**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)**
**CALIFORNIA ORGANIC PRODUCTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (COPAC)**
**May 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes**
**Hybrid Teleconference**
**2399 Gateway Oaks Dr, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95833**

## MEMBERS PRESENT

Amanda Felder – Chair
Mark Squire
Natalia Owens
Wendy Reynolds – California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

## REMOTE MEMBERS PRESENT

Jamie Carr
Lena Brook
Jeff Chean
Maroka Kawamura
Justin Miller

## MEMBERS ABSENT

Matthew Grieshop
Joseph Deviney
Ben Diesl
Kenny Likitprakong
Erin Raser – Vice Chair
Christopher Little

## INTERESTED PARTIES

Lauren Hale – University of California (UC) Organic Agriculture Institute (OAI)
Nina Zlatkov – Los Angeles County
Maroka Kawamura
Michelle Arashiro
Stephen Hawk
Krista Marshall – UC OAI
Tom Morgan – San Luis Obispo County
Thu Dinh – California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
Nick Woodrum – CDPH
Ken Brumfield – Contra Costa County
Jordan Key – San Diego County
Damara Trumbauer
Monica Winters – San Diego County
Yvette Pellman – Monterey County

## CDFA

Danny Lee
Jefferson Scott
Andrea Cano
Scott Renteria
Thomas Osborn
Sarah Cardoni
Leslie Fernandez
Pamela Rodriguez
Mayze Fowler-Riggs
Marcee Yount

## ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Amanda Felder, Chair. Roll was called by Andrea Cano, and a quorum was established.

## ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

## ITEM 3: REVIEW OF JANUARY 22, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Felder requested a motion to approve the January 22, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

**MOTION:** Chair Felder moved to approve the January 22, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Jeff Chean seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with Justin Miller, Jamie Carr and Lena Brook abstaining.

## ITEM 4: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (CDPH) UPDATES

Wendy Reynolds reviewed the Organic Processed Product Registration Actions taken. As of April 2026: there were 28 incomplete applications received, 132 new license applications received, zero denial letters sent, 31 deficiency letters sent, 207 expiration notices sent, 816 renewal licenses generated, 150 new licenses generated, 85 out of business notices, 667 renewal applications received, and one application withdrawn.

Thu Dinh presented the CDPH Organic Program's budget and revenue information. As of May 2026, for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/26, projected expenditures for total salaries and benefits were $690,923. Total direct costs were $125,845. Total indirect costs were $353,344, bringing the total program cost to $1,170,113. Total revenue is projected at $1,333,994. For FY 2025/26, actual revenue collected through February 2026 is $779,579.

## ITEM 5: UPDATE ON STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM (SOP) UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (UC) CONTRACT DELIVERABLES

Krista Marshall, UC OAI, provided a status update on OAI contract deliverables. Marshall stated that a second regional organic conference has been scheduled to be held on September 15 and 16 in San Luis Obispo. The conference will include farm tours and workshop sessions. The event will focus on organic agriculture in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties. Marshall invited those present to attend and added that the event will include designated space if COPAC would like to schedule a meeting during the conference.

Marshall went on to describe a Transition to Organic webinar series, which was hosted from January 2026 through March 2026. These webinars were offered in English, Spanish, and Hmong languages, and were attended by over 800 participants. Marshall noted that copies of these webinars are also available for viewing on YouTube. Additionally, the UC recently completed filming educational videos on organic plant breeding and integrating livestock into organic agriculture.

Lauren Hale, Faculty Director of UC OAI, provided her contact information and encouraged those in attendance to provide input on research priorities or proposals. Jaime Carr asked if UC OAI staff could provide a written summary of contract deliverables as an agenda item attachment for future meetings.

## ITEM 6: STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM (SOP) FUND CONDITION

Danny Lee provided a presentation on the SOP's Projected Fund Condition. Lee stated that as of March 31, 2026, the beginning fund balance for FY 2025/26 was $1,309,110. Lee explained that the SOP has experienced declining operating reserve levels in recent years, a trend which is projected to continue into FY 2026/27 and FY 2027/28. The SOP is projected to have an operating reserve of only $473,058 by the end of FY 2026/27, and be insolvent by the end of FY 2027/28.

