



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
CALIFORNIA ORGANIC PRODUCTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (COPAC)**

**January 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes  
800 Asilomar Ave, Pacific Grove, CA 93950**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Matthew Grieshop – Chair  
Amanda Felder – Vice Chair  
Erin Raser  
Kenny Likitprakong  
Mark Squire  
Jeff Chean  
Amanda Felder  
Maroka Kawamura  
Jamie Carr  
Wendy Reynolds  
Joe Deviney  
Christopher Little

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Lena Brook  
Jamie Carr  
Ben Diesl

**INTERESTED PARTIES**

Nick Woodrum – California  
Department of Public Health  
(CDPH)  
Thu Dinh – CDPH  
June Nakagawa – CDPH  
Christopher Lopes – Lopes  
Family Farms  
Bruce Lopes – Lopes Family  
Farms / Charles Lopes and Sons  
Joji Muramoto – UC Santa Cruz  
Orry Pratt – UC Organic  
Agricultural Institute (OAI)  
Krista Marshall – UC OAI

**CDFA**

Marcee Yount  
Andrea Cano  
Danny Lee  
Scott Renteria

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

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by Andrea Cano. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and self-introductions were made.

**ITEM 2: ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Cano opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

**MOTION:** Matthew Grieshop moved to nominate Amanda Felder for Chair. Erin Raser seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Cano opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

**MOTION:** Amanda Felder moved to nominate Erin Raser for Vice Chair. Maroka Kawamura seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

### **ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

### **ITEM 4: REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2025 MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Amanda Felder requested a motion to approve the September 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes as presented.

**MOTION:** Mark Squire moved to approve the September 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes as presented. Maroka Kawamura seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

### **ITEM 5: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATES**

Wendy Reynolds provided the CDPH Organic Program update. For organic complaints received during Fiscal Year (FY) 2024/25, 32 were completed and 17 remain open. One complaint was from the 2024 calendar year, and all of the remaining complaints were from the 2025 calendar year.

Reynolds spoke on Organic Processed Product Registrations New and Renewals for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. For 2024, there were 3,128 licenses issued for organic processors of which 727 were new and 2,401 were renewals. For 2025, there were 3,014 licenses issued for organic processors of which 495 were new and 2,519 were renewals.

Reynolds continued with the list of nonprofits that the COPAC committee members requested previously.

Thu Dinh provided an overview of the CDPH Organic Program's budget and revenue reports. For FY 2025/26, projected expenditures for salaries and benefits total \$764,403, total direct costs are projected at \$112,024, and total indirect costs are projected at \$327,973. Year-end projected expenditures total \$1,204,400 with revenue projected at \$1,373,296. Total revenue for FY 2024/25 was \$1,251,905, and total revenue for FY 2023/24 was \$1,243,667.

### **ITEM 6: STATUS OF STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA CONTRACTS UPDATE**

UC OAI Administrative Director Orry Pratt gave an update on the UC OAI contract. UC OAI hosted a conference in San Diego, with 100 participants, which included SOP staff and COPAC members. Of those participants, 50 were farmers & growers.

Krista Marshall, UC OAI, described how the organization has been able to create outreach & education content and conduct related activities. Marshall went on to provide an update on data of trend analysis & organic acreage data trends across California.

Marshall spoke about crop profiles on organic production processes and high-level trends. Production process was to compare the State Organic Program's data set with data that is reported yearly for the California Ag Productions Statistics for the CA County Agricultural Commissioners. Results included in the executive summary

were highlighted for the 2021 data set and about 54-58 counties reported organic crop

production across the United States and not able to integrate animal organic agriculture.

Marshall stated that top counties for organic harvested acreage were Lassen, Tehama, Modoc, Humboldt, and Fresno counties. These five counties account for 36% of the total United States organic acreage. Top counties for total proportion of acreage in organic were Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Marin, and Imperial counties.

Pratt gave an update on UC Santa Cruz, which had 100 participants attend the OAI organic webinar that began last week, and there will be a series of webinars running for ten weeks every Wednesday. Additionally, there will be field work research in March 2026 to work and record videos of farmers experiences on the integrated crop and livestock systems in the pasture and weed management.

Dr. Joji Muramoto gave a recap on his research and thanked COPAC and CDFA for all their support. Muramoto will submit his final report, as his contract with CDFA is ending.

## **ITEM 7: STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM (SOP) UPDATES**

### **i. Vacancies and Terms**

Cano provided the Vacancies and Terms Report. There were three member vacancies: one producer representative, one technical representative and one consumer representative. Additionally, there were 14 alternate vacancies: six producers; two processors; one retail representative; one environmental representative; two technical representatives; one consumer representative; and one accredited certifier representative.

### **ii. Revenue from Registration/New Registrations**

Scott Renteria presented information on organic registration fees collected by month and year. For FY 2025/26 for the period of July 1, 2025, through December 12, 2025, \$727,703 in registration fees were collected. A total of 4,193 operations registered with the State Organic Program (SOP) for 2025, of which 3,336 were producers, 1,252 were handlers, and 156 were processors.

### **iii. Fund Condition Update**

Danny Lee provided the Fund Condition update. As of November 30, 2025, the beginning fund balance for FY 2025/26 was \$1,309,110. Total revenue was \$731,910, making the available cash \$2,041,020. Total expenditures were \$952,654, with an ending balance of \$1,088,366.

