

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

Minutes of Public Meeting of November 2, 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, Peter Susi

Members Absent: Rik Kleinfeldt

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

Others Present: None

The meeting began at 10:07 a.m. at the Division of Agriculture, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI. A quorum of board members was present.

Minutes from OAB meeting of January 29, 2009, were read. Peter Susi made a motion, seconded by Brian Simmons, to approve the minutes without corrections. The motion was approved unanimously.

Board membership was discussed. Matt Green informed that, according to bylaws, members will need to be appointed. Current members in attendance indicated interest in continuing participation on the board. Matt Green will follow through on fulfilling the need for increasing organic handler participation on the board.

2010 certification fees and application deadlines 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 2010; the deadline of March 15 for application submission with \$50 application fee, and the remaining \$150 invoiced prior to inspection, was administered in 2009 and could be maintained in 2010.

Brian Simmons made a motion, seconded by Erik Eacker, to recommend keeping the 2010 application deadline at March 15, and fees for certification at \$200, with \$50 due at application and \$150 invoiced prior to inspection, which would cover the cost of the Division to maintain certifier accreditation, and to re-visit this topic at the next meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Matt Green informed that the same USDA organic certification cost-share programs are being administered by the Division this year, through which eligible operations may apply for partial reimbursement of organic certification fees. The AMA cost-share program will reimburse eligible crops and livestock producers, and the National cost-share program will reimburse eligible handlers, in Rhode Island 75%, up to \$750, of the cost of certification or continuation of certification received from 10/1/09 through 9/30/10.

Policy was discussed for use of treated wood on organic farms. Treated wood policy of WSDA as published in the April, 2009, Organic Quarterly was reviewed. Brian Simmons made a motion, seconded by Erik Eacker, recommending that the Division adopt the WSDA policy on acceptable use of treated wood in organic operations. The motion was approved unanimously.

Organic marketing and promotional materials were discussed. The “Get Fresh. Buy Local.” campaign logo has been incorporated into new RI certified organic logo materials, which are available in 2” round stickers and 3x5 price cards. Large price cards with the organic logo should be requested for purchase in the future. Promotion of the “Get Fresh. Buy Local.” campaign should be a priority again in the coming year.

The 2010 meeting schedule was discussed. Monday, January 25, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. was proposed as the next meeting date.

Additional Business:

A topic requested for discussion at the next meeting is re-visiting certification fees and to look again into the possibility of establishing a restricted receipt account for the DEM/Agriculture organic certification program which could be used to develop the program using certification fees. Matt Green will follow up on this topic prior to next meeting.

It was suggested that the possibility could be looked at of hiring and utilizing interns to work on making organic certification application forms fillable and/or entering certification application data into forms.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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