Lee stated that in order to address the funding issue, COPAC had moved to create a Strategic Planning Subcommittee, which held its second meeting earlier in the day to discuss ways to maintain solvency. Lee went on to explain that an increase and restructuring of registration fees will be necessary in the near future, in order to ensure solvency of the SOP and continuation of enforcement activities.

Felder requested that CDPH provide a similar projection of program revenue and expenditures. Justin Miller suggested that the SOP conduct outreach efforts centered on the benefits of organic enforcement to industry, particularly small-scale operations.

## ITEM 7: FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2026/27 PROPOSED BUDGET

Lee presented the FY 2026/27 Proposed Budget. Projected revenue is $1,956,850, with a total proposed budget of $2,284,063, which includes $995,102 for personal services; $919,449 for operating expenses and equipment; $441,925 for departmental expenses; a pro rata cash adjustment of $91,841; and a gas tax credit of $45,000.

Lee explained that the SOP has made significant cost saving efforts for FY 2026/27, such as reducing county enforcement contracts by 15%, from $374,740 to $324,690. The program also intends to delay backfilling a vacant Special Investigator position, thus saving salary and benefit costs. Lee also noted that the SOP and CDPH have implemented an MOU wherein the SOP can recover up to $35,200 annually in Attorney General fees incurred during appeals and hearings involving organic operations registered with CDPH.

**MOTION:** Amanda Felder moved to approve the FY 2026/27 Proposed Budget as presented. Jeff Chean seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

## ITEM 8: COUNTY CONTRACT COST BREAKDOWN

Jordan Key, San Diego County Department of Agriculture, Weights, and Measures, provided an overview of San Diego County's Organic Program. Key explained that the benefits of county enforcement contracts include the ability to assess local concerns, determine inspection priority, and develop regional workplans.

Key went on to outline compliance rates for producers, handlers, and retailers in San Diego County. Producers had the highest rates of compliance, followed by handlers and then retailers. San Diego County has also implemented a number of process improvements designed to increase efficiency, such as utilizing electronic inspection reports and combining inspections to reduce travel time.

Mark Squire requested that the SOP provide a breakdown of contract amounts provided to each county. Felder suggested that counties take turns providing similar organic program overviews to COPAC, in order to further education on organic enforcement.

**ITEM 9:SOP UPDATES**

i. Vacancies and Terms

Cano provided the Vacancies and Terms Report. The vacancies include one producer representative; one technical representative; one consumer representative; six producer representative alternates; two processor representative alternates; one retail representative alternate; one environmental representative alternate; two technical representative alternates; one consumer representative alternate; and one accredited certifier representative alternate.

Members whose terms will be expiring on October 31, 2026, and will be eligible for reappointment are Christopher Little, Lena Brook, Mark Squire, Jamie Carr, Maroka Kawamura, Ben Diesl, and Natalia Owens.

ii. Revenue from Registration/New Registrations

Scott Renteria presented information on organic registration fees collected by month and year. For FY 2025/26, $1,391,615 in registration fees were collected and 281 new operations registered with the SOP. Of these 281 new operations, 113 were producers, 52 were handlers, and 12 were processors. The total number of registrants for 2024 was 4,193. Of the 4,193 registrants, 3,336 were producers, 1,252 were handlers, and 156 were processors. Renteria also stated that operations can register as multiple operation types, so the number of operations by type will be higher than the total number of operations registered.

iii. Compliance and Enforcement/Appeals Summary

Renteria provided the Compliance and Enforcement/Appeals Summary for FY 2025/26. There were 130 total complaints of which 78 were investigated by the SOP (CDFA or County Agricultural Commissioners' staff); 21 were referred to Accredited Certifying Agents; 26 were referred to CDPH; and five were referred to the National Organic Program.

