

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP)
WISCONSIN PRODUCE SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL (PSAC) MEETING**

MINUTES

Date: October 16, 2024

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: Microsoft Teams

DATCP Division: Food and Recreational Safety

Welcome and Introductions

Call to order: At 9:34 Steve called the meeting to order.

Open meeting notice:

This meeting is a public meeting subject to public records requests and information was posted inviting public comments. No public comment was received.

Introduction of voting members

Present: Josh Rimmert, Alsum Produce; Lavern Zeiset, Zeiset Farm, Communities and Cultures Coordinator; Jenna LaChance, Organic Valley; Wayne Geist, Wisconsin Apple Growers Association and Bushel and a Peck Market; Steve Louis, Oakwood Fruit Farm; Jay Ellingson, Kwik Trip; Stephanie Teclaw, RPF. Sara Ecker, Ecker's Apples; Corey Miller, Organic Valley.

Not present: Venice Williams, Executive Director of Alices Gardens, Fondy Urban Farms and Food Center; Brandi Grayson, Supporting Healthy Black Agriculture/Urban Triage Inc; Daniel Cornelius, Intertribal Agricultural Council; Jeffrey Mears, Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council; Hsing-Yi Hsieh, Festival Foods; Susan Quam, Wisconsin Restaurant Association.

Ex-officio (non-voting) members

Present: Joanna Kahvedjian, DATCP; Troy Sprecker, DATCP; Jill Cholewa, DATCP; Adam Brock, DATCP; Jean Finger, DATCP

Not present: Keven Leroy, DATCP; Krystal Martin, DATCP

Introduction of Guests

Ryan Bennett, DATCP; Joe Ferguson, Ferguson's Orchards.

Quorum: Joanna verified that a majority of members are present to establish a quorum.

Approval of the agenda as presented: Steve called for a motion. Josh made a motion, and Jay seconded it. The motion carried.

Steve called for a motion to approve the minutes of August 21, 2024. Josh motioned and Stephanie seconded the motion. With none opposed, the motion carried.

Upon request, Joanna responded that she did not receive anything for public comment.

Membership Management

Term eligibility

Joanna explained the process of transitioning the council to an official advisory council and proposed to amend the bylaws from three to four terms to allow members continuity while a decision is being made so that they can be proposed to the secretary as prospective members without experiencing a gap in service. Joanna clarified that the terms are not stated in the council guidelines, but rather in member's welcome letters. Jay from Kwik Trip thinks adding an extra term is a great approach to getting the council officially recognized.

Discussion continued concerning applicable scenarios: if members do not want to extend their terms; the value of continuity of council membership; how the process of continuing, once the council is formalized, works (Lavern).

Adam will advocate the group that has already been meeting and working through this will be on it. If there is a desire, you would have to fill out a formal application. It is a more formal process, but someone having to vouch for you is not required. Jay agreed to get continuity, because they are all vested, moving to the council phase is the best way moving forward. Adam reiterated the value of the committees and councils, as how we get things done in the state. With Steve's agreement, Wayne motioned to extend member terms from three to four terms. Jay seconded the motion. Steve asked if there is any further discussion. With no one against, the motion carries. Steve also asked that members notify him if anyone does not wish their term to extend into a fourth term.

As part of the process for transitioning the committee to a statutory council, terms will be decided with the drafting of the Bylaws. Troy responded that up until we are transitioned to a new council, we continue to operate under the existing precedent.

Inactive member discontinuation consideration

Steve asked to get something formal added to our bylaws and guidelines to the effect that if you miss so many meetings without a replacement, you can be replaced. Lavern shared that inactive would mean low interest, not committed. Steve agrees that we want to keep our focus on what we are here and intended for, and we want to be sure that all voices are heard. Jay added that attendance is necessary for quorum, and without quorums, you cannot get business conducted. People who are unable to be on the council should have people attend in their place and come up with a proposal for a member of their organization to represent on their behalf.

