



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
CALIFORNIA ORGANIC PRODUCTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (COPAC)
Meeting Minutes
Inspection and Compliance Branch, 560 J Street, Sacramento, CA
November 17, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Blake Alexandre
John Ashby
Lauree Bradley
Stacy Carlsen
Thomas Chapman
Myron Cooper
Steve DeMuri
Ann King Filmer
Martin Guerena
Garff Hathcock
Larry Hirahara
Karen Klonsky
Melody Meyer
Sandra Schmaier
Julie Spandow
Sean Swezey
Aaron Turner

MEMBERS ABSENT

David Will
Dave Martinelli
John Foster

ALTERNATES ABSENT *

Janice Woodhouse
Michael Sencer
Ione Conlan
Brian McElroy

INTERESTED PARTIES

Kim Dietz
Ray Green
Tony Munoz, CDPH
Claudia Reid, CCOF

CDFA

Paul Collins
Brian Cote
Nate Dechoretz
Maria Hicks
Robert Leavitt
Steve Patton
Scott Renteria
Rick Jensen
David Carlson

ITEM 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Melody Meyer called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was established and introductions were made.

ITEM 2: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

MOTION: Dr. Sean Swezey moved to nominate Mr. John Ashby for Chair. Ms. Melody Meyer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Thomas Chapman moved to nominate Mr. Aaron Turner for Vice Chair. Mr. Garff Hathcock seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 3: APPROVAL OF AUGUST 18, 2009 MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Meyer moved to change Item 3 in the August 18, 2009 meeting minutes to reflect the date officers were to be elected as November 17, 2009, and stated in Item 13, adjournment, the time of 2:30 p.m. had been left out.

Mr. Blake Alexandre moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. John Ashby seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

* Alternates are not required to attend meetings.

Mr. Turner suggested releasing a draft of the meeting minutes to committee members prior to the timelines currently established. Mr. Turner stated that this would be helpful to committee members who were not present at the meeting.

Mr. Rick Jensen stated that the CDFA will explore the option of sharing a draft of the meeting minutes with committee members internally, before they are brought to the COPAC for approval.

It was recommended that the Vice Chair, Mr. Turner, keep track of action items and send email reminders to committee members of their obligations.

ITEM 4: STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. David Carlson provided an update on the Federal Cost Share Program, stating that \$1.65 million has been distributed for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007/2008 and FY 2008/2009, and that there is approximately \$250,000 remaining. Mr. Carlson stated that CDFA has entered a phase in the database development which will be covering case studies and the functions of the State Organic Program. Mr. Carlson reviewed organic registrants; stating that over the past seven years, there has been continued growth, and projected revenue for FY 2009/2010 is over \$1,000,000 for the first time.

Mr. Jensen stated that he has approved the FY 2009/2010 cost share letter, and the new application should be posted on the CDFA website soon.

Ms. Meyer recommended that CDFA provide the COPAC with an overview of where the Organic Program is spending money, so the committee knows where work is being done.

Mr. Paul Collins gave an overview of the complaint report; stating there were three complaints originating from the wheat grass issue. Mr. Collins stated that CDFA recently had a meeting with the Integrated Waste Management Board that represented different segments of the industry to discuss potential problems and to identify solutions. The National Organic Program (NOP) participated via telephone. Significant discussion ensued regarding the complaint report.

Dr. Swezey commented that he supports the determination that a residue standard needs to be in place, and materials that do not meet that standard are not in compliance.

Mr. Ashby commented that he was alarmed at how rigid the proposed limits were, and fears organic operations will be decertified. Mr. Ashby discussed the need to proceed with caution and gathering data prior to establishing any specific standards.

Ms. Claudia Reid from California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) stated that she believes the activities that surrounded liquid fertilizer were intentional, and the activities surrounding compost were unintentional. Ms. Reid stated that if individuals use conventional pesticides or herbicides and nitrogen fertilizers in their backyards, it will get into the compost because that's the source of the green waste. Ms. Reid commented that if consumers want to eat organic, they have to garden organically.

Mr. Nate Dechoretz stated that the samples were analyzed in a laboratory; they were subjected to a pesticide screening, and there was no other compounds found. CDFA will be working with NOP to follow-up.

ITEM 5: TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mr. Turner reported that the Organic Technical Planning Subcommittee had their final meeting on October 29, 2009 to review the Quality System Manual (QSM). Mr. Turner stated several hundred pages of the QSM were reviewed, including registration, due process and enforcement, and administration. There were minor items that were updated. The QSM will provide written guidance for policies and procedures. The COPAC made an inquiry to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) if a QSM is in place at CDPH, and requested a follow-up to be provided at the next COPAC meeting. Mr. Tony Munoz will inform Mr. Patrick Kennelly of the inquiry.

