

2/4/2005
Montana Organic Commodity Advisory Council (MOCAC)
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Nancy Peterson, Director; David Oien, Handler; Mikel Lund; Producer; John Hoffland, Consumer; Randy Hinebauch, at large (producer); Judy Owsowitz, Producer; Nancy Matheson, Producer; Robert Boettcher, Producer; Greg Ames, ASD Administrator; Donna Rise, CSB Bureau Chief; Doug Crabtree, Organic Program Manager; Kim Cobos, Administrative Assistant

Guests: Bob Quinn, MSU; Angie DeYoung, MDA; Ryun Schaeffer, RMA

Opening Remarks, Nancy Peterson, Director.

I'm excited to be here today with this group. This is the fastest growing program in the Department. Budget hearings are going well except for two areas.

- a) Growth through Ag.
- b) Supplemental request for 06/07 for additional FTE and dollars for some VCR DNA equipment for the lab in Bozeman.

Group discussed two issues with Nancy Peterson:

The Growth Through Ag Program.

The Organic Decision Package-adding ½ FTE in 06 & 1 FTE in 07

Election of Chair:

Doug opens this discussion with "Director Peck was chair," then turns the discussion over to the council for opinion or nomination.

Council has open discussion on chair position.

David Oien nominates Nancy Matheson for Vice-Chair, Nancy accepts the nomination.

Randy Hinebauch nominates Nancy Peterson for Chair, Nancy accepts the nomination.

John seconds the nominations.

All in favor of the two Nancy's for Chair and Vice-Chair; None opposed.

Approval of Previous Minutes

10/27/04 and 11/4/04; 11/4/04 minutes were not distributed; need to give to council members.

Council looked over 10/27 meeting minutes

Randy Hinebauch motion's to accept the 10/27/04 meeting minutes as presented.

Judy Owsowitz seconds the motion

All accept minutes; None oppose

Program Update

Certifications:

Certification activities and where we stand:

106 current certifications;
started 9/3/02 certified 22 in that year.
Last year (2003) we certified 79.

We currently have:

81 producers
25 handlers

28 are new or first time certified entities ~1/4 of our certifications; 5 additional new certifications pending. Doug continued to break down the types and locations of operations:

Cost Share

We were allocated \$110,000 to reimburse for certification costs. No additional funds were made available despite the program being extended. In fact, part of our \$110,000 allocation was withdrawn, we are down to \$85,000 instead of \$110,000. Due to "not spending the money".

Council has open discussion...

USDA is 2-3 weeks out before cost share contract is signed.

ISO-65 accreditation

Doug presented the progress towards ISO accreditation; requests an open discussion with council regarding funding.

Council has open Discussion...

Council discussed applying to the Wheat and Barley Committee for a grant.

Work with Andre Giles, Jeff Shapiro and David Oien as the “proposal writing committee” and Joel Clairmont and Brent Poppe from the Department.

The Council decided (unanimously) to submit a proposal to the Wheat & Barley Committee for funding to support the costs of ISO 65 accreditation

The Council will draft a letter to the Director of the Department, expressing concerns regarding USDA-NOP and ISO 65 status, failure of the NOP comply with ISO requirements and to incorporate ISO accreditation (for certifies) with NOP accreditation, as promised when the (NOP) program was presented.

Nancy Matheson and Doug Crabtree will work on letter after David Oien drafts it.

Old Business

David Oien states that public relations to promote the program are broken down into two categories.

1. The inexpensive and cheap PR – news releases
2. The expensive more focused PR –

Opened up to council discussion

All committee members will bring Organic PR to the attention of Ron Zellar through Doug Crabtree for Internet updates. And to any other function i.e., MOA and other various Ag group meetings for MDA Organic Certification exposure.

Forms

Nothing has been done on forms. David Oien is no longer on the forms committee. Nancy Matheson and John Hoffland will be this committee.

Council members decide to give notes to Nancy and John for possible improvements on the application forms etc..

Recommendations need to be into these two Forms committee members by early fall for time to go out next January.

Potato Seed Law

Dave Taylor states that both Organic and conventional potato growers seem to want this relationship to work, disease is the main concern.

Judy Owsowitz to visit with some growers on Monday 2/7/2005, will discuss the outcome with the MOCAC members at the next meeting. (Agenda Item)

New Business

Regional Certification Groups

Few council members had read the proposal, which was emailed twice, need to re-send.

Goal: attract more OCIA members. OCIA has loyal operations in some chapters, but maybe not in others. Council discussed possible ways to make “Certification Groups” work for the MDA. The MDA needs to be fairly well assured this will work

Council decides to speak with others and bring this back to the agenda for the next MOCAC meeting.

Annual Program Review

- Appoint Committee - At least 4 members must be appointed.
- Plan-council discussed possible out sourcing of help, spreading out the work.
- Schedule

No council was chosen, a MOCAC conference call has been tentatively scheduled for 2/23/05.

The final report on the files for the Annual Program Review must be in no later than the first of April.

Promotional opportunities at OTA’s all things Organic trade fair – Angie DeYoung.

In the marketing bureau, we help producers and handlers with the marketing of organic products. Put together an idea... Montana companies would like to be represented at large national trade shows, so we can announce our presence in the national industry. The Department is participating in the Organic Trade show in Chicago. We need to find (more) people and products to fill the space and present at the OTA “All Things Organic.”

The council agreed to be aware of any such producers who are going to participate in the Organic Trade show in Chicago to discuss the sharing of a booth with the MDA, if they have such an interest, the council will give the information to Doug, which will discuss with Angie.

Organic Research at MSU- Bob Quinn

Trying to encourage more organic research by MSU in general. A suggestion is to have an organic designated research plot at all research stations.

Council has Bob's Presentation:

Results:

Bob will draft a letter of support for establishing a certified organic research plot at all research stations.

MOCAC can endorse the proposal.

Judy moves we support Bob in this endeavor.

Bob Boettcher seconds to support having an organic research plot at all MSU research station.

All agree, None oppose

Crop insurance for Organic Producers – Update

Council has Ryun's Presentation

Council has decided to support such an insurance plan, but will not participate in the interim assistant Ryun has requested. Doug will give Ryun's presentation packet to the MDA Director and leave it at the Director's discretion.

Schedule next meeting

Doug suggests the next meeting should be a conference call:

Council decides the conference call will be - February 23rd morning 9:00am – Approx. 1 ½ hours

Conference Call Agenda:

- Update on proposal for Wheat and Barley Committee funding. (March 16th deadline to have your proposal in for grants)
- Select Review committee for Annual Report

Randy Hinebauch Motion's to adjourn
Judy Owsowitz second's

Adjourn