

Organic Advisory Board  
of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing

Minutes of Public Meeting of January 29, 2009

Meeting Location: RI DEM Division of Agriculture  
Conference Room  
Room 370, 235 Promenade Street  
Providence, RI 02908

Members Present: Erik Eacker, Brian Simmons, Dan Lawton, Eugene Pepper (sitting  
in for Peter Susi)

Members Absent: Peter Susi, Rik Kleinfeldt

Staff Present: Ken Ayars, Scott Marshall, Matt Green (RIDEM/Agriculture)

Others Present: Eric Scherer, Eric Boettger (USDA NRCS)

The meeting began at 10:35 a.m. at the Division of Agriculture, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI. A quorum of board members was present.

Minutes from OAB meeting of November 21, 2008, were read. Eugene Pepper made a motion, seconded by Brian Simmons, to approve the minutes without corrections. The motion was approved unanimously.

2009 Certification Fees were discussed. Matt Green informed that maintaining the fee for certification at \$200 is expected to cover fees to be charged by USDA to the Division to maintain organic certifier accreditation in 2009. Producers and handlers eligible for USDA organic certification cost-share may apply for reimbursement of \$150 of this amount. Dan Lawton made a motion, seconded by Brian Simmons, to recommend keeping the fees for certification at \$200, which would cover the cost of the Division to maintain certifier accreditation. The motion was approved unanimously.

2009 Application Deadlines for organic producer certification were discussed. The due date of March 15 was arrived at which would be within a favorable time frame for farmers and would facilitate timely submission and processing of applications. Brian Simmons made a motion, seconded by Eugene Pepper, to recommend a due date of March 15 for submission of applications for organic producer certification and continuation of certification. The motion was approved unanimously.

Matt Green informed about the USDA organic certification cost-share programs being administered by the Division through which eligible operations may apply for reimbursement of organic certification fees. The AMA cost-share program will reimburse eligible crops and livestock producers in RI 75% of the cost of certification up to \$750 for certification or continuation of certification from 10/1/08 through 9/30/09. The National cost-share program will

reimburse eligible handlers in RI 75% of the cost of certification up to \$750 per year for certification or continuation of certification from 10/1/07 through 9/30/09.

Brand Name Materials List review procedure was discussed. The Division reviews materials which are produced locally, or not OMRI reviewed, for acceptability for use in organic operations according to the USDA National Organic Standards. Technical support is obtained from OMRI, which reviews to the same Standards, and has been accepted by USDA NOP as a reviewer of materials. Dan Lawton made a motion, seconded by Brian Simmons, recommending that the Division continue to employ these methods for materials review, and to continue to reference OMRI materials and product lists in determining compliance for use of inputs in organic operations. The motion was approved unanimously.

The 2009 meeting schedule was discussed. Eugene Pepper made a motion, seconded by Brian Simmons, to schedule the second annual board meeting in 2009 for November 16, 2009, at 10:30 a.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Additional Business: Weatherproof signage to promote certified organic products in farmers markets was discussed. Funding for such signage is to be pursued through existing grants.

Eric Scherer and Eric Boettger presented information on USDA NRCS funding available to organic and transitional farms through the EQUIP program. Eligible farms include crops, livestock, and aquaculture.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Green  
Supervisor of Insect Pest and Plant Disease Control,  
RIDEM Division of Agriculture