

Minutes
Nevada Organic Advisory Council Meeting
2 April 2009

Nevada Department of Agriculture
350 Capitol Hill Avenue
Reno, NV 89502

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order 1:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

Members of the Public: Steve Litsinger, Pauline Hamilton, Rod Dahl

NDOA staff: Steve Marty, Ed Foster

3. Introductions

4. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda for the April 2, 2009 OAC meeting as offered was made by Rick Lattin and seconded by Bruce Quinlan. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

5. Review/Approval of Minutes From Previous Meeting

Rick Lattin inquired as to the identity of Dr. David Thain, who was mentioned in the meeting minutes from March 23, 2009. Steve Marty stated that Dr. Thain is a professor at the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources at the University of Nevada, Reno. A motion to approve the minutes from the March 23, 2009 meeting of the Nevada Organic Advisory Council was made by Rick Lattin and seconded by Sharon Davidson. The motion was passed by a vote of 5-0.

6. Public Participation

Steve Litsinger inquired as to the status of the Nevada Department of Agriculture Organic Certification Program. Ed Foster stated that based on the March 5 Legislative hearing, the position would continue to be funded, but stressed that the current budget is still hypothetical until formally approved by the Legislature. Mark O'Farrell asked whether the council should consider drafting a letter to Department of Administration Director Andrew Clinger asking for clarification regarding the program's status. Rick Lattin suggested to discuss this topic under agenda item 8A, and also suggested that the letter be of a friendly and positive tone.

7. Old Business

A) Correspondence and Announcements

Mark O'Farrell and Rick Lattin were welcomed to the council as the two newest producer members.

Sharon Davidson distributed handouts to make the council and concerned members of the public aware of House Bill HR 875, which is known as the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2009. Rick Lattin stated that he had been following the bill, but that it was likely dead due to lack of support. Bruce Quinlan stated that Whole Foods is directly interested and is monitoring the bill, but at this time are not overly concerned. Bruce stated that he would keep the council informed of new information concerning HR 875 that comes through Whole Foods.

Steve and Marcia Litsinger stated that they would represent the Nevada Organic Council at the Idylwild Park Earth Day celebration on April 19, 2009, and asked that other members help out during the day. They also stated that organic producers could sell product at the booth for a 5% fee on all sales. Rick Lattin stated that Ann Louhela may be able to do a blast email to certified organic producers concerning the potential to sell product at the booth.

Steve Marty stated that the NDOA Organic Certification Program had lost three producers during the renewal process, but that several new applications for certification had been received and were being processed. Steve also mentioned that he would be attending a meeting of the Nevada Seed Council on April 9 and planned to discuss the possibility of organic certification helping hay growers through a difficult year due to falling hay prices.

Marcia Litsinger noted that Rex Dufour of ATTRA has been actively searching for grant funds aimed at allowing the Nevada Organic Advisory Council to continue to perform outreach and educational activities.

Ed Foster stated that the new Department of Agriculture building would likely be completed the third week in June, and that a new Department website would likely be completed in three to four months. Mr. Foster also requested that a copy of any materials to be sent to Mr. Andrew Clinger be provided to NDOA.

8. New Business

A) Discussion and action regarding the current and future fee structure for the Nevada Department of Agriculture Organic Certification Program **(Action)**

Steve Marty distributed Microsoft excel handouts depicting the potential fees that would be generated by Nevada certified organic producers and handlers under the fee schedules for California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), Oregon Tilth (OTCO), Idaho Department of Agriculture (ISDA), and Utah Department of Agriculture (UDA). The tentative goal of restructuring the fee structure is to cover all operating costs in addition to the position salary. Currently, all operating costs are covered by fees, but salary is drawn from the general fund. The council tabled this agenda item for discussion at a future meeting.

B) Discussion and action regarding collaboration between the Nevada Organic Advisory Council and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in raising awareness of available grant opportunities and procedures to be followed in applying for grants **(Action)**

Rod Dahl of the NRCS was present to facilitate a discussion concerning NRCS grant opportunities for organic producers. Mr. Dahl stated that, at present, California is the only State which has set up funding pools specific to organic production. Therefore, the current priority is to develop conservation practice priorities for Nevada, which can in turn be used to set up funding pools. The group discussed the role of the Organic Advisory Council in developing conservation priorities and management practice standards. A motion to establish an NRCS liaison committee comprised of Rick Lattin, Marcia Litsinger, and Steve Marty was put forth by Rick Lattin and seconded by Marcia Litsinger. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

C) Election of officers for the positions of Chairperson and Vice-chairperson **(Action)**

A motion to nominate Bruce Quinlan as Chairperson of the Organic Advisory Committee was put forth by Mark O'Farrell and seconded by Rick Lattin. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0. (Note- Mr. Quinlan was not present to accept this nomination nor to vote on the motion, as other obligations mandated that he leave the meeting early).

A motion to nominate Dave Hall for the position of Vice-chairman was put forth by Sharon Davidson and seconded by Rick Lattin. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0. (Note- Mr. Hall was not present to accept this nomination nor to vote on this motion).

9. Schedule Next OAC Meeting

The next meeting of the Nevada Organic Advisory Committee was scheduled for October 15, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at the Reno office of the Nevada Department of Agriculture.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.