

Kings County Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes

March 7, 2007

Call to Order:

Chairman Gregory called the Special Meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. in the Agricultural Conference Room, in the Agricultural Center of the Kings County Government Center, 680 N. Campus Dr., Hanford, CA.

Members Present:

Jim Gregory, Gerald Theadore,
Bill Tos, Johnny Starling

Members Absent:

Don Mills, Charles Draxler
Ryan Bertao

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Kyle Sand for Pete Moock
Bill Zumwalt
Les Wright for Tim Niswander

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Kathy Sargent, Larry Spikes

Auxiliary Members Present:

Kerry Arroues, Peggy Gregory
Carol Collar

Auxiliary Members Absent:

Jeff Tyner, Jay Salyer

County Staff Present:

Greg Gatzka, Mark Sherman

Visitors Present:

Joe Neves, Emergency Director
Bob Prys, Prospective Member
Jim Roth, Darling International
Jeff Baker, Darling International
Jay Pezoldt, Baker Commodities
Doug Fletcher, Baker Commodities

Unscheduled Comments:

None

Minutes: January 11, April 12, September 13, and October 11, 2006:

A Motion was made and seconded (Theodore/Gregory) to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2007 meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

New Members:

Chairperson Gregory introduced Johnny Starling as a new committee member representing Ag processing.

Kings County 2008 General Plan Update:

Greg Gatzka, Kings County Planning Agency, provided a presentation to the Committee concerning the county-wide General Plan update and provided several informational handouts including conceptual

plans for future development in Kettleman City. He explained that concepts were being developed and considered to use a denser community design in order to prevent residential/urban sprawl in the County. Mr. Gatzka stated that outreach meetings to discuss community plans and concepts have been underway in Armona and Kettleman City since 2006 and that meetings in Stratford and Home Garden would be scheduled during the summer of 2007. He explained that a proposal to establish a General Plan Advisory Committee has been developed and will be presented to the Board of Supervisors at their next scheduled meeting. The Committee will be comprised of 15 members with representatives from the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, cities, communities, irrigation/water districts, Ag industries, commercial/industrial operations and the public at large. Mr. Gatzka said he hoped to have a draft General Plan document prepared by the summer of 2008.

Kings County Dairy Element Update:

Bill Zumwalt and Greg Gatzka, Kings County Planning Agency, provided an informational update to the Committee concerning the Dairy Element update and stated that the Dairy Element update was being combined with three (3) other General Plan Amendments and would be submitted to the Planning Commission on April or May of this year.

Dead Animal Management Plan:

Mark Sherman, Kings County Planning Agency, provided an update to the Committee concerning progress on the rough draft of the proposed Kings County Dead Animal Management plan. He informed the Committee that he had contacted Susan Good in Senator Florez's office as requested by the Committee Chairman at the last meeting, concerning the possibility of having the prohibition against composting of Mammalian flesh lifted. Susan has made contact with the legislative liaison for the CA Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) and it appears that CIWMB has been working to resolve the issue. Carol Collar's name was given to Ms. Good as the technical point of contact with CIWMB and she will work with the Board on the possibility of conducting a pilot program to evaluate the feasibility of dead animal composting.

The committee discussed at length, the issues and obstacles of finalizing the proposed Emergency Plan in order to put the plan in place before the summer months. Representatives from the two rendering plants, Baker Commodities and Darling International, were present at the meeting and briefed the Committee on the processing capacity problems that occurred in the summer of 2006 during the heat wave and their future ability to meet animal processing time constraints. They estimated that during the heat wave they were operating at least 20-30 percent or more over capacity and that many of the dead animals had to be shipped elsewhere. Representatives from both companies stated that they were currently operating at capacity and that the lengthy permitting process was their biggest obstacle in expanding their processing capacity. Both companies agreed that any support they could get from the County and the dairy/poultry industries might be helpful in influencing the agencies involved in the permitting process.

Bill Zumwalt, in response to Committee member questions, stated that originally the County thought that the limiting factor for dairy expansion in Kings County would be the ability of the cropland to take the manure waste, but it now appears that the ability of the rendering industry to process the dead animals would likely be the limiting factor. Mr. Zumwalt stated that if an applicant for a new or expanding dairy was unable to obtain a letter from the rendering plants stating that the dead animals would be picked up or accepted by the plant that no new permits could be issued by the County.

Peggy Gregory asked how the Emergency Action Plan would be used and Mr. Zumwalt stated that a copy would be attached to each new or expanding dairy permit and disseminated to all dairy owner/operators and made available on County websites.

The Committee discussed several dead animal burial and composting possibilities including a central site where animals could be composted by qualified individuals. Joe Neves, Kings County Emergency Director stated that he thought the establishment of a Mortality Intervention Team made up of County staff to assist dairy owners/operators in the proper burial and/or composting of dead animals could be part of the solution in dealing effectively with an emergency situation. Mr. Neves stated that the team, made up of 6-8 people, trained in the proper methods of composting and burial, could respond to assist dairy owners/operators and provide technical assistance on-site as needed. He also stated that the dairy must ensure land is set aside or identified in advance as a mortality area for burial/composting and must also have the equipment and resources on site to allow for proper disposal which would limit the necessity of moving dead animals on County roadways. The Mortality Intervention Team would be supervised by Emergency Services.

Chairperson Gregory directed staff to add the Mortality Intervention Team to the Emergency Action Plan and that the Committee would continue to work on the Plan at the next meeting.

Miscellaneous:

- a. Correspondence: None

- b. Member Comments: Chairperson Gregory passed out copies of “The California Food and Farm Protection Act” Bill Number: AB 541 as information to Committee members.

Adjournment

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is April 11, 2007.

Respectfully Submitted,

William R. Zumwalt, Secretary