

MOCAC Special Meeting Minutes
Pasture Rules change
Dec. 5th 2008, 8:00 – 10:00pm
Bozeman MT Holiday Inn
(In conjunction with MOA conference)

Council Members

Laura Garber
Rob Forstenzer
Andy Sponseller
Sharon Lindquist
Greg Thayer (absent)
Mark Bruckner (absent)
Jill Owen (absent)

Department Staff

Doug Crabtree
Andy Gray
Greg Ames
Sean Mulla
Ann Bay

This special meeting was called to order by Greg Ames on behalf of Director Ron de Yong at 8:00 pm

Doug Crabtree presented a power point presentation regarding the proposed rule changes to organic livestock standards with regard to NOSB 7CFR part 205; aka Access to Pasture Rule.

During the presentation Doug Crabtree responded to questions and comments from public attendees, included organic producers, handlers, consumers, state and federal agency personnel.

There were several aspects of the proposed rule that were of concern including: Shade requirements, safeguarding waterways – fencing, restrictions targeted at large dairies and ‘Grass fed’ vs. feed lots. There was concern expressed that 80-90% of Montana livestock operations will be unable to continue certification if the rule were passed as proposed and that small operations would be hurt most. Concern was expressed for a need for a unified strategy in responding with input from Organic Trade Association, Montana Organic Producers Cooperative, Montana Organic Association and other concerned and interested parties.

Senator Baucus’s representative, Brandon Willis, strongly suggested emails and letters be sent to Agriculture committee members and specifically to Senator Baucus. Brandon Willis also suggested no form letters as they would be regarded as less significant.

Greg Ames proposed to include public comments and the advisory council recommendations made at this meeting in the director’s response to the USDA. Rob Forstenzer moved to proceed with this proposal, Sharon Lindquist seconded, unanimously approved by present council members.

Steve Baril requested a copy of department’s letter be sent to the Montana Organic Association (MOA), Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO), Organic Trade Association (OTA), Montana Organic Producers Cooperative (MOPC), Organic Farm Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM), National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) and any other interested party. It was also suggested that a link to the letter might be posted on the program’s web page.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 pm.