

ALAB MEETING MINUTES

Monday –July 1, 2024

SLO County Farm Bureau, 4875 Morabito Place, San Luis Obispo 93401

Members and Alternates Present: Tom Ikeda, Sarah Kramer, Jerry Diefenderfer, Dan Rodrigues, Claire Wineman (via Zoom), Paul Clark, Jean-Pierre Wolff, Lisen Bonnier, Dylan Theobald, Jeff McKee

Staff Present: Marc Lea and Ian Landreth – San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture

Absent Members: Craig Pritchard, Ron Harben, Daniel Jones

Guests Present: Patricia Wilmore (via Zoom), Russell Todd – USDA FSA County Executive Director, Gloria Valdez – USDA FSA Training County Executive Director, Mary Hamilton – Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

I. Call to Order, introductions, quorum determination.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rodrigues at 5:01 p.m. There were enough members present to have a quorum.

II. Open Comment

Members wishing to address the ALAB on matters other than the scheduled items may do so at this time, when recognized by the Chairman.

Dan Rodrigues opened public comment.

Dan Rodrigues closed public comment.

III. Previous Minutes – May 2024

Thereafter on **Motion by:** Sarah Kramer, **Second by:** Jean-Pierre Wolff, and on the following vote:

REPRESENTATIVE:	AYES:	NOES:	ABSTAIN:	RECUSE:
Tom Ikeda	X			
Lisen Bonnier	X			
Jerry Diefenderfer	X			
Sarah Kramer	X			
Dan Rodrigues	X			
Paul Clark	X			
Jean-Pierre Wolff	X			
Jeff McKee	X			

The ALAB approved the May 2024 minutes.

IV. ALAB Governance Membership Updates

Marc Lea mentioned Dylan Theobald was approved on June 18, 2024, and tonight was his first meeting. Marc mentioned if a representative needed to step down, they just needed to email him

with the reason for doing so. The only remaining vacancy is the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD position. Marc asked the ALAB members to confirm their contact information on a sheet he was passing around so he could provide an updated contact list to all members. Marc mentioned the number of members needed for a quorum was 7; it would be 8 once all representative seats were filled.

V. Updates from Ag Department Staff:

Ian Landreth mentioned that the last Ag Pass Program training was on June 12, 2024. The Ag Commissioner has spoken with CalFire Battalion Chief Nate Hamm about future training dates and refresher course details for this season. Marc Lea reminded Ian that the training was cancelled because of a fire event in California Valley. Ian mentioned future dates would be sent to interested parties as they become available.

The Department of Planning and Building is going to the Board of Supervisors on July 7, 2024, with proposed amendments to the inland and coastal cannabis land use ordinances as directed by the Board on September 26, 2023. The amendments include 1) amending sections pertaining to permit expiration to allow time for cultivation operations to get up and running before the 5-year permit term commences. 2) amending the sections pertaining to the hours of operation to allow non-storefront retail dispensaries to operate in accordance with state law rather than indicating specific hours of operation. Currently county non-storefront retail dispensaries may only operate between the hours of 8am and 8pm, whereas the current state law is 6am to 10pm. 3) amending sections pertaining to ordinance purpose, enforcement, nuisance abatement, cost recovery procedures, and unpermitted cannabis and hemp activities.

Ian provided an update on the question Claire Wineman asked at the May 6, 2024, ALAB meeting regarding the likelihood of land zoned Agriculture being converted to meet Board direction to planning staff on the goals to implement the Housing Element. Ian spoke with Long Range Planning Supervisor Cory Hanh who provided the following response: "Generally, the objective would be to amend land use categories for parcels within the URLs and VRLs before considering parcels outside the URLs and VRLs. With that said, it is too early in the process to say with certainty whether Agriculture parcels will or will not be considered for land use category amendment." Marc Lea mentioned the department would continue to track the item and forward any proposals or items to ALAB as they become available.

