

**County of San Luis Obispo  
HEALTH COMMISSION**

Minutes of Meeting

Monday, August 13, 2007 (Board of Supervisors Chambers)

Members Present: Lynn Enns (Chair), Penny Chamousis, Ed Guereña, Pam Heatherington, Sara Horne, James Mase, MD, Susan Warren  
 Members Absent: Deborah Donnelly (excused), Jan Hicks (excused), David Odell (excused), Robert Thielscher (excused)  
 Staff Present: Greg Thomas, M.D., Health Officer/Public Health Administrator; Jean White (recorder)  
 Speakers: Jesse Arnold (Cambria Resident); Robert Lilley (Director, SLO County Ag), Mary Bianchi (Director, SLO County Coop Ext/Farm Advisor), Dana Merrill (Owner, Pomar Junction Vineyard), Jeffrey Wong, Ph.D. (Cal Poly Horticulture & Crop Science Dept.)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action	Who/When
<b>1. CALL TO ORDER</b>	Meeting called to order by Chair Enns at 6:02 p.m.		
<b>2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b>	<p><b>Minutes of June 11, 2007</b> were approved with corrections made to the spelling of Jennifer Jozwiak, Jeff Pienack, and Grace MacIntosh’s names. The acronym for Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) was corrected.</p> <p><b>Minutes of July 9, 2007</b> were approved with a correction to Mr. Arnold’s public comment – “adjunction” should read “injunction.”</p>	<i>June and July minutes approved with corrections.</i>	Approved -all
<b>3. PUBLIC COMMENT</b>	<p><b>Eric Greening</b> states that Planning Commission held its first hearing of a series to implement Smart Growth Principles into the framework for planning and land use general plan policies. The Planning Commission will hold another hearing on August 30<sup>th</sup>. Hearings will probably continue through the fall, with a two-month gap before the Planning Commission brings their recommendations forward to the BOS. He suggests the commission contact James Lopes in the Planning Department to provide an update to the commission. Mr. Greening adds that the Council of Governments Board (consisting of the 5 supervisors plus a rep from each incorporated city) officially authorized the preparation of an update to the Regional Transportation Plan earlier this month. He believes this Plan should be updated in conjunction with the implementation of the Smart Growth strategies. Mr. Greening suggests the commission invite someone from the Council of Governments to provide an update.</p>		
<b>4. REPORT ON CURRENT STATUS OF GE CROPS IN SLO COUNTY</b>	<p><b>Jesse Arnold, Cambria resident</b>, notes that he has a degree in ornamental horticulture and grows organically grown vegetables as a hobby. He provides an overview of SLO GE Free’s Corn Survey that was done this year. Mr. Arnold mailed out the surveys and followed up with telephone calls. There were 11 responses, two of which came in after the report was printed. There were 3 growers that did not return the survey. None of the growers that responded to the survey were growing GE corn. Six of the respondents were certified organic growers, the other five were conventional growers. Four of the certified growers and two of the conventional growers stated they were aware that GE corn was being grown in two locations in the County; the others were not. Certified growers were more concerned than conventional growers that GE corn was being grown in the County. Mr. Arnold advised people to ask what type of corn they are buying</p>	Handout: <i>SLO GE Free 2007 Corn Survey Results</i>	

when they buy at Farmer's Market. He thanked the growers, the Ag Department, and others who helped make the survey possible. *(A copy of the survey results is filed with the official record of this meeting.)*

**Commissioner Questions/Comments:**

**Commissioner Heatherington and Commissioner Chamousis** asked if there were discussions with growers about cross pollination. *(There were no discussions about cross pollination, but Mr. Arnold believes there should be a notification process, particularly for test plots.)*

**Commissioner Guerena** asks if the survey information is available on the SLO GE Free Website and if there is a map showing the location of the growers. *(The survey info is not posted yet, but will be. Mr. Arnold does not have a map, but will forward addresses to Commissioner Guerena.)*

**Robert Lilley, Director, SLO County Agriculture Department,** provides an update on what's happened since the BOS addressed GE crops in August 2006. The action of the Board was to accept the report of the GE Crop committee and their table of co-existence guidelines. The Board also asked that the Ag industry further address how to implement the co-existence guidelines and also address the issue of notification. Ag representatives looked at other programs throughout the state and examples of notification processes that are currently used in the Ag Department and came up with a program that is part of the California Crop Improvement Association, called Pin Map *(Mary Bianchi explains more later)*. Mr. Lilley adds that they continue to question the USDA (regulatory agency for GE crops) on the issue of notification. The USDA regulates crops under an "experimental use permit" and a process called "permitted and released," where crops are permitted to be sold in the marketplace and released from the regulatory program. Mr. Lilley has been told by USDA that the sites for experimental crops are confidential. He has sent a formal request to the USDA under the Freedom of Information Act, requesting that the USDA notify them of any GE crops grown in the County, specifically related to test plots, but has not yet received a response from that request.

