

**Nevada Department of Agriculture**

**NEVADA ORGANIC ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

December 8, 2006  
350 Capitol Hill Avenue  
Reno NV 89502

Council Members Present: Sharon Davidson\*, Virginia Johnson\*, Marcia Litsinger\*, Bruce Quinlan\*, Jim Smith (member elect)  
(\*Participated via conference call)  
Council Members Absent: Dave Hall  
Members of the Public: Rick Lattin, Kerry Badertscher  
NDOA Staff Members: Ed Foster, Peggy McKie

**1. Call to order** at 10:07 a.m.

**2. Roll call.**

Council member Dave Hall was unable to attend the meeting. All other Council members were present.

**3. Minutes** of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

**4. Correspondences & Announcements.**

a) Sharon Davidson said she has received many ATTRA publications that will help the Council develop educational brochures. Ray Johnson reported that the "Friends of Nevada Organic" filed incorporation papers on 11/7/2006. The members of the Board of Directors are as follows: President Bruce Quinlan; Treasurer and Resident Agent, Ray Johnson; and Secretary, Sharon Davidson. Ray has the articles of incorporation and the corporate seal. He said he will copy the seal and send it to all Board of Directors members. He said that they now need to develop by-laws to establish the purpose of the organization and a description of the membership; also needed is to set up a bank account. He said that he will file for 501(c)(3) status after the first of the year and expects it to take about 6 weeks for completion. Sharon Davidson said she has been looking into banking options. Ray requested the "Friends" be placed on the Organic Advisory Council's agenda at least two times per year to report on their activities. Bruce and Sharon expressed thanks for Ray's hard work.

b) Virginia Johnson welcomed Jim Smith as the newest member of the Organic Advisory Council.

**5. Public Participation.**

Kerrie Badertscher, Horticulture Specialist with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension reported that Extension is involved with meetings to

discuss the feasibility of developing a demonstration farm and CSA at the Main Station Farm and/or university property along Valley Road, both in Reno. She reported that they are currently pursuing funding and are in the formative stages of looking for partners for grant collaboration, and farmers to provide internships and expertise. Jim Smith if the University will seek organic certification for the farm(s) and Kerrie replied that she did not know at this time. Jim also questioned if the Main Station Farm had fields that would qualify for certification in the near future since sewage effluent has been used for many years to irrigate. Kerrie stated that she understood that to be fields on the farm to which effluent had not been applied.

Jim Smith said he would like to see NDOA get accredited by USDA to do livestock certification to have certification kept at the local level. Virginia Johnson recommended that the Council offer organic livestock certification education at upcoming conferences and workshops. Marcia Litsinger said she believes that the lack of certified slaughter/packaging facilities is holding back further development of organic livestock in Nevada. Jim Smith said that there are buyers looking for live organic animals “on the hoof” so that the processing facility shouldn’t hold people up from beginning to convert to organic livestock. Rick Lattin said that the Churchill Economic Development Authority has been studying the feasibility of situating a slaughter facility in Churchill County but supports the idea of locations elsewhere so long as the idea moves forward. Virginia Johnson said it would be very nice to include a commercial kitchen in the facility in the plans as well. Rick Lattin said that it is critical to include value added opportunities in the planning.

Jim Smith added that he would like to have the Council provide NDOA’s director Don Henderson with information about trends in organic livestock production and the Council’s concerns that NDOA does not offer organic livestock certification. Virginia Johnson asked Jim if he would be willing to present information about this to the Board of Agriculture and Jim said that he would. Sharon Davidson asked if the Council was interested in working with the chefs of local hospitals to educate them about sources of local organic produce and Virginia said she thought this would be a better job for the “Friends”. Rick Lattin reported on the development of the Reno local food system network and that they are also planning to file for non-profit status. He said they have a member that is a staff member of a local hospital who is interested in developing educational packets for hospitals.

## **6. Organic Program Staff Report.**

Peggy McKie reported that the program manager Gary Cross has accepted a position as with the University of Missouri Cooperative Extension. Gary will be working as a community development specialist for Oregon County in rural south central Missouri. She also reported that the changes to the organic regulations have been filed went into effect November 13, 2006. Virginia stated that the Council will also need to change references in their by-laws to the “administrator’

to “director”. She also asked Council members to review the by-laws and let her know if there are other changes needed.

## **7. Senator McGinness sponsoring BDR 253.**

a) Virginia said that she had spoken with Senator McGinness that morning (December 8) and that no changes had been made to BDR 253 to date. She was told that the “farmer’s market group” might add something but that the organic portion of the bill will remain unchanged. Mr. McGinness added he had spoken with Director Henderson recently about the Department possibly having something to add to the BDR that would not affect the Council’s request. Rick Lattin stated that Nevada Grown and NCFMA are withdrawing their requests for funding as a part of BDR 253 and promised support for the Council’s request. Jim Smith stated his concern that the budget used for the BDR showed an excessive amount dedicated to workshops and conferences. Virginia explained that the budget as submitted was meant to be preliminary and undefined and was being used as a basic “guesstimate” to assist in future discussions as the BDR moves through session. Sharon, Virginia and Marcia also reminded that the workshops are to be held around the state to reach as many people as possible and therefore would require more funding than if held in only one location. Jim Smith volunteered to join the committee working on the BDR and Virginia stated that he was welcome to participate.

A motion was made and passed to approve the tentative budget used for the BDR. Jim Smith abstained from the vote due to his stated unfamiliarity with the group’s goals and proposed projects.

b) Discussion followed to develop an on-going committee was established to follow the BDR through the legislative session. Jim Smith said he is willing to help Marcia and Virginia. A motion was made and approved to establish a BDR committee with council members Virginia Johnson, Marcia Litsinger, and Jim Smith, and include Rick Lattin as an interested organic farmer.

## **8. Nevada Organic Review.**

A motion was made and approved to utilize the \$1500.00 received from the Agriculture Council of Nevada to Custom Business Services for the production of the newsletter. Chairwoman Virginia Johnson excused herself from the voting because she is the owner of Custom Business Services.

## **9. New Business**

a) The Council’s request for an additional grant funds from Nevada Agriculture Council to continue the NOR beyond the current funding for 3 issues, and to seek professional graphic artist to do preliminary map work was turned down. However there will be more opportunities to apply in 2007. No other funding requests are in process. Virginia reported that someone from the council should be present to answer questions when the Nevada Agriculture Council is reviewing requests.

b) A motion was made and approved to re-affirm the activities of the Working and Action Committee, comprised of Marcia and Virginia.

c) Additional comments: Rick Lattin informed the Council that all of the presentations made at the Agriculture Summit held in Fallon on December 1, 2006 will be posted on the Nevada Grown website. Sharon Davidson requested clarification of the roles between the organic Council and the Friends of Nevada Organic. Virginia Johnson responded that it is the role of the Council to work with the Department to make sure that the organic industry is served. Virginia stated that clarification of the NRS will be printed in the next NOR.

Sharon requested a list of events in 2007 in which the Council might participate so that pre-planning can be done. Discussion followed and it was decided that information about upcoming events should be forwarded to Virginia for review by February 1, 2007. She will then forward it to Peggy to be sent out to Council members. Virginia is to type up copy to be printed on Department letterhead to be sent to all producers and handlers currently in the NDOA program to ask for information about events around the state that they may be aware of where the Council could have a display or presence.

**10. Next meeting** Friday, March 2, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. and will be held at the NDOA office in Reno.