

Minutes
North Dakota Organic Advisory Board
Harvey Armory
October 26, 2009

Chairman Brad Brummond called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm.

Roll Call was taken:

Advisory Board members present: Brad Brummond, Christina Dockter, Chuck Gustafson, Grayson Hoberg, Britt Jacobson, Lowell Kaul, Kevin Kvamme, Anne Ongstad, Kayla Pulvermacher, Dennis Schill representing Donna Hines, and Chuck Fleming representing Commissioner Doug Goehring.

Advisory Board members absent: Ernie Hoffert, Keith Kadrmas, Betsy Perkins, David Podoll, and Scott Sinner.

Others present: Marlene Ells, Janet Jacobson, Sherry Izler, Bob Weyrich, Stephanie Sinner, Joe Yotti, and Clara Kjelland.

The Chairman asked if there were more items that should be put on the agenda. The following items were added:

APUC grant

Greetings to the Commissioner

Resolution commending Dakota Prairie Organic Flour Mill and Grayson Hoberg

Bob Weyrich- South Dakota Department of Agriculture Added Value Specialist

Motion relating to SBARE

Christina Dockter moved that the minutes of the July 13, 2009 Board meeting as printed be approved. Seconded by Anne Onstad. Motion carried.

Chuck Fleming gave an updated financial report. He reported that the Department of Agriculture has committed \$30,000 towards organic activities for the 2009-11 biennium. He reported the following expenditures since July 1, 2009:

Expenditures-July 1-2009

July 13, 2009 Board meeting	\$2,380
Bowdon Locker Plant Study	\$1,000
ND Farm Bureau Booth	\$ 375
KMOT Expo Booth Space	\$ 450
Total	\$4,205

Chairman Brummond pointed out that the \$275 sponsorship expenditure for the NDSU Extension Service Social held on October 13th was not included.

Britt Jacobson moved that the financial report be amended to reflect that expenditure and when so amended be approved. Seconded by Dennis Schill. Motion carried.

Reports:

Priorities of SBARE relating to Organics

Dennis Schill reported that Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society has been invited to appear before SBARE on November 20th. He handed out a 3 page draft letter and was seeking advice. Chairman Brummond thought “GROWING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ORGANIC FARMERS TO FILL THE GROWING DEMAND” should be the primary purpose. Discussion ensued about expanding activities at the Carrington, Langdon, and Dickinson Research Centers as well as the possibility of an Organic Extension Specialist being hired by the Cooperative Extension Service. Chairman Brummond pointed out that NDSU Cooperative Extension Service Director Duane Hauck is quite supportive of getting that organization more involved in organics. After some discussion it was agreed that Chairman Brummond would contact Mr. Hauck for budget numbers that might be included in the letter. It was decided that it would be inappropriate to send a letter of support directly to SBARE members since the Commissioner serves on that Board.

Update on Bowdon Locker Plant

Pat Downs, Cooperative Development Specialist for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electrics, gave an update on the proposed locker plant at Bowdon. He pointed out that the feasibility study showed that there are enough cattle in the area to make the plant feasible. The challenges are raising the equity and finding strong management. He indicated that two people have shown an interest in managing the plant so he was confident that this challenge could be met. He pointed out that raising the proper equity is a bigger hurdle. He estimates that \$200,000 in equity would be needed for the \$350,000 plant. The goal is to slaughter 500-1,000 animals per year. He believes the plant should seek organic certification once it is built. The next step is for the community support group to write the business plan and then start an equity drive. The group can do an equity drive by contacting no more than 50 individuals to lessen the security filing requirements.

Food Export Association- Midwest

Joe Yotti, who had represented the Food Export Association-Midwest at the ribbon cutting ceremony at Dakota Prairie Organic Flour Mill earlier in the day, made a presentation to the Board on the various programs that Food Export Association-Midwest offers on international trade. Food Export Association-Midwest is a non-profit organization comprised of Ag Commissioners from 12 Midwest States. The North Dakota Department of Agriculture pays \$7,000 dues annually. Major funding for the organization comes from USDA Foreign Agriculture Service.

Chairman’s Report

Chairman Brummond reported that the NDSU Extension Social on October 13th went very well. He and Scott Sinner represented the board at the social. He pointed out that organics is now becoming more mainstream in Extension circles. There appears to be a lot more interest in that topic. He announced that the North Dakota – South Dakota SARE program has now been split. He said that his ultimate goal is to have every agriculture student at NDSU take a course in sustainable or organic agriculture.

