MOCAC
Conference Call
October 8, 2009
6:30 pm – 8:10pm
Department of Agriculture
Conference Room #225

Department Staff
Greg Ames – Administrator ASD
Andy Gray – Bureau Chief CSB
Doug Crabtree – Program Manager
Kristan Barbour – Executive Assistant

MOCAC Members
Director Ron de Yong
Roy Benjamin
Robert Forstenzer
Jill Owen
Greg Thayer
Kathee Dunham

Absent:
Andy Sponseller
Sharon Lindquist

Meeting called to order at 6:45 pm by Ron de Yong.

Doug Crabtree briefed the council on the Federal Cost Share Program for the 2008 and 2009 seasons. The program will be available again for the 2010 season with $90,000 available to certified organic producers and handlers in Montana. Roy Benjamin inquired if there has been good interest in the Cost Share Program. Doug did not have the exact number of applications received, to date. However, the total cost share payments over the last seven years have been over $102,000.

The program Budget and fee analysis, spreadsheet information was reviewed and discussed. The budget deficit issue was addressed with a fee increase proposal as outlined in the spreadsheets. Greg Ames explained how "lean" the Organics Program has operated. The program is currently in its eighth year and is the fastest growing program within the Montana Department of Agriculture; however the

deficit continues to grow. In the past, grants and federal funds covered budget short falls, as well as the Produce Program. The council discussed the proposed fee increases, questions arose as to the fees charged by QAI (Quality Assurance International) and if the department was proposing to charge higher fees than QAI who does not disclose their fee schedule. The council agreed that the proposed fee increases will need further review and discussion. The council would like to bring a formal recommendation to the November 11th meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm on October 8, 2009.

Next meeting scheduled for November 11, 2009 from 6-9 pm at the Wheat Building in Great Falls, MT.