Joanna read from the RFSAC Bylaws as possible proposed language for attendance: "If an RFSAC member is absent from more than half of the regular meetings during the past 12-month period, the Chairperson shall notify the DATCP Secretary regarding the member's attendance in writing and petition for a replacement appointment." Jenna shared from her experience managing the Organic Valley produce executive committee, that attendance is in the guidelines and thinks it is very reasonable to have some kind of written stipulation as to how many meetings you should attend. Wayne wanted to make sure that we have language about delegates and how frequently they should be allowed to replace the member before becoming the member. Steve will have a proposal in the bylaws. If anyone has any concerns let Joanna or Steve know.

Steve discussed convening a work group to draft the Bylaws and other general needs to transition to an official council. He proposed in the next couple of months, getting together a group including council officers and at least three more people. The work group would take some time to review to streamline the process before sharing their findings and recommendations with the wider council.

Nominations

Steve introduced Joe Ferguson, as having been on apple growers board, has a lot of knowledge and encouraged Joe to run for this position. Joe appreciates the opportunity to speak and get some background. He is an apple grower, with multiple commercial sites in WI and MN, with 400,000 apple trees and four different retail agri-entertainment locations serving 4,000 guests and run by 500 employees. Ferguson's has been inspected pretty heavily the past decade and put a heavy focus on food safety. Part of that is the reason he would like to join the

committee/council as it grows as an organization, to have input on rules and have an avenue to teach and inform other growers to help adopt the practices. Steve asked if anyone has any questions for Joe. Lavern asked the name of the orchards and if he has produce apart from apples. Joe shared Ferguson Heights of Lake City MN, Eau Clair, Chippewa Falls and Gill WI. Ferguson's does have fresh market to retail stores and used to own a pack house for fresh produce in Lake City and a cider operation in MN. Steve asked for a motion to accept Joe as a new member. Jay motioned to accept Joe, and Steph seconded the motion. With none opposed, the council welcomed Joe.

Joanna introduced Mike Klemp-North as Ginseng Board of Wisconsin nominee representing the ginseng industry of approximately 100 active growers and 31 million in revenue with Wisconsin as the number one producer of cultivated ginseng in the United States accounting for about 98 percent of all cultivated ginseng produced in the United States. Mike has been working in ginseng for seven years overseeing regulatory compliance obligations for Hsu Ginseng Farms in Wausau and Hsu Ginseng Enterprises production facility. Wayne motioned to accept Mike Klemp-North and Stephanie seconded the motion to accept him to the council. With none opposed, the council welcomed Mike.

Member Updates and Issues/Further Discussion

Steve reiterated the immediate action item of pulling together the workgroup, and further called on the group to provide representation for their constituents to the council. Members can do this by sharing agenda items to discuss at the November meeting. Please get them to leadership in a timely manner so that they can be added. Going forward, the council will have to source more business content directly from membership, including generating action items, and rely less on DATCP to initiate the agenda content. We are looking for input with any issues you have. Wayne shared that the food safety director of Silver Springs is interested in joining our group. Lavern raised a concern that too few members grow a wide range of produce other than apples and wants to know, if an issue would come up (for example a disease outbreak in melons, peppers or tomatoes), would there be representation. Steve shared that beyond Lavern and Josh, Corey and Jenna with Organic Valley can represent a range of 15 different vegetable types. Josh agrees, but also thinks at the end of the day "food safety is food safety" and, though it will change somewhat with each commodity, E coli, Listeria, etc. could happen in any part of the industry. Lavern emphasized his level of comfort with the group and Jay agreed "we are one big family now." Steve reminded everyone that we learn more when anyone voices opinions and discussions with different backgrounds and that the council has better insights when all members attend because more members share what they know. Lavern shared this pulls us tighter as a unified support group. Adam added that one of his joys of coming to the regulatory side is the forum aspect where everyone brings a part of the picture.

Steve reiterated that if there were any other concerns and if you have topics you want included on the agendas going forward, that is what we are looking for. Please bring them to Steve or Joanna's attention to get added to the agenda.

Summary of Action Items, Person/s Responsible

The next full meeting is virtual on November 20th.

Let Steve or Joanna know if you:

- a. are interested in participating on the work group
- b. wish not to continue to a fourth term, or
- c. have an agenda item to add for a future meeting.

Joanna will share the transition plan and proposed updates to the Guidelines with all and send everyone an updated welcome letter to include the added term.

Approved November 20, 2024

Adjourn

At 10:50 Wayne motioned to adjourn, Stephanie seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.