

DRAFT ALAB MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 7, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, 4875 Morabito Place, San Luis Obispo

Members and Alternates Attending: Lisen Bonnier, Tom Ikeda, Jerry Diefenderfer, Mark Pearce, Sarah Kramer, Jean-Pierre Wolff, Brent Burchett, Kaylee Ellis

Staff Attending: Marc Lea – San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture

Absent Member: Craig Pritchard, Daniel Chavez, Seth Scribner, Camilla Posson, Randy Diffenbaugh, Butch Yamashita, Mary Bianchi, Claire Wineman, Dan Rodrigues

Guests Attending: Patricia Wilmore – Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance

1. Call to order, introductions, quorum determination: The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Bonnier at 5:04 pm. Only 7 ALAB member organizations were represented. 8 is needed for a quorum so no quorum was established.

2. Open comment (for items not on the agenda):

- Jerry Diefenderfer asked about the status of the County's Drought Task Force. Jerry is concerned about the possibility of wells going dry and potential ag/urban conflicts brought on by a lack of groundwater.
- Marc Lea reminded members that ALAB provided a letter to County Planning and the Board of Supervisors regarding concerns about the potential Paso Basin Planting Ordinance. ALAB did not receive any response to that letter and the current status of the Planting Ordinance's development is unknown.

3. Review/approval of November 1, 2021 (regular meeting) and November 15, 2021 (special meeting) minutes: The November 1 and 15, 2021 meeting minutes could not be approved due to the lack of a quorum.

4. ALAB Members – Organizational updates

- Marc Lea mentioned that Lynda Auchinachie retired from the Department of Agriculture at the end of 2021. There is currently a recruitment underway to find someone to fill Lynda's Agricultural Resource Specialist position.
- Jean-Pierre provided updates on the implementation of Ag Order 4.0. Jean-Pierre also mentioned that the Water Board would be conducting upcoming surveys in our area to try and determine if there were any areas with unsafe levels of TCP (1,2,3 trichloropropane).
- Brent Burchett mentioned that the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau would be holding its 100th Anniversary Celebration on September 10, 2022. Brent also reminded people that the Farm Bureau is currently seeking a Deputy Executive Director.
- Kaylee Ellis informed everyone that the Grower-Shippers Association has been involved in recent efforts to distribute at-home COVID tests, masks, and hand sanitizers to local fieldworkers.
- Lisen Bonnier discussed the recent activities in the Chorro Valley involving exploratory wells being drilled for a potential battery storage facility (Hydrostor project).

5. ALAB Governance and membership updates

- Election of Chair and Vice-Chair position: Marc explained that both Dan and Lisen were voted into their current positions in March 2020, at the first meeting of 2020. They just finished their first terms as Chair and Vice-Chair. There is no limit to the number of terms that the Chair and Vice-Chair may serve, and both have agreed to serve another term.
A vote for Chair and Vice-Chair was not held due to the lack of quorum. The vote will be held at the next meeting.
- Update on effects of redistricting on ALAB Supervisor Appointees: Redistricting will affect our ALAB members since it effects the Supervisor district boundaries themselves. Marc explained that ALAB representatives must live in or be based in the district that they serve, and that according to County Counsel the boundaries of District 2 and District 4 will officially change as of 1/1/23. The boundaries of Districts 1, 3, and 5 will officially change as of 1/1/25.
- Update on member terms expiring in 2022: the Ag Finance and the Coastal San Luis RCD Representatives' terms will expire in August. Jean-Pierre Wolff expressed an interest in remaining as the CSLRCD representative. Mark Pearce explained that he will likely shift to the alternate position with Sarah Kramer moving from the alternate to the primary representative.

6. Updates from Ag Department Staff

- California Department of Pesticide Regulation – Development of a Statewide Pesticide Application Notification Program: there are several pilot programs currently underway in Santa Cruz, Ventura, Riverside, and Stanislaus counties. There are various notification methods being tried, including texts, email, and website postings. The pilot programs are mostly focused upon the application of fumigants, which are restricted materials with heavily regulated use. Currently, under state law and regulation, only restricted materials require prior notification to the Ag Department. Non-restricted materials do not have any requirements for notification and have not been a main component in any of the current pilot programs.
- 2022 Workshops – Continuing Education Hours: The San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture and the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau will be teaming up to provide some continuing education workshops in 2022. Let Marc or Brent know if you have any ideas on the types of topics that should be covered that would be relevant to local growers.
- Board of Supervisor direction on a potential countywide camping ordinance: at the January 25, 2022, Board of Supervisors Meeting, the supervisors identified their priorities for the Planning Department. The supervisors identified the following three items, all of which are directly tied to local agriculture:
 1. Urban small wineries
 2. Craft distilleries
 3. Revised camping ordinance on ag and rural lands.

The Planning Department will now prepare a Budget Augmentation Request to add approximately 2 staff members to help implement those priorities. It's not expected that there will be any movement on these changes until at least the summer of 2022. Current Planning staff anticipates that they will be reaching out to ALAB in the fall of 2022 to get their feedback on these items, especially the camping ordinance.

7. Presentation/Discussion: Development of an Ag Pass Program in San Luis Obispo County to improve wildfire preparedness

Brent Burchett, San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau

- Brent provided an overview of the Ag Pass Program, which is a mechanism that has been used in other counties to allow agriculturalists, especially cattle ranchers, to reach their livestock despite an emergency or disaster declaration being in place.
- Participants must undergo a training course in order to obtain the certification and ID badge required to enter certain areas.
- There is currently the framework of a program in place in San Luis Obispo County that was pulled from the plan established for Santa Barbara County. Santa Barbara's plan included both ranchers and growers and had a minimum acreage size to ensure that only genuine or commercial agriculturalists were involved not small hobby farmers and others.
- AB1103 only covers those who need access to their livestock, but other programs have involved other members of the agricultural industry who are cultivating annual or perennial crops.
- The San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau will be working with Cal Fire, the Sheriff's Department, and the Ag Department and hope to have a plan in place by this June.
- Several members agreed with the need to establish an Ag Pass program for San Luis Obispo County, and other members relayed information regarding the problems and concerns with recently being dropped by insurance companies due to potential wildfires regardless of how much preventative work had been conducted.

8. Future agenda items

- Ag Pass program
- Paso Basin Planting Ordinance
- Camping ordinance; craft distilleries; urban small wineries – Board of Supervisors priorities for the Planning Department
- Groundwater SGMA Update

Next meeting – April 4, 2022

Meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marc Lea, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture