

Executive Committee Conference Call Minutes

April 12, 2002

NOSB Members: Dave Carter, Board Chair; Jim Riddle, Vice Chair; Goldie Caughlan, Acting Secretary; Owusu Bandele, Crops Committee Chair; Kim Burton, Materials Committee Chair; Steven Harper, past Processing Committee Chair; Mark King, Processing Committee Chair; Willie Lockeretz, International Committee Chair; George Siemon, Livestock Committee Chair.

NOP Staff: Katherine Benham; Richard Mathews, Barbara Robinson

Called to Order: 2:35 p.m. EDT Dave Carter, Chair

Agenda: Approved Agenda ([Appendix B](#))

Announcements: None

Minutes Approval: JR moved to approve February Exec. Committee Minutes, KB seconded, approved unanimously; JR moved to approve March EC Minutes, KB seconded, approved unanimously.

Comments from the Chair: There is a need to facilitate and improve the flow of communication between the NOSB and the NOP to better facilitate implementation of the program. DC and RM have discussed some key concerns, particularly DC has suggested that there is need for a running inventory of recommendations made by NOSB and tracking those recommendations for progress within NOP. NOSB wonders whether there is something missing in our decision-making process or what the Board can do to facilitate the situation.

GS suggested running list showing pending actions, status on all decisions. BR offers to work offline with GS, understanding his request, and responding, getting info together for him.

Discussion: Concluded that each committee needs to generate a list of past committee actions and bring it forth.

BR agrees it is a good idea that we jointly pause briefly, and that recommendations previously made be gathered, with a status report and feedback to NOSB. Meetings are so infrequent that it is sometimes easy to lose track.

BR generously offered to commence short ten to fifteen minutes weekly update conference calls for interested NOSB members to call into as they see the need. NOSB well satisfied with the offer. In response to further question of GS, BR suggests that Board members contact her (e-mail or phone) ahead of time regarding specific questions, and if/as necessary she will arrange for particular staff members to participate in the call(s), the better to answer questions as fully as possible. No minutes will be required. Will not replace monthly Exec. Board calls.

First date will be arranged with DC and a memo to full board. DC and other members thanked BR for her response.

Discussion concerning the recent reassignment of a key NOP staff member, Mark Keating. There was general NOSB agreement that this is a personnel issue and that no comments could be made by NOP staff. Discussion concerning frustration that no announcement has been made of new NOSB members. Board letter to the Secretary had requested appointments be made before April 5 or after May meeting, Concern that new appointees must have sufficient time to study issues of materials, especially, and be able to reach informed decisions for voting in May.

RM stated that outgoing NOSB members are asked to attend but will not vote; that will be for the incoming replacement members. DC will interview each new member ASAP after appointments, relative to committee assignments. The orientation session on Sunday, the 5th of May might run fairly long.

GC recommended, DC agreed, to send an additional letter of concern to the Secretary.

Program Update: BR reported that accreditation is progressing, but she sought the Exec. Board's opinion on delaying initial announcements of appointments for approximately one week past the target date of April 21. Discussion of timing of announcements. It was generally agreed that a week delay should not be critical. A press release will be issued about April 29. Any media events or other attention is within the purview of the Secretary. The first Accredited Certifiers will then be posted to the web and letters sent to successful applicants. Other accreditations will be made as soon as they are complete and as they are approved.

Website update: Discussion of FAQ's. JR concerned, seeking to track action on antibiotics, vaccines, small farmer exemption, and certification of private label products. RM directed Board's attention to the "Summary of NOSB October Meeting" on the website. The "missing" are antibiotics, vaccine and semen, small farm exemption and certification of private label actions. NOP staff will check into this.

BR states that the new design of website will please NOSB, with our "own" section on NOSB page. JR says need to post within NOP. He also brought up concerns that the current answer to "is organic best/better for soil than conventional," is hurting organic program credibility. Discussion as to what can and cannot say under constraints of the rule. JR felt it should be possible to point out in a positive manner the aspects of organic that relate to water quality, fertility, and to point out that these practices could also be embraced by conventional agriculture and achieve these measures as well. BR suggested that If JR or other NOSB member want to propose wording for a different "answer" to be posted, that will be given consideration.

US and Japanese Equivalency Agreement: JR concerned that 3 materials (lignin sulfonate, alkali extracted fuming acid and potassium bicarbonate), widely used in US, are causing real problems. Japan won't accept any of these, he says. Discussion. Growers who want to sell to the Japanese markets will need to grown to their standards. BR will check into the agreement and report later.

Staffing for Crop and Livestock: No decision has been made as to who will be NOP contact staff for crop and livestock (following Mark Keating's reassignment).

Farm Bill Update: DC reports persistent rumors about language being "dropped in" to the farm bill concerning commercial availability issue, and addressing the claimed shortage of organic livestock and poultry feed, arising out of Georgia. Will watch the bill. This is a significant issue. (Some 550 thousand birds are being grown "organically" there.)

