlers, and 146 were processors.

iii. Fund Condition Update

Lee provided the Fund Condition update. As of November 30, 2022, the beginning fund balance for FY 2022/23 was \$2,400,236. Total revenue was \$839,260, making the available cash \$3,239,496. Total expenditures were \$769,570, cash adjustments were \$126,162, with an ending balance of \$2,343,764.

iv. Compliance and Enforcement/Appeals Summary

Scott Renteria provided the Compliance and Enforcement/Appeals Summary. For FY 2022/23, there were 154 total complaints of which 82 were investigated by SOP, CDFA, or county staff; 26 were referred to ACAs; 40 were referred to CDPH; four were referred to the Nation Organic Program; and two were referred to the Organic Input Materials Program. There were 574 total inspections: 382 of these were conducted at farmers' markets; 68 were conducted at production sites; 25 at a handling facility; five at a processing facility; 86 at a retail wholesale facility; and eight at a location not within the above categories. A total of 174 samples were collected of which 154 were surveillance and 20 were investigative. Of the 154 surveillance samples, 15 samples had residues detected with six containing residues above tolerance levels and nine containing residues below tolerance levels. Of the 20 investigative samples, 10 samples had residues detected with six tested above tolerance levels and four tested below tolerance levels. Eleven appeals were received in which five have been closed and six remain active.

v. Complaint Activity Report

Renteria provided the Complaint Activity Report for 2022. A total of 63 open complaints were active in which 26 were open for more than 120 days; nine were open for between 90 and 120 days; eight were open for between 60 and 90 days; 11 were open for between 30 and 60 days; and nine were open for less than 30 days. An additional 91 complaints were closed.

vi. Complaint Summary Log

Renteria presented the Complaint Summary Log, detailing complaints and investigations that were assigned and closed for 2022.

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 2022/23, there were 154 surveillance samples: 21 at farmers' markets; 35 at production sites; and 98 at retail wholesale facilities. Of the 15 samples with residues detected: three were at farmers' markets; none were at production sites; and 12 were at handling facilities.

viii. Cost Share Update

Renteria provided an update on the Cost Share Program. There were 1,815 applications that have been reviewed and approved for 2022, slightly less than the 1,826 applicants that were reimbursed for the prior year. A total of \$1.2 million in funds were reimbursed, leaving a remaining \$61,000 in unused federal funds.

ITEM 8: INSPECTION/COMPLAINT DATA PROVIDED TO COPAC

This agenda item was tabled for the next meeting due to time constraints.

ITEM 9: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting will be held May 23, 2023, 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. Agenda items will include the inspection and complaint data provided to COPAC.

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:49 p.m. by Chair Alexandre.

Respectfully submitted by:

Danny Lee, Supervising Special Investigator
State Organic Program