Marc provided a quick update on regulation changes that took place on January 1, 2024, limiting the use of diphacinone, an active ingredient in certain rodenticides, in residential settings. It hasn't impacted agricultural operations but has really impacted structural companies and ranchette owners who are not production agriculture but have ground squirrel issues. DPR is evaluating diphacinone in the next 6-12 months on the production agriculture side and it is currently unknown if that will result in any regulatory changes. The Agriculture Department will track this and bring any proposed changes to the ALAB.

VI. Presentation: Updates on the Requirements and Implementation of the Irrigated Lands Program Agricultural Order. Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (CCRWQCB)

Mary Hamilton provided a high-level overview on the updated requirements and implementation of the Irrigated Lands Program Agricultural Order.

Link to PowerPoint Presentation: [PowerPoint Presentation \(ca.gov\)](#)

Dan Rodrigues asked about monitoring farm wells. Is that strictly nitrate quality issues or is it quantity being removed? Mary indicated it was water quality and not just nitrate but nitrate is one of the primary measurements. Quantity is not measured so things like depth are not being measured. In coordination with SGMA, the CCRWQCB is starting to work with different GSAs to share information because under SGMA they do measure quantity.

Tom Ikeda asked if operations are required to report total annual application amounts of nitrogen. Mary confirmed you must report the amount applied as part of your total nitrogen applied reporting. Tom clarified his question by asking that the CCRWQCB is receiving this information, but it is not something that they test for. Mary clarified that the CCRWQCB is getting total annual nitrogen application information from growers but that there are other users of the basin such as private residential wells, so all of that data is not collated into one place.

Marc Lea asked how many third-party certifying organizations exist. Mary stated that there is only one approved third party, Preservation Inc. Marc asked if they needed approval from the CCRWQCB? Mary stated that a third-party organization is required to submit an application demonstrating their capacity, ability, and experience with the elements of the program requirements. There could be different third parties but Preservation Inc. is the only one who has applied.

Dan asked what the motivation was for changing the formulas used for measuring nitrogen applied versus nitrogen removed in the irrigated lands program agricultural order. Mary stated that she could not speak for the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) reasoning as to why they required the change to formulas in their order.

Earlier, Mary stated that the CCRWQCB's previous order language for calculating nitrogen applied, and nitrogen removed had language about the availability of credits for various types of nitrogen applied and discounts for cover crops, compost, or other woody things that slow the nitrogen movement through the soil. The SWRCB directed that language to be removed. That language has since been removed and the order is now identical to what is being implemented in the central valley, which is nitrogen applied with fertilizer and irrigation water, minus nitrogen removed from harvest.

Mary added that the third-party program (Preservation Inc) was working on their alternatives compliance pathways where they are developing a formula for things like a mass nitrogen balance that would accept a number of different nitrogen inputs and outputs that may also work to justify the use of those credits/discounts previously mentioned. As part of the alternative compliance pathways, the third party has developed a technical advisory committee, and stakeholder advisory committee which the CCRWQCB continues to support.

VII. Presentation: Updates on the Programs & Services Provided by the USDA Farm Service Agency

Russell Todd and Gloria Valdez presented an overview and update on the programs and services provided by the USDA Farm Services Agency.

Link to PowerPoint Presentation:

[Microsoft PowerPoint - USDA-FSA Overview 07.01.2024 \(ca.gov\)](#)

The ALAB had an open discussion on this item.

County Committee elections. Russell mentioned this year the Local Administrative Area 2 for the county is undergoing nominations and runs through August 1, 2024. Those interested in applying may submit an application through the FSA.

An item of note was the tree assistance program relating to vineyard, orchard, and associated crop types that may have been impacted by a natural disaster or plant disease. The cost is shared between the applicant and FSA.

VIII. Future agenda items/meeting dates, adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 PM. Dan Rodrigues asked for any future agenda items. The next monthly ALAB meeting is scheduled for August 5th, 2024.

Thereafter on **Motion by:** Jerry Diefenderfer, **Second by:** Tom Ikeda, the July 1, 2024, ALAB meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Ian Landreth, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture.