

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

**Meeting Minutes**

**July 30, 2008**

**Sacramento, CA**

**MEMBERS**

Blake Alexandre  
Garff Hathcock  
Larry Hirahara  
John Foster  
Melody Meyer, Chair  
Steve DeMuri  
John Ashby  
Lauree Bradley  
Sajeemas Pasakdee  
Sean Swezey, Vice Chair  
Karen Klonskey  
Pat Kenneley

**ALTERNATES MEMBERS**

Thomas Chapman  
Martin Guerena

**CDFA**

Rick Jensen  
Ray Green  
Dave Carlson  
Paul Collins  
Sarah Cardoni  
Brian Cote

**Interested Parties**

Claudia Reid  
Jim Downing  
Kirk Sparks, Eco Nutrients  
Steve Beckley  
Pat Matteson, DPR

**ITEM 1: INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Melody Meyer called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. with a quorum established.

**ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF MAY 7, 2008 MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Mr. John Ashby moved to approve the May 7, 2008 Meeting Minutes as submitted. Dr. Sean Swezey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

***A copy of the meeting minutes is attached as EXHIBIT A.***

**ITEM 3: CDFA UPDATES (LBAM)**

Mr. Ray Green provided a brief update on the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM). Mr. Green iterated that LBAM eradication efforts will not interfere with the National Organic Program. The members subsequently discussed the implications of non-organic spray.

**ITEM 4: ORGANIC PROGRAM REPORTS**

Mr. Green introduced Mr. Paul Collins. Mr. Collins will begin working exclusively with the California Organic Program on August 18, 2008 as a Fruit and Vegetable Quality Control Supervisor II. Mr. Collins was previously in charge of the West Sacramento Shipping Point Inspection District and brings 30 years of inspection experience to the California Organic Program.

Mr. Green announced that the California Organic Program had a total income of \$916,544 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007/08, which is approximately \$25,000 above the projected increase of \$77,000. Currently, there are approximately 2,935 registrants in the California Organic Program.

Mr. Green outlined the new process for conducting organic inspections. The California Organic Program has identified 200 inspections to be completed by September 30, 2008. The inspections will evaluate the effective implementation of the National Organic Program (NOP) in California.

Ms. Claudia Reid announced that California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) has identified a member of the legislature to sponsor a bill that would add a certifier seat to COPAC.

Mr. Green announced that Mr. Jack Young, Alternate Consumer Representative has resigned from the committee and thanked him for his service. Mr. Green attended the Department of Pesticide Regulation's pesticide investigation course and hopes to use the information received to train counties and accredited certification agents on investigation planning, procedures, and reporting.

Mr. Carlson provided a presentation on the Organic Complaint Log. From January 1, 2008 until June 30, 2008, the California Organic Program received 13 new complaints. Two complaints have been held over from 2007 making 15 total complaints. Nine complaints have been resolved, and six remain under investigation. One of the complaints investigated was the commingling of product in a poultry processing plant. The California Organic Program issued a cease and desist order and worked with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to investigate and resolve the violation. Mr. Green reported that since the Organic Program's inception, it has received a total of five appeals. Two of the submitted appeals were withdrawn.

Mr. Carlson provided an update on new Organic Program registrations. From January 1, 2008 until June 30, 2008, the Organic Program received 214 new organic registrations. There were no new dairy or livestock registrations and over 90 percent of the new registrants were involved in farm production. The other 10 percent were retail, wholesale, and processing. Dr. Swezey requested that future reports include a running total of organic registrants.

Mr. Carlson provided an update on organic spot inspections for the second half of FY 2007/08. During the second half of FY 2007/08, 277 audits of operations were

conducted, including 146 producer audits, 65 retail audits, 46 certified farmers' market booth audits, and 20 handlers audits.

