

## ALAB MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 5, 2020

### ***MEETING HELD REMOTELY DUE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS – ALL ATTENDED EITHER BY WEBINAR OR CONFERENCE CALL***

**Members and Alternates Attending:** Dan Rodrigues, Lisen Bonnier, Mark Pearce, Sarah Kramer, Kaylee Ellis, Tom Ikeda, George Kendall, and Jean-Pierre Wolff

**Staff Attending:** Marc Lea and Lynda Auchinachie – San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture; Mladen Bandov, Angela Ford, and Dick Tzou – San Luis Obispo County Department of Public Works

**Absent Members:** Craig Pritchard, Daniel Chavez, Krista Burke, Jerry Diefenderfer, Dick Nock, Don Warden, Butch Yamashita, Claire Wineman, and Mark Battany

**Guests Attending:** Brent Burchett – San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, Joel Peterson and Patricia Wilmore – Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance

1. **Call to order, introductions, quorum determination:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Rodrigues at 5:05
2. **Open comment: (for items not on the agenda):** None.
3. **Review/approval of May and August 2020 meeting minutes:** Delayed until next meeting due to the lack of a quorum.
4. **ALAB Membership Updates – Marc Lea**
  - ALAB members agreed to continue holding meetings remotely and will be reaching out to nonparticipating members to encourage participation. Marc Lea is working with CCOF and farmers market representatives to fill the vacant direct marketing/organic representative position. The strawberry position has yet to be filled.

#### **5. Presentation/Discussion: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)**

Mladen Bandov, Angela Ford, and Dick Tzou, San Luis Obispo County Public Works Department

- Mladen Bandov, Angela Ford, and Dick Tzou provided an overview of current SGMA timelines and efforts. The Paso Robles and Cuyama groundwater sustainable agencies (GSAs) met the January 2020 deadline for submitting their groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs). The State has until January 2022 to provide feedback. The San Luis Obispo, Arroyo Grande, and Atascadero GSAs are all working towards submitting a GSP by January 2022. All GSAs are currently holding quarterly meetings that the public can attend remotely. Meeting information is available on the GSA websites.
- Los Osos continues to implement their stipulated basin plan and meet SGMA reporting requirements.
- The USGS is conducting a study of the Adelaida area. Stakeholders have participated during the initial phase of data collection.

- There will be stakeholders' outreach in January regarding stormwater capture on agricultural land. The goal is to educate the agricultural community on how they can help.

## **6. Presentation/Discussion: Impacts of recent wildfires on the 2020 wine grape harvest**

Joel Peterson, Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance

- Joel Peterson indicated harvest 2020 has been like no other with heat events, the pandemic, shortage of PPE, and wildfire smoke. The smoke has been a concern for wine grape growers because of smoke taint and both growers and buyers are testing local grapes for smoke levels. Testing is typically quick and easy; however, the high demand has delayed some results up to 7 weeks. Two local labs have pivoted to help test wine grapes and Joel can provide contact information for those local labs. An alternative option to lab testing is micro fermenting. Large wineries will have the opportunity to blend, while the smaller wineries may be more impacted by smoke taint. Monterey, Napa, and Sonoma counties have had more problems than San Luis Obispo County based vineyards due to the proximity of the wildfires. The loss of grapes in other counties has resulted in prices going up due to the need for bulk juice.
- Dan Rodrigues shared that 200-400 acres of Pinot Noir were a total loss in Monterey County.
- Tom Ikeda indicated the recent smoke had not greatly impacted leafy vegetable crops.

## **7. Updates from Ag Department staff**

Marc Lea, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture

- 2019 crop report statistics were presented to the Board of Supervisors on Sept 22, 2020. Total value went down by 5.5 percent compared to the record breaking 2018 value. Strawberries were the highest grossing crop followed by wine grapes.
- The Agriculture Department completed 2020 trapping for the European Grapevine Moth (EGVM). No EGVM were detected. An infestation of EGVM in northern California was successfully eradicated in 2014, and the state was declared free from EGVM in 2016. Detection trapping continues on annual basis to ensure any additional outbreaks are detected at the lowest levels possible.
- The County of San Luis Obispo's industrial hemp permanent ordinance remains in effect despite a recent legal challenge. A lawsuit has been filed but a temporary injunction has not been put into effect and is not expected at this time. A final ruling on the lawsuit is expected during the spring or summer 2021.
- The August cannabis hearing before the Board of Supervisors did not result in any changes to the cannabis ordinance. A hearing scheduled for October 6, 2020 will address minor "clean-up" changes, primarily related to the items that must be included as part of the cannabis permitting application that is required to be submitted to County Planning.

## **8. Presentation/Discussion: COVID-19 related updates for local agricultural businesses**

Marc Lea, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture

- Marc Lea summarized four issues discussed at a recent COVID-19 Virtual Townhall hosted by the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau:

1) County Outreach Efforts to Local Agricultural Workers: Representatives from the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department are working with the agriculture industry to provide multi-language COVID-19 related outreach, education, and prevention kits directly to agricultural workers. Public Health is willing to distribute those prevention kits and provide outreach question and answer sessions to local businesses and their employees. You can contact Public Health directly or you can contact Marc Lea at the Ag Department who can help facilitate one of these outreach events.

2) Testing: SLO County Public Health is still interested in establishing temporary, pop-up testing sites at local agricultural businesses; if there are any local ag businesses with a substantial number of employees that may be interested you can contact Marc Lea at the Ag Department and he can help facilitate a potential pop-up testing site with Public Health. Other testing location options are identified on the County's website, which is updated regularly: <https://www.emergencyslo.org/en/testing-locations.aspx>

It's important to note that not all of the testing sites have the same requirements. Most do require pre-arranged appointments, but there are some that allow drop-in testing with minimal personal information requirements and no health insurance requirements. Check the testing website regularly as new sites are added frequently.

3) Mask Distribution: The Ag Department has distributed over 200,000 surgical masks for COVID-19 protection, and nearly 10,000 N95 masks for both smoke protection and for use as legally required PPE. N95 masks are in short supply but there are still some available for local distribution. The surgical type masks also remain available. Contact the Ag Department for further information.

4) *Housing for the Harvest* Program: San Luis Obispo County is now participating in the *Housing for the Harvest* program. *Housing for the Harvest* is a joint program funded by state and local agencies that provides temporary housing – typically a local hotel room - to a fieldworker or other ag worker or ag processing worker – who has either tested positive for COVID-19 or was definitely exposed to COVID-19, and would have a hard time self-isolating at home. The program not only provides for temporary housing but also arranges for food delivery, wellness checks, and other essentials so that the person can safely isolate for approximately two weeks.

Contact Public Health for additional information regarding housing for agricultural workers isolating due to COVID-19 contraction or exposure: <https://www.emergencyslo.org/en/housing-for-the-harvest.aspx>

**9. Future agenda items:** none identified

**Next meeting – November 2, 2020**

Meeting Adjourned 6:15 pm

Respectfully submitted by Lynda Auchinachie, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture