

# **ORGANIC ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

**January 22, 2024**

The Organic Advisory Council (OAC) met via zoom on January 22, 2024. The meeting was preceded by public notice as required by Wis. Stat. §19.84.

## **Call to Order**

OAC Chair Harriet Behar called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

## **Members present**

The following 8 OAC members were present: Harriet Behar, Wayne Wells, Mark Doudlah, Chris Delong, Emily Fowell, Kris Olson, Kristen Adams, Paul Maggio.

The following 4 OAC members were absent: Adam Warthesen, Mike Kelly, Kat Becker, Steve Pincus.

Interagency Partners present: Erin Silva, Julie Dawson,

Guests present: Val Dantoin, Jamaal Stricklin

## **Organic Advisory Council Admin**

### **Motion**

A motion was made by Kris Olson and seconded by Wayne Wells to approve the agenda & November 2023 OAC meeting minutes. Motion was approved unanimously.

State public records training on LearnCenter. OAC members are successfully getting logged on and completing the course.

Andrew reminded everyone about recruiting nominations for new OAC members.

Andrew provided an overview of the RFSI grant.

### **TOPP update**

Some outreach but most certifiers don't know about specifics well enough. Will postpone to the March meeting when we can get the WI TOPP person to give an overview.

### **SOE update**

In implementation NOW. We are supposed to be in full compliance on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

SOE will close loops, exemptions, exclusions, tightening up the chain. Adding definitions and clarity.

More facilities will need certification. Even a facility that just puts labels on cans for example. Now more oversight, Online stores... Vendors, distributors also need to be certified.... Everything in the chain needs to be certified.

Must know (record keeping) one step forward and backward (if applicable) about where it came from and where it goes.

Retail establishments are exempt – and can do internal prep/processing and selling product on site (not leaving and not selling for resale)

Fully Supply Chain audit – tracing back to farm. already do that with livestock. So this is the same for handler full supply chain audit. SOE is clarifying this process. – and now these supply chain audits must be documented.

Not about tracking but traceability.

Only about a third of the new rule is targeted toward producers and handlers. But big portion for ACAs – tightening up certification requirements. FSLA - This will also increase burden on certifiers – a fair labor law.

Will the SOE impact prices? – depends on how much fraud there is in the system... and how that will adjust the market.

### **NRCS Organic Transition Initiative**

NRCS could get up to \$2,500 per acre to transition to Organic (#823). Will have a presenter talk more about these programs in the March meeting.

### **Public engagement and outreach**

Bi-monthly GovDelivery email bulletin.

- Sign up here: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDATCP/subscriber/new>
- Could highlight and educate on issues such as:
  - Organic as Climate Smart
  - Farm Bill Update – info about marker bills
  - New rules (for ex. SOE)
  - Funding opportunities

### **Organic Training Course Development**

Val Dantoin, farm and at NWTC 15 years. And some students are interested in being inspectors.

Micro-credentials – WI State Tech College System. – OAC could create courses and content. OAC (etc.) would be content experts. With input from OAC, Val and NWTC would develop the course modules.

Some questions:

- NOP approved, qualified, accredited – how to get this?
- Location? In person or online
- Testing?
- Shadowing? Mentorship? Would this be possible through NWTC?
- The full certification or just a start? So that people could determine if this is of interest and then if they want to proceed further would go get the actual certification?

Cost would be significantly cheaper than IOIA or UW cost per credit hour. Tech College is \$175/credit vs UW about \$950/credit. And IOIA is about \$5,000 per scope.

Kris - What is the commitment for a micro course vs an associate's degree?

MOSA & UW met to discuss options for training inspectors. TOPP. And UW interested in supporting in the future if a good fit.

Also could hold an event to hear from inspectors. Invite people interested in being an inspector to attend to hear from inspectors.

#### **Future agenda items**

- Bradford Steine future guest speaker to talk about NASDA
- NRCS 823
- TOPP – Allison
- Update on inspector training
- Prime act – regulating meat processing...
- organic crop insurance

#### **Public Comments**

None

#### **Adjourn**

#### **Motion**

A motion to adjourn was made by Harriet Behar and seconded by Andrew Bernhardt. Motion approved unanimously. The Council adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

*All reports and any associated documents presented during this Council meeting can be obtained by contacting [andrew.bernhardt@wisconsin.gov](mailto:andrew.bernhardt@wisconsin.gov).*