**Mr. Lilley** also notes two key lawsuits in February 2007, where the court ruled on issues related to GE crops. The first related to Roundup Ready alfalfa (a crop that was permitted and released). The court found that the USDA did an unsatisfactory job dealing with potential contamination issues and ordered the USDA to do an Environmental Impact Statement, and adjust the regulatory approach. The second court hearing related to Roundup Ready Bent grass (ornamental grass used in turf for golf courses), where the USDA permitted an experimental test plot, and the Court found that they did not do an adequate job dealing with potential contamination issues and ordered an Environmental Impact Statement, and adjust the regulatory approach. On August 16<sup>th</sup>, the USDA will formally "roll out" the Environmental Impact Statement on those two court orders. Mr. Lilley has invited USDA regulatory officials from Washington DC to come to Sacramento in December to explain to Ag Commissioners how the new regulatory approach might look and how they can be involved.

**Commissioner Questions/Comments:**

**Commissioner Heatherington** asks about next steps after the USDA report comes out. *(The committee will work cooperatively with the CDFA and will vote and provide comments on the USDA proposed regulations and address how they may affect them.)*

**Commissioner Heatherington** asks about the possibility of a map of where corn is being grown in the County, especially if the new ruling says you have to test for cross-pollination. *(Mr. Lilley answers that once per year growers come in to get their annual pesticide permit, with a list of crops they plan on growing, but it is very difficult on a rotational crop to know what is in the ground at any one point in time. They have a general idea who anticipates growing corn, but not information on whether the corn is in the ground or not.)*

**Commissioner Chamousis** asks about contaminants left in the soil after GE crops have been planted. *(Most of the issues are related to open pollinated crops, such as corn. It is not so much a residual left in the soil, but pollen drifting onto other corn.)*

**Public Comment:**

**Jesse Arnold** clarified that as of March 2007, Roundup Ready alfalfa seed cannot be sold. Crops that were already planted can be sold.

**Eric Greening** asked if the County's response to the draft EIR would go before the Board of Supervisors and also about the database used for surveying organic growers. *(Mr. Lilley answered that there is no date scheduled to update the Board, but he would be happy to do that at any time. They have a database for organic growers, as well as the database for growers requiring pesticide permits.)*

**Mary Bianchi, Horticulture Farm Advisor with UC Cooperative Extension, and Acting Director for SLO County Cooperative Extension,** spoke more about the Pin Map system available through The California Crop Improvement Association (CCIA). CCIA is a non-profit corporation, officially recognized as the seed certifying agency under the California Seed Law. CCIA put together an interactive Pin Map system, which is online and maintained on their website. The internet pin map is provided as a tool to growers to help maintain field isolation of seed crops. This map does not enforce field separation. It is the user's responsibility to assure isolation requirements are maintained. It would cost approx. \$2,000 to develop a page on the website to be used by SLO County growers and it would be the responsibility of the users to maintain the site. The system uses Google maps for identification of locations and is password protected. The question remains which growers (organic, GE, conventional) would pin their locations using this system.

**Commissioner Questions/Comments:**

**Commissioners Enns, Heatherington and Warren** asked for more information on costs and development of the Pin Map tool. *(This is a system used only by growers at this point. After the initial development, maintenance of the website would be by the growers who are participating. There was also a page developed for alfalfa seed producers that was used collaboratively by GE alfalfa growers and other growers concerned about contamination. This map is a mechanism for organic and conventional growers to help them to be successful in achieving their goals.)*