Website Update

Janet Jacobson reported that there are a number of things that need to be done with the www.ndorganics.nd.gov website and she was waiting for direction from Chuck Fleming. Both of them expressed frustration with getting things onto the site. Jacobson as a contractor does not have direct access to place things on the site and it is necessary to go through the Department of Agriculture and then a contracted vendor. She pointed out that it is not possible to access the website from the Department of Agriculture website. Fleming said he would try and solve that situation. Work needs to get completed on the classified ad section. Fleming indicated that the data base also needs to be updated, since that hasn't been done since the site went online.

Organic Reimbursement Program

Chuck Fleming gave a report on the USDA organic reimbursement program. As of October 23rd:

2008 organic reimbursement applications processed

111 complete applications \$76,290.48 paid out of grant

2009 organic reimbursement applications processed

37 complete applications \$24,399.59 paid out of grant

We are sitting on eight (8) 2008 applications that are incomplete.

We are sitting on thirty nine (39) 2009 applications that are incomplete.

Received eight (8) 2009 and two (2) 2008 applications in today's mail. Not processed yet to see if they submitted all the paperwork.

Old Business

Janet Jacobson recommended that we wait until January 2010 before deciding to update the Status of Organic Agriculture in North Dakota report. The Board agreed.

The Board agreed that no further action was required at this time regarding the Bowdon Locker Plant Study.

Fleming initiated a discussion regarding mapping organic lands for the benefit of commercial and non-commercial spray applicators. Fleming pointed out that the Department does that for bee keepers and grape growers. Christina Dockter pointed out that her organization sends that information to the ND Aeronautics Commission. Fleming indicated that he would proceed to place that information on the web site for next year's season.

Fleming indicated that booth space has been secured for the ND Farm Bureau Convention on November 19th and 20th in Bismarck and for the KMOT Expo in Minot on January 27-29, 2010. Marlene Ells volunteered to help with the Farm Bureau event and Marlene Ells and Lowell Kaul volunteered to help with the Minot Show.

New Business

The 2009-11 Work Plan was discussed. At the July meeting of the Board, a budget of \$30,000 was established:

Board meeting costs	\$12,000
Web site updates	\$5,000
Organic Statistics Updates	\$1,500
Trade Shows	\$4,000
Uncommitted	\$7,500
Total Budget	\$30,000

It was agreed that a meeting with Commissioner Goehring was necessary to get his priorities for the biennium. Chairman Brummond said that education was an important role that the Board could assist with. He named supporting Dickinson Organic Days, farm tours, working with FARRMS and SARE and assisting Frank Kutka, Pat Caar and others to develop the industry as examples. He also said that the www.ndorganics.nd.gov web site is a key component to this educational process.

Discussion was held regarding Organics now being a part of the federal EQIP program. There was some concern as to how that program is working. Britt Jacobson suggested that representatives of NRCS be invited to the next meeting to get a progress report and to see what efforts the Board may be able to take to make the program successful.

A discussion was held on legislation for the 2011 Legislative Session. It was emphasized that efforts need to start early to be successful. There was general agreement that this is a topic that needs to wait until the Board has a meeting with the Commissioner.

Grayson Hoberg moved that the Board send greetings and best wishes to Commissioner Goehring and wish him a speedy recovery and also express the desire to sit down with him at his convenience to discuss organic issues. Seconded by Lowell Kaul. Motion carried.

Kevin Kvamme moved that we congratulate fellow board member Grayson Hoberg on his business expansion and thank him for his hospitality on this special day. Seconded by Christina Dockter. Motion carried.

Discussion was held regarding attending the North Dakota Farmers Union Convention to be held in November. Since they have no trade show, it was suggested that perhaps a representative of the Board show attend the convention.

Dennis Schill moved the Chairman be authorized to appoint a representative to attend the convention and receive expenses. Grayson Hoberg seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Chairman had asked that the subject of an APUC grant be on the agenda. The Chairman indicated since they had not met with the Commissioner, it would be premature to have a discussion on that.

Chuck Fleming invited Bob Weyrich of the South Dakota Department of Agriculture to make any comments after having attended this meeting. He indicated that their office is considering becoming more active in organic matters and wanted to see our Advisory Board in operation. He is calling a meeting of South Dakota organic stakeholders in the next month to get their input. He indicated that most of the issues that were discussed at this Board meeting are the same issues facing South Dakota.

It was agreed that the date of the next quarterly meeting of the Board be set after consulting with Commissioner Goehring's schedule.

Grayson Hoberg moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Kevin Kvamme. Motion carried.