

Minutes
Public Meeting of the Nevada Organic Advisory Council (NOAC)
February 4 2010

Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDOA)
405 South 21st Street
Sparks, NV 89431

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order 1:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present: Marcia Litsinger, Sharon Davidson, Rick Lattin, Mark O'Farrell

Members of the Public: Steve Litsinger, Ray Johnson, Josie Glassberg

NDOA staff: Steve Marty, Ed Foster

3. Introductions

4. Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the February 4, 2010 NOAC meeting was approved as offered.

5. Approval of Minutes From Previous Meeting

Rick Lattin made a motion to approve the minutes as offered. The motion was seconded by Sharon Davidson and passed by a vote of 4-0.

6. Public Participation

Ray Johnson of Custom Gardens had a question regarding annual organic inspection timing. Steve Marty attempted to explain that all certified organic operations are inspected once per year at a time when the Organic System Plan (OSP) can be verified. Mr. Johnson noted that his inspection anniversary date would soon pass and that his organic certificate stated that it would expire. Steve Marty explained that organic certification is good unless surrendered or revoked, and although expiration dates had in the past been included on organic certificates as a way to deter fraud, certificates issued in 2010 will not include an expiration date.

Josie Glassberg asked whether school gardens could obtain organic certification. Steve Marty replied that it was possible for school gardens to obtain certification.

The group shifted its focus toward the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG) program, and discussion was centered on communication problems with NDOA that several SCBG grantees had experienced. Several grantees stated that they had not received return phone calls and/or emails regarding the Specialty Crop Grant program. Rick Lattin stated that he believed overhead money from the upcoming SCBG cycle was to be used to fund a position dedicated to executing the program. Steve Marty stated that he was not aware of the possibility for a position to be funded, but offered to check with NDOA Plant Industry Regional Manager Ed Foster. Mr. Foster offered to speak with the group regarding the SCBG program. The discussion was vigorous and heated. Mr. Foster was unaware of the new position, but acknowledged the claimed lack of communication from NDOA and offered to follow up on the situation for the benefit of the group and other SCBG grantees.

7. Old Business

A) Correspondence and Announcements **(Informational)**

None

B) Update regarding the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) grant proposal
(Informational)

Steve Marty stated that a proposal had been submitted for the NOAC to produce three "Transitioning to Organic" workshops. The grant proposal requested \$12,000 from OFRF. The grant notification date is April 1, 2010. Ray Johnson mentioned that Custom Gardens had entered into a grant agreement with the Silver Springs school district to provide fresh fruit and vegetables to students during the 2009/2010 school year.

C) Update concerning the Nevada Organic Advisory Council budget **(Informational)**

Marcia Litsinger read aloud a letter from State Controller Kim Wallin, which stated that Nevada Organic Advisory Council (NOAC) funds which were to be reverted to the general fund due to budget cuts were not initially collected by the Controller's Office through no fault of the NDOA. This letter was intended to clarify the situation, as the NOAC was initially unsure as to the fate of the funds. The funds have been reverted to the general fund as part of NDOA's budget cut. A copy of the letter is available upon request.

8. New Business

A) Discussion and possible approval of the NOAC public comment letter to both USDA and NDOA concerning the USDA draft Environmental Impact Statement for Roundup Ready alfalfa **(Action)**
After reviewing the draft comment letter to USDA, A motion to send the public comment letter to USDA, excluding the final page, was made by Rick Lattin. The motion was seconded by Mark O'Farrell and passed by a vote of 4-0. A copy of the letter is available upon request.

B) Discussion and recommendation concerning the format and content of NDOA's organic certificate **(Action)**

The group discussed this issue to some degree during the Public Comment portion of the meeting, thus further discussion was limited. Steve Marty again stated that expiration dates would not be included on organic certificates issued during 2010, and that the last annual inspection date would appear on the certificate. No action was taken.

C) Discussion and action concerning NOAC presence/participation at the Wingfield Park Earth Day event **(Action)**

Marcia Litsinger stated that the NOAC would be afforded a booth space at the Wingfield Park Earth Day event free of charge. A motion was put forth by Rick Lattin for the NOAC to participate in the Wingfield Park Earth Day event. The motion was seconded by Sharon Davidson and passed by a vote of 4-0.

D) Discussion and action concerning NOAC member terms and officer elections **(Action)**

This agenda item was tabled until the next meeting of the Nevada Organic Advisory Council.

E) Schedule next NOAC meeting **(Action)**

No action was taken

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.