	<p><b>Dana Merrill, Owner, Pomar Junction Vineyard</b>, provided a Power Point overview from a “non-technical” perspective. The presentation focused on the grape industry and what they have done to come up for a cure for Pierce’s Disease (PD), a bacteria spread by the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS), which is a fatal disease of grape vines. The Ag Department has done a great job in helping to keep SLO County Sharpshooter free. Approx. 23 million dollars per year (1/4 from the industry, matched with state and federal funds) are being invested in research dollars to find a cure. There are some efforts going on at UC-Davis to develop PD resistant vines. Dr. Andy Walker talks about his ongoing research in the Spring 2007 PD Board bulletin (available on the PD Board website). GE research projects identified that PD resistance is controlled by a single dominant gene. Mr. Merrill stated that locally, no GE vines are on the horizon, and no GE yeast is being used. Genomic research has produced benefits to conventional breeding programs.</p> <p><b><u>Commissioner Questions/Comments:</u></b>  <b>Chair Enns</b> asked about separation/co-existence issue for grapes. <i>(Mr. Lilley answers that the risk level is higher for corn. The committee did extensive research on coexistence practices and launched a table of co-existence that was applied statewide as an effective means for farmers to use to provide co-existence, such as buffers. To their knowledge, there are very few GE crops grown in SLO County.)</i></p> <p><b>Jeffrey Wong, PhD, Cal Poly Horticulture &amp; Crop Science Department</b>, talked about the crops that are being grown at Cal Poly. Dr. Wong oversees all the GE crops that are grown on the campus. Currently Cal Poly has 20 acres of Roundup Ready silage corn for sale directly to the Cal Poly Dairy, 8 acres of Roundup Reach alfalfa (planted prior to the no-plant date) currently being managed by the Farm Operations Group, that will go mainly to Cal Poly Dairy, with some to the Animal Sciences Department. Cal Poly has discontinued growing of BT sweet corn and has entered into an agreement with the Cal Poly Organic Farm to grow sweet corn with them. Dr. Wong stated that since there are not a lot of GE crop growers in SLO County, that he is not certain the Pin Map system is the right system for this County.</p> <p><b><u>Commissioner Questions/Comments:</u></b>  <b>Commissioner Heatherington</b> asks about testing of corn for cross-pollination. <i>(Dr. Wong notes that there was a senior project that looked at cross-pollination, with inconclusive results. They go off of reports about distances and maintain those distances to make sure they do not get cross-contamination. Dr. Wong works with the organic farm and farm manager to make sure they do not have any kind of cross contamination with any GE crops).</i>  <b>Commissioner Guerena</b> asked about the possibility of a map showing where GE crops are being grown. <i>(Dr. Wong answers that it is probably possible, but sometimes decisions are made very late in the growing season.)</i>  <b>Dr. Thomas</b> asks for more information about the costs of the Pin Map system. <i>(\$2,000 to set up and approximately \$10.00 cost for pinning once the page is established. The question really comes down to who puts their location on the map. There are more organic producers than</i></p>	<p>Handout:  <i>Copy of Power Point Presentation</i></p>	
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	<p><i>there are GE producers or conventional producers that have gene concerns.)</i>  <b>Commissioner Heatherington</b> suggests that the GE producers should be responsible for pinning, because they can contaminate the organic growers.)</p>		
<p><b>5. PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORT</b></p>	<p><b>Greg Thomas, M.D., Public Health</b>, referred to his written report, providing an update on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fees for 2008/09 are due to the Auditor on August 17<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Performance measurement results for 2006/07 are due to CAO on August 17<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>▪ PH Lab has received full certification from CDC as a Select Agent Laboratory. Plans continue for the remodel of the PH lab and Level B lab certification.</li> <li>▪ County Personnel has made some changes to help expedite recruitments.</li> <li>▪ The second recruitment for a PH Lab Director closes on 8/17/07.</li> <li>▪ Jail is still recruiting for a part-time physician for Saturday sick call clinic.</li> <li>▪ Staff is continuing to move into the “Health Campus.”</li> <li>▪ Medical Marijuana ID Card Program is issuing 5-6 cards per month.</li> <li>▪ Dr. Thomas spoke at Planning Commission on the health and obesity prevention aspects of community design.</li> <li>▪ PH Department Performance Profiles will be presented to BOS on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Analysis and alternatives to reduce the General Fund contribution will be presented to the BOS on November 6<sup>th</sup>. The list of proposed service level reductions for the Health Agency that was included with the budget was emailed to commissioners.</li> <li>▪ Kern County has been epicenter for WNV this year, with 48 humans cases.</li> <li>▪ Public Health has a new BT Prevention Program Manager – Michelle Shoresman.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Commissioner Heatherington referred to the list of proposed service level reductions and suggested PH explore partnerships with the coastal communities and Surfrider Assoc. to do ocean water monitoring &amp; testing. Chair Enns asked about lab capability to perform new TB blood test – Quantiferon. PH Lab is in process of hiring a microbiologist to set up the testing/methodology to perform that test. Commissioner Mase asked about sensitivity of the test. It is much higher than a PPD (skin test)).</i></p>	<p>Handout:  <i>Copy of written report.</i></p>	
<p><b>6. EOC HEALTH CARE ACCESS OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM</b></p>	<p><b>Mary Miller, EOC Health Care Patient Advocate/Ombudsman</b>, was present at tonight’s meeting and gave a brief update to the commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ She announced that her new last name will be “Cota.”</li> <li>▪ She noted that she has been unable to secure an orthopedic surgeon to do “pro bono” work, but still working on it.</li> <li>▪ Also, noted that the vision care center she has been using in Goleta no longer has funding available.</li> <li>▪ She attended “California Speaks” on August 11<sup>th</sup> and will deliver a packet to Public Health Department tomorrow morning.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Commissioner Warren commented on the high number of clients listed in the report that needed mental health and drug &amp; alcohol assistance and asked if most of these services were being provided through CHC. CHC has really “stepped up to the plate,” providing a high level of service at the 13<sup>th</sup> Street homeless project in Grover Beach, and by bringing Dr. Tecata, Psychiatrist, on board, who is located in the Health Campus Annex in SLO. MH and Drug &amp; Alcohol also provide services. Still looking at ways to collaborate to come up with a more integrated long-term case management program.)</i></p>	<p>Handout:  <i>Copy of EOC Health Care Access Ombudsman Report</i></p>	

