

Minutes

North Dakota Organic Advisory Board
Doublewood Inn
Bismarck ND
June 2, 2010

Chairman Brad Brummond called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Roll Call was taken:

Advisory Board members present: Commissioner Doug Goehring, Brad Brummond, Christina Dockter, Scott Sinner, Grayson Hoberg, Ernie Hoffert, Lowell Kaul, Anne Ongstad, Dennis Schill, Kevin Kvamme, Britt Jacobson.

Advisory Board members absent: Chuck Gustafson, Keith Kadrmas, Betsy Perkins, David Podoll, Kayla Pulvermacher,

Others present: Marlene Ells, Janet Jacobson, Chuck Fleming, Dane Braun

A quorum was declared.

Chairman Brummond asked if anyone wanted any additions to the agenda. Fleming requested an item be added regarding the requirement that a producer needs to get letters from 3 companies saying they do not have a particular organic seed available before being able to buy non-organic seed.

Review and discussion of North Dakota Organic Economic Impact Study

Fleming reported that the Department had completed its study of the economic impact of the organic industry on North Dakota that had been requested by Commissioner Goehring. Numbers used to compile the report were from the survey conducted by the USDA Ag Research Service in 2008 on producers and by a survey to the 38 organic processors which was conducted by the ND Department of Agriculture. 20 of the 38 processors responded. The data was run through the NDSU Input-out Model to determine the effect on the economy.

Janet Jacobson pointed out that that the survey of producers done by USDA-ARS found 127 producers and she believed that there were more producers in the state, so it understated the economic impact. Dennis Schill of Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society (NPSAS) and Christina Dockter of International Certification Services (ICS) pointed out that their organizations were not included in the report and that through employment and operating expenses added significant impact to the North Dakota economy.

A discussion followed between Commissioner Goehring and the Board. Commissioner Goehring pointed out that there were a number of priorities and enhancements he intended to pursue in the 2011 Legislature. He outlined the procedure that the Governor had set forth in his guidelines to agencies for the preparation of the 2011-13 budget. He asked the Board for priority items they would like to see if funds were available to the Department for organic activities. He indicated that perhaps a ½ FTE might be possible to get, particularly if it was a temporary position. Chairman Brummond described the

biggest need is to “grow the next generation of organic farmers.” He indicated that a person who could coordinate the many activities of the various organic related groups to more effectively grow the industry would be very helpful. The Board concurred with those comments. Fleming pointed out that with additional resources, more effort could be made to help small organic processing companies grow their businesses. Commissioner Goehring indicated he would further review the economic impact study and would be determining further action as he prepares the Department budget. The Commissioner thanked the Board for the work that they were doing and expressed his appreciation for the guidance they were providing.

Grayson Hoberg moved that the minutes of the March 9, 2010 Board meeting as printed be approved. Seconded by Scott Sinner. Motion carried.

Chuck Fleming gave an updated financial report. He reported expenditures of \$1,898 since the March 9th meeting bringing a total of \$10,558 in total expenditures for the 2009-11 biennium. He indicated that some work done on the web site had not yet been billed. The budget for the biennium is \$30,000. **Grayson Hoberg moved that the report be accepted. Seconded by Christina Dockter. Motion carried.**

The Board recessed for lunch and returned at 12:40 pm.

Reports:

North Dakota Department of Agriculture

Chuck Fleming reported that the mapping of organic lands in North Dakota has been completed, but he was not satisfied with how they are represented on a North Dakota map. Further work will be done to make the map user friendly and then it will be put on the web site.

Fleming indicated that he would be working on implementing the 2010 organic reimbursement program. The Department has a contract with USDA for \$140,000 for that program. Fleming indicated he would work with the certifying agencies to help administer the program. The Board reiterated its support for that.

Fleming reported that the data base has been updated utilizing information from the USDA site. Communications will be going out to the producers and processors to get some information that is missing.

Website Report

Janet Jacobson gave an update on the work that has been done to update the website. Many improvements have been implemented. The classified ad section needs to get activated. Each producer and processor will need to have an access code for that to work. Board members gave some suggestions as to how that might be done.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Brummond reported that he believes the interest in organic agriculture is increasing. He believes the web site is generating a lot of interest and is optimistic about the future of the industry. He stated that a Sustainable Ag Committee is now formed in the Extension Service. Five county agents will be going to Tulsa for an organic tour sponsored by SARE. There is a soil quality workshop for county agents in Carrington on June 28-29 and one in Bismarck the first part of July.

Brummond also reported for the Consumer and Retail Committee that they will be making a second effort to get the cooperation of retailers to have them post the organic products they carry on the www.ndorganics.nd.gov web site.

Bowdon Locker Plant Report

Lowell Kaul reported that the Bowdon Locker Plant project has received 2 grants totaling \$42,000 and that the equity drive for \$550,000 is still progressing.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Fleming brought up an issue that came from an organic producer who was not happy with the rule that he had to get letters from three seed dealers saying they didn't have the organic seed he was looking for before he could plant non-organic seed. Chairman Brummond pointed out that was part of the national rules, not something that a certifying agency could waive. Discussion was held. There was not any sympathy from the Board to seek a change in the present rule!

Discussion was held on being represented at Trade Shows. The Board agreed that it was worthwhile to continue having a booth at the Expo in Minot in January. The Board also agreed that it probably was not cost effective to continue having a booth at the ND Farm Bureau convention unless the Commissioner felt that a presence was needed there.

Fleming announced that the following Board members terms expire on June 30th:

Dockter

Sinner

Jacobson

Hoffert

Ongstad

Gustafson

Perkins

He indicated he needed to make some recommendations to the Commissioner by then. All present at the meeting whose term expires indicated they would serve another two year term if asked by the Commissioner. Fleming will check with those not present at this meeting.

Election of a Chair and Vice-Chair were held. **It was moved by Scott Sinner and seconded by Grayson Hoberg that the same officers remain for another one year term. Motion carried unanimously.** Thus the Chair will be Brad Brummond and the Vice Chair will be Britt Jacobson.

It was decided that the next meeting of the Board will be September 23rd at a place to be determined.

Dennis Schill announced that the Winter Conference of Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society will be held at the Ramada Suites in Fargo on February 4-5, 2011.

Kevin Kvamme moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Lowell Kaul. Motion carried.