MOTION: Mr. Ashby proposed whereas the COPAC supports and commends the new QSM, COPAC encourages the Secretary to fast track the regulatory process, in order to facilitate rapid resumption of inspections and other processes as outlined in the QSM. Dr. Swezey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 6: LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH (LBAM) DISCUSSION

Dr. Robert Leavitt reported that approximately one year ago, the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) Project was changed from a pheromone release program to a sterile insect technique program. Dr. Leavitt stated that the LBAM Project is moving along successfully, with the USDA being lead on the sterile insect technique. The USDA did a demonstration release approximately two weeks ago in a vineyard on the Napa/Sonoma county line. Dr. Leavitt stated that the purpose of the demonstration was to show that USDA's trapping, recovering, and sterilization methods would work, and it was a success. Dr. Leavitt stated that there will be more demonstration releases on a larger scale over the next year, and this should be fully operational within 18 months. The LBAM Project still has a quarantine program in force. Dr. Leavitt stated that this affects all producers, in particular the nursery industry. Dr. Leavitt stated the LBAM Project has one active project in San Luis Obispo County, where they are doing pheromone twist ties for an ongoing infestation. Dr. Leavitt stated that the LBAM Project will be conducting twist tie projects in Manteca, and possibly Tracy in the near future. Discussion ensued regarding LBAM irradiation and its influence on the organic industry.

Ms. Reid commented that CCOF understands that the sterile moths are not an ingredient in the food and therefore has not taken exception to sterile insect technology.

ITEM 7: NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD (NOSB) UPDATE

Mr. Steve DeMuri stated that he attended a National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting two weeks ago in Washington, DC, and announced that there is a new Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program (NOP), Mr. Miles McEvoy. Mr. DeMuri reported that the NOP intends to increase enforcement. Mr. DeMuri stated that NOSB has had a budget increase from \$3.87 million in 2009, to for \$6.97 million for 2010. Mr. DeMuri stated that there will be a NOSB meeting in the spring, possibly in the Sacramento area. Mr. DeMuri provided an overview of the

major recommendations that were made to NOSB from various committees including: retailer certification, personal body care standards, a document on nanotechnology, animal welfare, and clarification of definitions for the national list. All of these items passed with the exception of nanotechnology, which was withdrawn. Mr. DeMuri encouraged individuals to view the USDA website. Mr. DeMuri stated that there will be five new members joining the NOSB in January 2010, including Mr. John Foster, who is a COPAC member.

Mr. DeMuri encouraged the COPAC to schedule their spring COPAC meeting the same week as the NOSB meeting. Ms. Meyer suggested that the NOSB update be a standing agenda item.

ITEM 8: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (CDPH) UPDATE

Mr. Tony Munoz, Regional Administrator, CDPH, Food and Drug Branch, provided an update on behalf of Mr. Patrick Kennelly. Mr. Munoz reported that as of January 1, 2009, there were 1,335 firms registered with the CDPH. Mr. Munoz reported that as of November 10, 2009, the number of organic operations registered with CDPH increased to 1,589. Mr. Munoz provided an overview of CDPH's complaint log, stating there have been eight documented complaints for 2009.

ITEM 9: FOOD SAFETY UPDATE

Mr. Ashby reported that there are no exemptions given to organic foods for food safety issues. Mr. Ashby stated that organic foods have to be in compliance with all food safety requirements, and once something is voluntarily thought to be a food safety issue, even if it not a law, it can be a requirement. Mr. Ashby stated that if the procedure is not followed, it is thought to be abnormal. Mr. Ashby commented that it is his belief that if irradiation becomes a de facto solution, it will be an issue for organics. Mr. Ashby reported that the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) is required to assess the impact of this on organics, and there is acknowledgement of traceability that already exists in organic foods that do not exist in all other conventional foods. Mr. Ashby stated there is some recognition that an effort will need to be made to avoid duplicate registration and excess costs to small businesses.

ITEM 10: ASIAN CITRUS PSYLLID

Mr. Hathcock provided a brief overview of Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP). ACP is a serious pest of all citrus and closely related plants because it can transmit the disease huanglongbing (HLB) when it feeds on the plants' leaves and stems. HLB is a devastating citrus disease. Symptoms of HLB include yellow shoots, leaf mottle, small upright leaves, and lopsided fruit with a bitter flavor. Infected trees decline in health, produce inedible fruit, and eventually die. There is no cure for the disease and infected trees must be removed and destroyed to prevent further spread of HLB. Discussion regarding ACP ensued.

ITEM 11: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nothing to report.

ITEM 12: NEW ITEMS

Dr. Karen Klonsky stated that she received an email from the Agriculture Sustainability Institute inquiring if anyone from the organic industry would be interested in serving a two year term on an advisory committee that will review the benefits of nitrogen. For interested parties, the contact for this committee is Sonja Brodt, sbrodt@ucdavis.edu. The website is <http://nitrogen.ucdavis.edu>.

Mr. Stacy Carlsen stated that residue sampling of organic produce can be handled by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR), CDFA, or California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA).

Mr. Jensen stated that CDFA will have regulatory language for the COPAC to review regarding the QSM at the January meeting. Mr. Jensen presented Mr. Ray Green with a resolution on behalf of California State Assembly for nearly fifteen years of dedicated service in which the California Organic Program has prospered immeasurably.

Dr. Swezey thanked Ms. Meyer for her service as chair of the COPAC.

ITEM 13: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next COPAC meeting will be held in Pacific Grove, CA on January 21, 2009 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Agenda items must be submitted by December 14, 2009.

ITEM 14: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by chairperson at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

David Carlson, Acting Program Supervisor
California State Organic Program
Inspection and Compliance Branch