

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

Minutes of Public Meeting of December 3, 2012

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

Members Present: Dan Lawton, Skip Paul, Robert Mastin, Peter Susi

Members Absent: Brian Simmons

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

Others Present: None

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

Dan Lawton made a motion, seconded by Robert Mastin, to approve the minutes from the OAB meeting of January 23, 2012, without corrections. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dan Lawton informed of activities of NOFA/RI related to specialty crop grants. Growers Workshops were conducted and were well attended on organic farms including Roots Farm in Tiverton and Wishing Stone Farm in Little Compton. The NOFA/RI Organic Crop Advisor program runs through 2013.

Matt Green summarized results of the NOSB October 2012 Providence Meeting. The OMRI Materials Report summary from the meeting was discussed regarding NOSB-petitioned materials, including results that ferric phosphate is to remain on 205.601 for slug and snail bait, and that biodegradable plastic mulches are to be added to 205.601(b)(2) with revised annotation.

Matt Green informed on the status of the fertilizer sodium nitrate, regarding the fact that sodium nitrate sunsetted off of the National List section of the Standards prior to rulemaking. A proposed rule addressing sodium nitrate has not yet been published by the NOP. NOP Notice 12-1 was discussed which requires that producers must comply with Standards 205.200 and 205.203(b) when using sodium nitrate until a final rule is published to regulate the substance. Matt will issue guidance and pass along information to organic operators as it is received regarding status change of sodium nitrate.

The NOP final rule published 11/8/12 requiring Periodic Residue Testing was discussed. Matt Green discussed the NOP Memo to certifying agents regarding the rule, and informed that to

comply with the rule, RIDEM must test samples from at least 1 certified operation annually based on the current total number of RIDEM-certified operations.

The NOP 2609 Instruction issued 9/12/12 requiring Unannounced Inspections was discussed. Matt Green informed that to comply with the NOP instructions, RIDEM must conduct at least 1 unannounced inspection of a RIDEM-certified operation annually based on the current total number of RIDEM-certified operations.

Matt Green informed that the USDA organic certification cost-share programs for 2011-2012 administered by the Division were in the stage of requesting reimbursement funds from USDA for 17 applications which were approved under the AMA program for producers for a total of \$3,622.50, and for 4 applications which were approved under the National program for handlers for a total of \$2,150.63. No information was available yet from USDA regarding 2012-2013 cost share programs.

The NOP 2012 Accreditation renewal on-site audit of RIDEM was discussed. Matt Green informed that the notice of audit results had not been received yet from the NOP, but that the auditor identified several noncompliances which were expected to be received from NOP in the notice related to timeliness of application processing, annual inspections and update of certification, as well as lack of sufficient number of personnel.

Matt Green, Peter Susi and Ken Ayars informed that it has been necessary in 2012, due to the increase in the numbers of operations certified and applicants for certification, and the Division's inability to increase staffing in response to the increased workload, due to lack of administrative capacity in the RIDEM organic program to institute a policy of accepting new organic handling category applications for certification only from applicants already certified organic by RIDEM in the crops or livestock producer categories.

The next OAB meeting was scheduled for Monday, January 21, 2013, at 10:00 a.m.  
(Note: The 1/21/13 meeting date subsequently was cancelled and that meeting was not held.)

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Green  
Environmental Scientist  
RIDEM Division of Agriculture