There were 1,098 total inspections, of which 635 were conducted at farmers' markets; 123 at production sites; 53 at handling facilities; 18 at processing facilities; 259 at retailers; and 10 at locations including but not limited to restaurants and border stations.

A total of 340 samples were collected, of which 329 were surveillance and 11 were investigative. Of the 329 surveillance samples, 10 contained residues above EPA tolerance levels and 23 contained residues below tolerance levels. Of the 11 investigative samples, zero samples tested above tolerance levels.

A total of 10 appeals were received, of which two have been closed and 12 remain active.

iv. Investigation Activity Report

Renteria provided the Investigation Activity Report. FY 2025/26, there were 130 total investigations. Of these, 44 were for an unregistered or uncertified operation, 41 for prohibited substances, 24 for noncompliant systems, and 21 for misrepresentation or fraud. 65 investigations have been closed.

v. Complaint/Investigation Summary Log

Renteria provided the Complaint/Investigation Summary Log. The report summarized complaints and investigations active during FY 2025/26.

vi. Surveillance Sampling Summary

Renteria provided the Surveillance Sampling Summary updates, detailing the results of samples collected by the SOP during routine surveillance and investigative efforts. For FY 2025/26, there were 329 surveillance samples: 60 at farmers' markets; 51 at production sites; and 217 at retail wholesale facilities. Of the 33 surveillance samples with residues detected: two were at farmers' markets; one was at a production site; and 30 were at retail or wholesale facilities.

Renteria also provided a breakdown of the number of samples with residues by commodity type. Pears were the commodity most likely to test positive, with residues detected on four out of nine samples collected.

vii. Surveillance Sampling Results

Renteria provided the Surveillance Sampling Results update. The report consisted of a summary of all samples collected, including information on the date collected, sample site, commodity, county, analysis requested, pesticide detected, and the pesticide amount detected in parts per million.

## ITEM 10: ENFORCEMENT EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Mark Squire provided the Enforcement Education Subcommittee update. Squire stated that he has attempted to contact the Marin County Agricultural Commissioner's office and is awaiting a response. He reiterated the importance of Counties presenting to COPAC and the public on their enforcement efforts and how funding is utilized. Felder discussed the potential benefits of making educational materials specifically targeting producers, retailers, and handlers, which could be distributed by county staff. Felder went on to emphasize the importance of counties taking a unified and consistent approach to enforcement. Squire concluded by noting that conversations with County Agricultural Commissioners remain ongoing.

## ITEM 11: STRATEGIC PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Amanda Felder provided the Strategic Planning Subcommittee update. Felder explained that the Subcommittee is examining two potential fee increase scenarios; one in which fees are increased initially, and another wherein the SOP would have the ability to increase fees year-over-year up to a certain percentage. Under this second scenario, COPAC would retain oversight of the fee schedule, and would vote on an annual basis to recommend that the SOP increase, decrease, or maintain fee levels, based on current program funding levels.

Felder went on to explain that any potential fee changes would require a statutory change via legislation, rather than a rulemaking. Because of this, no fee changes would come into effect until at least January 2028. The Subcommittee has requested that

CDFA staff provide updated projections of the SOP's anticipated revenue, expenditures, and reserve balance. The goal is to determine a new fee schedule that meets program demands, without leading to an excessively large reserve balance or creating financial hardship for small farmers. Felder concluded by noting that the goal is for the Subcommittee to have an updated fee schedule ready for presentation at COPAC's next full meeting in September, in order to implement any fee schedule changes by January 2028.

## ITEM 12: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMSs

The next meeting will be held in September. A poll of COPAC members will be conducted to determine the meeting date. Agenda items will include evaluating the SOP's current One Pager, inviting a county to present on their enforcement activities, and evaluating opportunities for increased social media and county outreach.

## ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31 p.m. by Chair Felder.

Respectfully submitted by:



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Scott Renteria, Supervising Special Investigator I
State Organic Program