

ORGANIC ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

May 20, 2024

Call meeting to order

OAC Chair Harriet called meeting to order at noon.

Organic Advisory Council Admin

Roll call

17 present:

OAC members: Harriet Behar, Steve Pincus, Mark Doudlah, Wayne Wells, Paul Maggio, Kris Olson, Adam Warthesen, Emily Fowell, Andrew Bernhardt,

Agency Partners: Allison Walent, Erin Silva, Ariana Abbrescia, Tom Manley

Guests: Val Dantoin, Lori Stern, Matt Woods, Krista Knigge, Randy Romanski

No public attended.

Absent: Chris Delong, Kristen Adams, Mike Kelly, Kat Becker

Motion: Harriet requested that a motion be made to approve the March 2024 minutes and the May 2024 agenda.

E-newsletter: future article ideas were discussed. The suggestion to have an article about DATCP Pesticide Drift Complaint team included in the June newsletter.

Steve Pincus gave an overview of the recommended nominees. Followed by vote to recommend these nominations to the Office of the Secretary.

OAC Meeting Agenda Items

TOPP update and its funding for mentoring inspectors. No funding for curriculum development. Discussion of how the OAC could support this or be involved.

USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant project presentations:

- Guest speaker Matt Woods from Delong Co, gave an overview presentation of their USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant project.
- OAC member Adam Warthesen gave an overview presentation of their USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant project.
- Lori Stern arrived late and gave her overview of their USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant project in the afternoon.

Secretary Romanski gave an update on relevant DATCP activities and listened to OAC members about pressing issues they are seeing/experiencing.

Council Member Discussion – Present OAC members provided updates on a variety of topics:

- SOE, seed testing, pesticides in school food, pesticide drift, new markets for seed/crops during transitional period, how solely focusing on carbon offsetting/sequestration is good might be a distraction. High tunnels and smaller farms, and shifting to wholesale away from CSA is becoming more common in organic ag. Using NRCS 823. Finding new markets for product, exploring international markets. Crisper, GMOs, European regulations. OTA growth report. Avian flu. Competing labels. Increasing organic farms. Connecting new farmers with retiring farmers. Farmland access.
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Interagency Partner updates: Erin, Ari, Tom and Krista

- Resources for farms in transition to organic
- TOPP is working on workforce development
- IRA has much more money for NRCS payments more than OTI.
- Trainings are getting organized for 823
- UW videos
- TOPP & OTI getting on the same page.

Lori Stern gave an update on the Marbleseed Climate Smart Commodities Grant and upcoming Marbleseed trainings/events.

Wrap up

Next meeting in July, date TBD. Will meet in-person 10-3 time frame.

Agenda item ideas:

- Losing organic land/farms.
- What stopping conv. Farmer from transitioning to organic. Barriers?
- Maybe brainstorm ideas – snippets.
- Paul M.: Competing labels. Common Ground movie – Paul spoke at a viewing. Is Organic getting diluted by other labels.

Public Comments

None

Adjourn

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.