Lee provided some historical information on the SOP's funding, noting that the current fee structure had been unchanged for over 10 years. Marcee Yount, Inspection and Compliance Branch Chief, suggested that COPAC form a subcommittee to deliberate a potential registration fee increase for the SOP. Yount noted that the ending balance of the fund condition is decreasing and is projected to result in a negative balance by the end of FY 26/27. Yount went on to note that as of January 1, 2025, the SOP has a means of recovering a portion of the substantial Attorney General fees, which the Program has incurred. The Program is also engaging in other cost saving measures, such as temporarily suspending the backfilling of Renteria's former Special Investigator position, as well as reducing county contract agreement amounts. OAI's contract will not be extended beyond their current terms. Updated expenditure and revenue projections will be presented at COPAC's Spring budget meeting in May. A period of discussion ensued regarding the process for submitting a legislative concept/proposal and methods of maintaining program solvency. Yount also stated that CDFA does not want to cut enforcement from SOP.

Mark Squire asked why the SOP has to be self-funded. Yount answered Squire's question by providing that the SOP is not a general funded program and that the SOP is an industry funded program as written in statute. She also noted that there may be other impacts, since the Governor's Administration and CDFA Secretary will be changing this year. Also, CDFA and the California organic industry has previously asked the National Organic Program (NOP) whether they can provide funding to the SOP and the NOP has determined they cannot provide funding support to the SOP.

Yount reminded COPAC that California is the only state with a State Organic Program (SOP). Philadelphia has been trying to develop their own SOP for approximately four years and has been unsuccessful thus far. Lee spoke that a few years ago there were more states interested in having a SOP but California remains the only SOP.

Yount spoke on the potential proposal of a legislative concept for the SOP and noted that other concepts related to a direct fee increase have been previously denied. A potentially sustainable scenario is that industry works on alternatively feasible legislative concepts to be sponsored for next year, by February 2027. Yount spoke about finding a member of the legislature to sponsor a bill. Previously, Assemblymember Mark Stone, Santa Cruz, sponsored changes to the California Organic Food and Farming Act. Ideally, a Bill would come from industry and not from the state. Yount advised those in attendance to form a subcommittee at this meeting.

**MOTION:** Amanda Felder moved to form the Strategic Planning Subcommittee. Jeff Chean seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions. The Strategic Planning Subcommittee Members are Jeff Chean, Mark Squire, Amanda Felder, Erin Raser, Matthew Grieshop, and Joe Deviney.

iv. Compliance and Enforcement/Appeals Summary

Scott Renteria provided the Compliance and Enforcement/Appeals Summary. For the 2025 calendar year, there were 170 total complaints, of which 118 were investigated by CDFA and county staff; 4 were referred to Accredited Certifying Agents; 42 were referred to CDPH; 4 were referred to the National Organic Program; and 2 were referred to the Organic Input Materials Program.

There were 1,349 total inspections: 697 of these were conducted at certified farmers' markets; 199 were conducted at production sites; 78 at handling facilities; 18 at processing facilities; 343 at retail facilities; and 14 at locations not within the above categories.

A total of 384 samples were collected, of which 373 were surveillance and 11 were investigative. Of the 373 surveillance samples, 24 samples had residues detected, with 13 containing residues above tolerance levels and 11 containing residues below tolerance levels. Of the 11 investigative samples, three samples had residues detected above tolerance level. Eleven appeals were received, of which four have been closed and eight remain active.

v. Complaint Activity Report

Renteria provided the Complaint Activity Report for the 2025 calendar year. A total of 63 open complaints were active, of which 39 were open for more than 120 days; six were open between 90 and 120 days; four were open between 60 and 90 days; ten were open between 30 and 60 days; and four were open for less than 30 days. An additional 107 complaints were closed.

vi. Complaint Summary Log

Renteria presented the Complaint Summary Log, detailing complaints and investigations that were assigned and closed for the 2025 calendar year.

vii. Surveillance Sampling Summary Updates

Renteria provided the Surveillance Sampling Summary update, detailing the results of samples collected by the SOP during routine and investigative efforts. For the 2025 calendar year, there were 402 surveillance samples: 84 at certified farmers' markets; 84 at production sites; three at handling facilities; and 231 at retail wholesale facilities. Of the 37 samples with residues detected: nine were at certified farmers' markets; eight were at a production site; and 20 were at retail wholesale facilities.

### **ITEM 8: SOP OUTREACH AND EDUCATION UPDATES AND STRATEGIES**

Renteria spoke on facing budget cuts and restrictions on outreach and education contracts outside of CDFA. Renteria noted that fortunately, the SOP has substantial enforcement data to utilize resources internally that can still be used effectively for outreach and education. Renteria highlighted that the SOP has created outreach and educational banners and flyers to present information in a more clear and easily digestible manner. The SOP website has also been updated with additional information. Renteria is working on creating materials for market managers and consumers to better understand organic labeling.

Renteria spoke on strategic planning for the SOP by specifically educating consumers, market managers, and industry members. This education will be focused on the value that protecting equity in the marketplace and the organic systems plan provides.

Yount suggested utilizing CDFA's Office of Public Affairs for outreach and education YouTube videos and announcements.

### **ITEM 9: ENFORCEMENT EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

Mark Squire, COPAC Enforcement Education Subcommittee Member, spoke on creating a slide show called, "Partnering to Support Organic Labeling Integrity" to present to county health members and inspectors at the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) meeting. The slideshow presentation included topics such as The Importance of Organic Labeling Integrity, Organic Certification Background, Organic Retail Oversight Needed, False and Deceptive Label Claims, and Potential Solutions.

**MOTION:** Matthew Grieshop moved to recommend that Mark Squire spread and present the slideshow's message to the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) conference meeting. Amanda Felder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

### **ITEM 10: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

The next meeting will be in a hybrid format and will be held on Thursday, May 21, 2026, in Sacramento and via Zoom, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Agenda items will include Mark Squire reporting on spreading the message of vacancies for COPAC at CCLHO, as well as the Strategic Planning Subcommittee.

### **ITEM 11: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m. by Chair Felder.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Scott Renteria, Supervising Special Investigator I  
State Organic Program