

Minutes
Public Meeting of the Nevada Organic Advisory Council (NOAC)
December 2 2011

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

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order 1:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

Members of the Public: Steve Litsinger, Steve Slusser, Rob Holley, Caleb Holley, Kunall Patel

NDOA staff: Jim Barbee, Ed Foster, Steve Marty

3. Introductions

4. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda as offered was made by Bruce Quinlan, seconded by Marcia Litsinger, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

5. Approval of Minutes From Previous Meeting

Bruce Quinlan made a motion to approve the minutes as offered. The motion was seconded by Marcia Litsinger and passed by a vote of 5-0.

6. Public Participation

None

7. Old Business

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

Marcia Litsinger announced her resignation from the Nevada Organic Advisory Council effective at the conclusion of her current term in January of 2012.

B) Discussion concerning the "Transitioning to Organic" workshop held by the Nevada Organic Advisory Council in Las Vegas, NV on April 7-8, 2011. **(Informational)**

There was discussion concerning revenue in excess of the stated budget from the "Transitioning to Organic" workshop, which is currently held by the Friends of Nevada Organics, and the creation of an account to house the funds, which amounted to just over \$200. Rick Lattin suggested that no action be taken and the funds remain with Friends of Nevada Organics to support organic farm training at the Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Institute Small Farm Conference. There were no objections from the council.

8. New Business

B) The council skipped to item 8B at the discretion of the chairman. Review the results of the November 10, 2011 workshop held at the Nevada Department of Agriculture regarding fee increases for organic certification and take appropriate action **(Action)**

Nevada Department of Agriculture Director Jim Barbee addressed concerns related to the proposed fee increases for the organic certification program. Mr. Barbee stated that all programs at the Nevada Department of Agriculture were subject to budget cuts from the General Fund and

all experienced a subsequent need for increased fee revenue. Mr. Barbee also addressed concerns regarding program efficiency and streamlining, potential grant funding, and alternatives such as organic certification through private entities eligible to offer certification services in Nevada. Mr. Barbee stated that these avenues had been explored, and would be further addressed through internal program reviews, which are to be conducted in early 2012. Council Chair Mark O'Farrell stated that he appreciated Mr. Barbee addressing the group's concerns, but that the council assumes NDOA is operating the organic certification program with reasonable efficiency and the council needed to move forward, as the need for increased fee revenue had been clear to the group for some time. Marcia Litsinger made a motion to voice support for a revised fee schedule reflecting input from stakeholders. The motion was seconded by Sharon Davidson and passed by a vote of 5-0. Discussion then focused on consideration for increasing the hourly inspection rate charged for on-site organic inspections. Rick Lattin made a motion to recommend an increase in the hourly inspection rate from \$30/hour to \$65/hour. The motion was seconded by Bruce Quinlan and passed by a vote of 5-0. A motion was made by Marcia Litsinger to recommend an increase in the annual continuation of certification fee to \$75. The motion was seconded by Rick Lattin and passed by a vote of 5-0. A revised gross income fee schedule was presented during the meeting (attached), and Rick Lattin put forth a motion recommending adoption of this fee schedule by NDOA. The motion was seconded Marcia Litsinger and passed by a vote of 5-0. An additional motion was made by Rick Lattin to draft communication to stakeholders informing them of the recommended revisions to the proposed organic certification fee schedule. The motion was seconded by Sharon Davidson and passed by a vote of 5-0.

A) Review current USDA National Organic Program solicitation bulletins and take appropriate action. **(Action)**

The group discussed a recent request for input from USDA regarding the proposed mandate for the use of organic hops in processed products marketed as organic. Marcia Litsinger made a motion to submit to the USDA National Organic Program a comment voicing support for discontinuing the current exemption regarding the use of non-organic hops in processed products marketed as organic. The motion was seconded by Bruce Quinlan and passed by a vote of 5-0.

C) Discussion and action concerning recruitment for the Nevada Organic Advisory Council conventional agriculture position. **(Action)**

Marcia Litsinger put forth a motion to nominate Rob Holley of Holley Family Farms to fill the conventional agriculture vacancy on the Nevada Organic Advisory Council. The motion was seconded by Bruce Quinlan and passed by a vote of 5-0.

9. Adjourn

The next meeting of the Nevada Organic Advisory Council was tentatively scheduled for January 27, 2012.