

Montana Organic Commodity Advisory Council (MOCAC)
Montana Department of Agriculture
Conference Room #225
December 11, 2013

Council Members Present: Ty O'Connor, Producer Representative; Kiki Hubbard, Consumer Representative; Matt Johnson, Producer Representative; Greg Thayer, Handler Representative; Mark Smith, Producer Representative

Council Members on Phone: Lise Rousseau, Producer Representative

Council Members Not Present: Catherine Odden, At Large Representative

Staff Members: Ron de Yong, Director; Cort Jensen, Attorney, Greg Ames, ASD Administrator; Georgana Webster, Organic Program Manager; Bree Caldwell, Administrative Assistant

The meeting began at 8:15 AM. Introductions were made.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes from 11.27.2012 were reviewed. Kiki Hubbard moved for approval, Ty O'Connor seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Terms

Council member terms were discussed. The council member terms were adjusted to change the stagger of terms from two year terms to three year terms. Consequently Ty O'Connor and Catherine Odden are up for reappointment in 2014. Mark Smith, Kiki Hubbard's and Lise Rousseau's terms expire in 2015. Greg Thayer's and Matt Johnson's terms expire in 2016.

Program Update

Georgana Webster explained that all residue samples were negative. Concerns were raised about beef testing to detect dewormer and antibiotics. Beef testing is not available at this time.

Crop Rotation, MOCAC Internal Review, Unannounced Inspections, USDA Audit, Internal Audit, and Versa database were discussed.

Administrative Update and Website

Breanna Caldwell explained that the website had been updated. Matt Johnson asked about PDF certificates online. Breanna Caldwell explained that this wasn't available at this time.

Connecting organic buyers and producers was discussed. The Organic Program cannot house this type of program due to NOP Rules. The Marketing Department may be able to assist with something similar to the Hay Hotline. Ron de Yong said that they would check into options.

USDA NOP

Sound and sensible Organic Certification, aimed at streamlining the process, was discussed

Seed Guidance was discussed and the Organic Seed Finder was requested as a link on the Department website.

Cost Share was discussed and the Farm Bill for 2014 includes cost share funding.

The National Organic Standards Board was discussed.

Crop Insurance and Genetically Modified Organisms were discussed.

Organic Program Fiscal Analysis and Rule Change

The current Organic Program Fee Schedule was discussed. Cort reviewed rule changes and the process. Mark Smith moved to recommend the removal of the Producer Mixed Operation fee, Multiple Enterprise fee, Additional Certification fee, Miscellaneous fees, and add an incremental late fee which starts at \$200 and increases by \$100 for every month late. He also moved to eliminate the Handler Miscellaneous fees and additional certification fee while adding an incremental late fee starting at \$200 and increasing by \$100 every month. Matt Johnson seconded the motions. The motion passed unanimously.

Organic Program financials were discussed. Currently organic produce revenue is being used to fund a portion of the Organic Program. Legislative Audit services approved the use of the Produce fund for the program.

2014 Initiatives and Goals

Outreach through the NRCS offices, industry meetings, agricultural equipment shows, and 4-H were discussed. Ty O'Connor said he would like to see the Program fiscally sound in two years so that extra money could be used for projects, marketing, and advertisements.

Public Comments

No public comments.

MOCAC Committee Review

Ty O'Connor, Mark Smith, Matt Johnson, and Greg Thayer stayed to work on the MOCAC program review after the meeting adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 PM.