<b>7. HEALTH COMMISSIONER UPDATES</b>	<p><b>Chair Enns:</b> No report.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Horne:</b> No report.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Warren:</b> Attended the Drug &amp; Alcohol Advisory Board -- Drug &amp; Alcohol staff will be moving to the Health Campus at the end of September. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, there will be a training for Behavioral Health staff (as well as other providers) on co-occurring disorders. Commissioners are encouraged to attend. Commissioner Warren will forward the flyer to those interested.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Chamousis:</b> Did not attend ASPC this month, will present on the meeting minutes as well as the September meeting next month.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Heatherington:</b> Attended Domestic Violence Task Force meeting. Representatives from the task force will be speaking at the November Health Commission meeting.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Guerena:</b> Attended the California State Conference “<i>California Speaks</i>” on August 11<sup>th</sup> at the Madonna Expo, where 3500 Californians got together at 8 different sites (that were linked by satellite) to discuss health care. Touch pads were used to answer questions and responses were gathered quickly and sent back. This was designed to be California’s chance to talk, for individuals to give their views to the State Governor and State legislature on what they want for healthcare reform. Commissioner Guerena handed out a packet from the meeting including 1) Preliminary Report; 2) comparison of California Health Coverage Expansion Programs; 3) The California Speaks Participant Guide, and 4) Myths and Facts regarding undocumented residents and health care resources. Commissioner Guerena noted that the Participant Guide only addressed the Governor’s plan and the Nunez plan and not single payer. Over 50% of the participants wanted single payer plan to be part of the discussion, which led to more discussion at the end about single payer. For more info: <a href="http://www.californiaspeaks.org">www.californiaspeaks.org</a>.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Mase:</b> No report.</p>	<p>Handout: Packet from “<i>California Speaks</i>”</p>	
<b>8. COMMITTEE REPORTS</b>	<p>No committee updates.</p>		
<b>9. PROSPECTIVE FUTURE ITEMS</b>	<p><u>September 10, 2007</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children’s Assessment Center</li> <li>▪ Beginnings</li> <li>▪ Autism</li> <li>▪ Medically Fragile Update</li> </ul> <p><b>Commissioner Heatherington</b> referred to a telephone call she received from a person in South County (living by the strawberry fields) that experienced a pesticide exposure. She asked when the Pesticide Task Force last met, noting that the Grand Jury asked that the task force reconvene every three years. Jean White will check on the date.</p>		
<b>10. ADJOURNMENT</b>	<p>Motion to adjourn at 7:45 pm</p>		<p>Approved - all</p>