BR: asks NOSB's assistance in contacting supply side, growers etc., and finding out "what are your planting intentions out there?" The farm bill might be used to change the standard requiring 100% organic feed, to delay the feed requirement, or broaden the concept of "commercial

availability." BR reported she has contracted with Leopold Center for Sustainable Ag at Iowa State to survey growers widely for availability, starting with Iowa, moving west - will be a few weeks to get any results however.

Crops Update: GS says access to outdoors still very edgy issue, with attempts to get rid of the wording continuing. He sees the farm bill as a golden opportunity for those opponents as well. After the farm bill is signed, if we get past that without changes, that will be helpful.

May NOSB meeting Agenda: Deadline for getting materials to Katherine Benham for copying, and into the Board packet: Friday the 19th. Orientation of New NOSB: Will need plenty of time, more than two hours, JR feels, to adequately cover the Policy Manual. Urges that NOSB all come fully familiar with the manual, prepared to offer proposed changes, amendments. DC concurs, each chair will need more than an hour as well. Will not break up until 5:45 or later if necessary.

Materials Committee: KB e-mailed updated materials list today (attached). Nine of 11 TAPS have been fedexed and remaining two on Chilean Nitrate will be mailed today to NOP. Calcium Stearate will be completed and mailed to NOP on the 18th. KB has had considerable contact with CFN, they are all primed and ready to receive material to review, have staff online, and are ready to go. After May, six materials remain to be referred this year on OMRI's contract, with UC Davis about the same number, so balance will end up referred to CFN. KB also expressed concern at not having yet seen new process for shortened petitions. OB is working on draft of hydroponics. Anxious for spirulina report. KB says she'll ask Toni S to e-mail that to OB.

KB urges Board Chairs to bring ALL draft language to Austin, it definitely needs to be in

writing. We had problems in this arena in October, with less materials, and with so many materials this time it is even more important.

Crops Committee: OB says composting draft will be ready next week, progressing on planting material and getting transitional position out to his committee members. Making every effort to get it to KB by the 19th.

Livestock Committee: GS reports continued industry concerns on access to outdoors and dairy replacement issues. Votes definitely will be taken on: feed ingredient, dairy animal replacement, access to outdoors. Still working on wording for excipients in medications. GS really feels loss of Mark Keating's assistance in this issue. Discussion and query: in considering excipients, if approved for use in fertilizer, what about medication? Is a TAP required? If approved in human food, can it be extrapolated to livestock food, or Is a TAP required?

Processing Committee: Re: Diethylaminoethanol (DEAE) discussed last week, deferred one week for additional information from industry, and gelatin to be discussed on April 15 call, and hopefully reach consensus. Calcium Stearate will have to be last minute position, as not received early enough. Question to RM: No progress on statement re: apiculture and honey as relates to effects on processors? RM hasn't yet met with attorneys but will next week, and will be ready for May.

MK asks clarification on Sec.205.606, and RM confirms it will be addressed via technical correction.

MK has received Steven Harper's collection of comments received regarding the suggested technologies needing TAP's, will discuss in conference calls and try to bring it forward to May meeting for discussion.

Discussion re: natural flavors: KB will work on drafting language for policy handbook, as to how far back, how many levels, to go to meet intent of annotation.

International Committee: WL reports no meetings, just three members, with JR and MK. Awaiting DC's new committee appointee. Need someone with international trade background and interest if possible. WL says the EU/US equivalency issue is the most critical standard to be addressed. He has set up a conference call among the three committee members today. Nothing will be available for May. Discussing in May, vote in September is goal.

Accreditation Committee: JR reports some work done on draft for grower group recommendation, will get to committee in few days, to NOP late next week, with final recommendation in September, discussion only in May.

Re: FAQ on web, the full name of certification agent is said to be required on label, but some have a short and also a longer name. Can their legal acronym be used? This is a question being asked by several who believe they will be ultimately certified. Also querying as to will there be instructions as to how to report suspected non-compliance. JR volunteers to draft the "how to contact" FAQ answer for RM's perusal and approval, and RM accepts.

JR will consult with BR (who left the conf call) concerning peer review status, and report at Austin.

Added issue: DC reports concerns raised over inerts in pheromones, mating disruption materials, and that a high percentage have List 3 (prohibited) inerts. KB says OMRI is working with EPA, that about 60 materials should be moved from List 3 to List 4, and of those, about 14 will be by August. Not clear if those include the pheromones and OMRI could not comment because of conflict concerns.

Emily of OMRI suggested looking at making recommendation to change annotation to pheromones, so if in traps, no food contact, but as it now stands the annotation is unworkable.

DC has heard concerns from fruit growers. KB feels that the revised petition process will work to expedite questions for shortened TAP's

WL offered a motion expressing gratitude for Mark Keating's past service, and requesting that NOP reconsider his reassignment. After much discussion, the motion passed, 7:2, with KB and GC voting against passage. (The approved motion is appended to these minutes as [Appendix A](#)) It is recognized that the motion is nonbinding. It will be shared with other Board members.

On JR's motion, WL's second, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m. EDT

Submitted by
Goldie Caughlan, NOSB Acting Secretary

[Appendix C](#)