***A copy of the 2008 Organic Complaint Log, 2008 New Organic Program Registrants, and the Spot Inspection Log for the Second Half of 2007/08 are attached as EXHIBIT B, C, and D, respectively.***

#### **ITEM 5: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT**

Mr. Pat Kenneley provided the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Report. The number of registrants has remained fairly stable at approximately 1,263. Over the last six months, CDPH has received a total of 14 complaints, including the complaints referred from the California Organic Program. Although the complaints overlap, nine of the complaints are related to uncertified/unregistered operations and 10 are related to misbranding. Eight of the complaints were substantiated and corrective action was taken. Three of the complaints were unsubstantiated and three of the complaints are currently pending resolution. Four of the 14 complaints deal with web-related claims rather than product labeling. Mr. Kenneley also conveyed that there appears to be an increased interest in organic product representation on the Internet.

The committee took a lunch break from approximately 12:20 p.m. until 1:00 p.m.

#### **ITEM 6: REVISION OF COPAC PROCEDURES**

The committee discussed the potential for forming a subcommittee to revise COPAC procedures. Some of the proposed revisions include:

- Requiring COPAC members to submit agenda items to CDFA staff no later than 30 days before the meeting.
- Implementing timelines for agenda item discussion.
- Including space on previous agenda items to follow-up on previous activity and recommendations.
- Requiring CDFA staff to provide a quick snapshot of budget activity on subsequent agendas.

Ms. Meyer volunteered to chair the subcommittee and Mr. Ashby and Dr. Swezey volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

#### **ITEM 7: MEMBER REPORTS**

- A. National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Update

Mr. Steve DeMuri provided an update on the National Organic Standards Board. There was a presentation by the material working group with the task of defining agricultural and non-agricultural material and synthetic and non-synthetic material. The next NOSB meeting will be held in November 2008 in Washington, D.C. Ms. Meyer encouraged COPAC members to provide NOSB with public comments prior to NOP's November 2008 meeting.

#### B. Fertilizer Issue Update

Mr. John Foster announced that Earthbound Farm has moved rapidly in developing a process validation for agricultural input suppliers to its growers, which should be functional and mandatory by September 1, 2008. The process will include onsite process validation audits and will focus on process validation of animal based fertilizer materials. Mr. Foster announced that growers are pleased with the process.

#### C. CDFA Registration Renewal

Mr. Foster discussed whether it is possible for the California Organic Program to accept organic renewal forms and payments electronically. Mr. Green explained that electronic payment and renewal are among the goals identified in the redesign of the Organic Program. Currently, the California Organic Program is not able to receive electronic payments.

### **ITEM 8: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Reid announced that CCOF is mounting an effort to get ready for the Canadian Organic Program, which is expected to be launched on December 14, 2008. Ms. Reid explained that CCOF is hosting conference calls that will address some of the questions associated with the Canadian Organic Program. Mr. Rick Jensen discussed the possibility of providing a COPAC resolution to the CDFA Secretary listing the concerns of the California organic industry in the development of Canadian organic standards. The members discussed the possibility of encouraging the USDA to continue a dialogue that ensures the successful implementation of Canadian organic standards.

**MOTION:** Mr. Ashby moved that COPAC write a letter to Secretary Kawamura specifically requesting that CDFA Secretary Kawamura contact the USDA National Organic Program directly to encourage the NOP to resolve equivalency discussions with Canada's soon to be implemented Canadian Organic Program in order to mitigate disruption to California's organic industry that will occur if the Canadian regulations are implemented as scheduled without changes to the Canadian regulations and/or

equivalency agreements. Mr. Blake Alexandre seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM 9: NEW ITEMS**

None.

**ITEM 10: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Martin Guerena suggested that COPAC should extend an invitation to the Sustainability Institute to make a formal presentation at the next COPAC meeting.

Ms. Klonsky requested an update on the status of the Canadian organic standards issue.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on October 29, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in Sacramento, CA.

**ITEM 11: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Ray Green, Supervisor  
California Organic Program  
Inspection and Compliance Branch  
Inspection Services

RG/bc