



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
STANDARDIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STDZ)**

March 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Teleconference

4437 South Laspina Street, Tulare, CA 93274

MEMBERS PRESENT

Louis Pandol – Chair
Jeff Simonian
Patrick Tucker

**REMOTE MEMBERS
PRESENT**

Garret Patricio

MEMBERS ABSENT

Marko Zaninovich – Vice
Chair
Glenn Fankhauser

INTERESTED PARTIES

Carrie Mitchell – Merced Co.
Tyler Pereira – Tulare Co.
Michael Bliss – California Citrus
Mutual
Amanda Zito – Fresno Co.
Stefanie Pandol – Pandol Bros.
Delia Cioc – Riverside Co.
Cathy Roache – Alameda Co.
Bryan Nickerson – Western
Growers Association
Don McCoon – Alameda Co.
Eddy Greynolds – Kern Co.
Greta Shutler – Alameda Co.
Jeremy Wagner – San Mateo Co.
John Beall – Ventura Co.
Melissa Lovett – Stanislaus Co.
Nina Zlatkov – Los Angeles Co.
Yvette Pellman – Monterey Co.
Christopher Greer – Tulare Co.
Timothy Lewis – Monterey Co.

CDFA

Marcee Yount
Stacey Hughes
Kevin Jenkins
Anna Carrasquillo
Sarah Cardoni
Steve Patton

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Louis Pandol.

ITEM 2: INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

Roll was called by Sarah Cardoni, and a quorum was established.

ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ITEM 4: REVIEW OF OCTOBER 10, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Pandol noted an error under Item 8, FY 022/23 County Enforcement Activity Reports. The Port of Los Angeles was inadvertently added in place of Port Hueneme under the Ventura County activity information. Chair Pandol requested a motion to approve the October 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes with amendment.

MOTION: Patrick Tucker moved to approve the October 10, 2023, Meeting

Minutes as amended. Garret Patricio seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions

ITEM 5: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT

Cardoni provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. Current vacancies include: two fresh fruit members; four fresh vegetable members; and two other fresh vegetable members. Marko Zaninovich will be eligible for reappointment to serve a fourth term, starting September 1, 2024.

ITEM 6: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 COUNTY AGREEMENTS

Stacey Hughes presented the Proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2024/25 County Cooperative Agreements. Hughes began by stating that Merced County was recently informed that they have a new cherry packing facility. Merced County exhausted its funding for its FY 2023/24 agreement. An amendment was made to Merced County's FY 2023/24 agreement to include an additional \$7,000 for cherry inspection costs.

Carrie Mitchell, of Merced County, discussed the need for additional funding in more detail. Merced County requested an increase in FY 2024/25 funding. Meena Farms is starting a cherry packing facility for the 2024 season and estimated approximately 500,000 containers to be packed at the facility. Merced County estimates they will need an additional \$7,006 to cover training, inspection hours, and mileage driven to the facility. This increase raises Merced County's FY 2024/25 Proposed Agreement to \$22,834, bringing the total Proposed County agreements for FY 2024/25 to \$850,811.

Due to the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 701, Los Angeles (LA) County plans to increase their wholesaler registration fees, allowing them to expand their enforcement. As a result, Riverside County will no longer perform supplemental enforcement activities in LA County. Hughes noted that many other counties are also considering enacting their own registration programs. Nina Zlatkov, of LA County, noted that the increase to wholesaler registration fees needs to be approved by the county's board of supervisors and the county plans to enact the increase in the next calendar year.

Tulare County requested \$20,000 in additional funding, which was not granted due to weather related revenue losses.

ITEM 7: PROPOSED FY 2024/25 PROGRAM BUDGET

Hughes presented the Proposed FY 2024/25 Program Budget. Proposed expenditures include: \$857,752 for personal services; \$1,064,630 in operating expenses and equipment; and \$457,068 for departmental services; bringing the total program cost for FY 2024/25 to \$2,379,450. With a projected gas tax credit of \$36,170 and a cash adjustment for statewide costs of \$133,933, the total projected program budget is \$2,477,213. The projected revenue for FY 2023/24 is \$2,217,563.

Hughes noted the FY 2022/23 Program Budget was not fully expended due to savings under personal services as the Compliance Unit Agriculture Program Supervisor (APS) IV position, of which a portion of salary and benefits are covered by the program, remains vacant. Additionally, the Northern District Fruit and Vegetable Quality Control

(F&VQC) Inspector position will not be reclassified to a F&VQC Supervisor II until this current budget year. Moreover, under total operating expenses and equipment, there was a printing expense of \$17,043 for the printing of non-compliance books which have not been printed in several years. Overall, the FY 2022/23 Program Budget actual expenditures were \$211,421 below the proposed budget.

Hughes expects savings for total personal services to continue in FY 2023/24 due to the previously mentioned APS IV vacancy, as well as the Citrus Program APS I position that has been vacant since May 2023. Karrie Batchelor has since accepted the position and will start in May 2024.

Hughes anticipates an increase for total personal services in FY 2024/25 due to some employees receiving merit salary adjustments and a three percent salary increase for all positions. Hughes noted a slight increase in the Utilities-Internet line item under operating expenses and equipment for the connection of internet services at the program's Fresno office.

Garret Patricio noted that the program's revenue appeared to be lower than program expenses and asked if the cash adjustment line item was meant to address this difference. Hughes responded that the cash adjustment line item allocates funds for statewide administrative costs, such as pro rata for the State Controller's Office and the Department of General Services, and for SB 84 pension repayments. Patricio further questioned if the committee should revisit assessment rate levels to address this difference in expenditures and revenue. Hughes highlighted that the program raised assessments in July 2021, and along with recent budget savings, the program has consistently built up its reserves. Chair Pandol requested continuing the discussion at the next committee meeting.

i. Inspection and Compliance Branch Administrative Fees Breakdown

Marcee Yount presented information on a breakdown of indirect costs within total departmental services, which are composed of Branch personal services, purchases, and equipment. Yount discussed the percentage that each program within the Inspection and Compliance Branch allocates towards indirect costs, with the Standardization Program being responsible for 15 percent of indirect costs. Yount then discussed the program's overhead percentages, with the Standardization Program being responsible for three percent of Division administration, and about half a percent for both executive administration and shared Information Technology.

Chair Pandol requested a motion to approve the Proposed FY 2024/25 Program Budget as submitted.

MOTION: Patrick Tucker moved to approve the Proposed FY 2024/25 Program Budget submitted. Jeff Simonian seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 8: PROGRAM UPDATES

Hughes shared an update on imported table grape inspections in LA County, Riverside County, and Ventura County. LA County started testing Peruvian table grapes at the beginning of January. LA County inspected 35 lots and had one notice of non-compliance for labeling. Chilean table grape inspections began on March 16. To date, eight vessels of table grapes have arrived at the Port of Long Beach. Riverside County has inspected seven of the eight expected vessels in which 12 notices of non-compliances for labeling were issued. Ventura County has not had any product available for inspection this year.

ITEM 9: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Pandol requested a discussion regarding assessment rates and the program's reserve balance. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, October 22, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and will be held via Zoom.

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m. by Chair Pandol.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stacey Hughes, Program Supervisor
Standardization Program