

KINGS COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHARLES DRAXLER – DAIRY INDUSTRY
JIM GREGORY – AG CHEMICALS & PETROLEUM
MICHELE COSTA – KINGS COUNTY FARM BUREAU

DON MILLS – WATER
BILL TOS – NUT CROPS
VACANT – SMALL FARMS

JOHNNY STARLING – AG PROCESSING
BOB PRYS – FEED/SEED & GRAIN
BRIAN POTTER – AG EQUIPMENT

STAFF: MARK SHERMAN (559) 582-3211 EXT. 2675

MINUTES OF October 11, 2012

Call to Order:

Chairman Mills called the meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee to order at 12:13 p.m. as an informational meeting only, since a quorum wasn't met, in the Ag Commissioner's Admin Multi-Purpose Room, 680 N. Campus 1400 W. Lacy Blvd, Hanford, California.

Committee Members Present:

Don Mills, Brian Potter, Bill Tos,
Johnny Starling

Committee Members Absent:

Charles Draxler, Michele Costa,
Jim Gregory, Bob Prys

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Tim Niswander, Greg Gatzka, Kathy Sargent

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Auxiliary Members Present:

Kerry Arroues, Jay Salyer
Jim Sullins, Carol Collar,

Auxiliary Members Absent:

Charles Buhl

Committee Coordinator Present

Tony Barba

Committee Coordinator Absent

County Staff Present:

Johannah Hartley, Chuck Kinney,
Terri Yarbrough, Francisco Urbina

County Staff Absent:

Visitors Present:

Unscheduled Comments:

None

Minutes: April 12, 2011 Meeting:

No motion was made.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Drought Conditions in Kings County:

Johannah Hartley updated the Committee on the Board of Supervisor's resolution declaring a local emergency due to drought conditions in Kings County. Ms. Hartley reported that the fire risk was high and the 2011-2012 water year and precipitation has been below average. The lack of precipitation has resulted in a 90% forage loss within the County. She reported that the County continues to face reduced water deliveries, overdrafting of groundwater and high risk of wildland fires.

NEW BUSINESS

Walnut Theft Ordinance:

Tim Niswander introduced a draft ordinance to address walnut theft. He also provided a copy of the ordinance adopted by Tulare County. He asked for input from the Committee and reported that the ordinance should be in place for the 2013 harvest.

Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program:

Rick Hoelzel and Erik Calthorp representing Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition, explained groundwater regulations from the coalition and irrigator's standpoint and also explained member requirements. Mr. Hoelzel reported that the EIR which was being considered for adoption by the Regional Water Quality Control Board is currently being challenged. He reported that the RWQCB held a workshop in August that was well attended and encouraged everyone to attend the workshop that is scheduled to be held in November. Mr. Hoelzel also gave an overview of the Coalition responsibilities and key issues. Mr. Bill Tos expressed a concern that there would be exemptions for small farmers creating a burden for everyone else. He suggested less regulation for the small farmer rather than an exemption.

Correspondence: None

Member Comments: Kerry Arroues shared some peat soil samples he collected from the Delta and reported that this resource is being lost. He stated that there is less than half of what was there in the 1920's. Kathy Sargent reported that there may be additional assistance coming, relating to drought conditions through the Farm Bill. Carol Collar brought to the commission's attention an article called "Everyone Eats There" in the New York Times magazine. She stated this article was very enlightening on how farming is perceived by people. Mr. Greg Gatzka and Mr. Tim Niswander reported that work was still being done with regard to hail cannons. It was suggested that a meeting be held with the growers, with the hopes that an impact could be made on those growers who are causing the problems. Before writing any additional ordinance it was suggested to determine if one or two growers are causing the problem. Greg Gatzka introduced Francisco Urbina as a new Planner on the Community Development staff.

Staff Comments: None

Adjournment

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be January 10, 2013 at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully Submitted,


Gregory Gatzka, Secretary