

# **Rules of Procedure**

## **Guidelines for Agricultural Advisory Committee**

**Adopted by the Board of Supervisors March 18, 2008**

### **I. ESTABLISHMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) was established by the Board of Supervisors as an agricultural advisory group by Minute Order March 14, 1995 (95-19,550). The duty of the AAC is to provide advice to the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and other County departments on matters related to agriculture. The AAC may review matters that have agricultural resource issues (i.e. land use, economics, pesticides, legislation, water, regulatory issues, property rights, agricultural practices) or may affect agricultural resources including but not limited to policy and ordinance changes, departmental projects or programs, annexation requests by cities, other agency programs, and specific projects that have broad implications to agriculture.

### **II. COMMITTEE AUTHORITY**

The AAC is advisory in nature and has no authority to approve, deny, or require modifications to any matter or project under the committee's consideration. The committee's advice shall be conveyed by written report of the Chair of the AAC, by County staff in reports to decision-making bodies, or by appearance of an authorized representative of the AAC at meetings of decision-making bodies.

### **III. APPOINTMENT PROCESS AND MEMBERSHIP TERM**

#### **A. Size:**

The size of the AAC as established by the Board of Supervisors is 12 members.

#### **B. Composition:**

The composition shall include one appointee by each member of the Board of Supervisors (5) and one member from each of the following groups (7) to be ratified by the Board. All nominees shall have knowledge of or background in agriculture.

- 1) Santa Barbara County Flower and Nursery Grower Association;
- 2) Central Coast Wine Growers Association;
- 3) Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau;
- 4) Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association;

- 5) Santa Barbara County Cattleman's Association;
- 6) California Strawberry Commission/Santa Barbara County Strawberry Growers;
- 7) California Women for Agriculture.

Nomination of alternates to the AAC by each member groups shall be subject to appointment by the Board of Supervisors. Each member of the Board of Supervisors may consider appointing an alternate to their representative.

C. Term of Office:

The term of office for a member of the AAC is 4 years. Members may be reappointed to additional terms with no limit to the number terms a member can serve. However, the term of an appointee of a member of the Board of Supervisors shall end at the expiration of the term of that individual Supervisor.

IV. COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

A. Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

The mission and purpose of the AAC is to review, discuss, form consensus, and advise the Board of Supervisors and other agencies in order to maintain and enhance agriculture as a viable and sustainable industry in Santa Barbara County.

B. Correspondence to Agencies other than the County of Santa Barbara:

The AAC may correspond with agencies outside of county government as long as the AAC follows county policies. If there is an issue that is questionable the AAC shall get the approval of the Board of Supervisors before sending the correspondence. The AAC is free to correspond with other agriculture or agriculture related groups as the need may arise.

C. Request for Action by the Board of Supervisors

A request of the AAC for Board Action must be initiated by at least one member of the Board of Supervisors for approval of the entire Board.

D. Agenda Management

The Chair of the AAC and the Agricultural Commissioner will set the Agenda for each meeting. Anyone wishing to put an item on an agenda may do so through the Chair or the Agricultural Commissioner. A reasonable attempt will be made to limit AAC Meetings to 3 hours or less.

For time sensitive items the Chair and the Agricultural Commissioner may agree to schedule a special meeting prior to the next scheduled meeting.

E. Agenda Distribution:

Agendas and agenda materials should be mailed to the members of the AAC at least 5 days prior to the meeting. Copies of the agendas, minutes, and agenda materials will be made available online at: [www.agcommissioner.com](http://www.agcommissioner.com) and at the Agricultural Commissioner's Offices

V. OFFICERS AND RULES OF CONDUCT

The responsibilities of the AAC also include annual election of officers, consisting of at least a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Chair shall lead all meetings, be the primary spokesperson for the AAC, and be the primary committee liaison to staff and the public. The Vice-Chair shall fulfill the duties of Chair in the latter's absence. Staff of the Agricultural Commissioner's Office shall take notes of, or tape record, each regular and special committee meeting, and shall prepare minutes of motions and discussion items. These minutes shall clearly convey actions and motions taken by the committee. Minutes are to be considered, amended as needed and approved by the full committee at the earliest possible following meeting.

VI. MEETING PROCEDURES

The AAC is subject to the Brown Act. All committee members should familiarize themselves and comply with the Brown Act (Gov. Code § 54950 et seq).

- A. Public notice of AAC meetings shall be provided in accordance with Brown Act requirements.
- B. All AAC meetings shall be open and public. Meetings are to be held in a facility which makes adequate provision for attendance by all interested members of the public.
- C. Members of the public are to be given an opportunity to speak to the AAC on any regular agenda item. Members of the public will also be given an opportunity to speak on any matter not on the agenda which is related to agriculture. All public speakers are subject to reasonable time limitations established by the Chair.
- D. The AAC will elect officers annually.
- E. Meetings shall be run in a parliamentary style. Substantive issues will have higher priority than matters of procedural detail. The Chair has discretion in guiding discussion among committee members and in allowing appropriate public input.

- F. Staff may address the AAC at any time, with timely recognition by the Chair.
- G. Quorum: Seven members shall constitute a quorum. If a vacancy exists on the committee, a majority of the currently appointed members constitute a quorum. Decisions are made by a majority of the members present and voting. No business may be transacted if fewer than a quorum is present. Full discussion, public participation, and staff input shall occur prior to a decision. A vote shall occur after a motion, a second, and deliberation on the motion.
- H. Subcommittees: The AAC may select ad-hoc subcommittees to focus on specific transitory subjects. The AAC may also select standing committees to address continuing subject matter or which meet on a regular schedule established by the AAC; a standing committee is subject to the Brown Act. Subcommittees may be made up of individual AAC members and any member of the public recognized for the purpose by the AAC. In no case shall the number of AAC members on a subcommittee constitute a quorum.

## VII ATTENDANCE

AAC members shall make every effort to attend regular meetings. Members unable to attend any meeting should contact the committee Chair or Agricultural Commissioner staff at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting. Three consecutive unannounced absences by a member shall be grounds for dismissal from the AAC, subject to the discretion of the appointing Supervisor(s).

## VIII APPEARANCE ON AAC'S BEHALF

The Chair, Vice-Chair, or other official designee may speak for the Committee at any applicable non-AAC public hearing or other meeting. Individual members of AAC not so designated, who do testify at a public hearing or other meeting, shall clearly identify themselves as speaking individually and shall clearly indicate that they are not authorized to speak on behalf of the AAC. Official designees shall report back to the AAC at the next meeting.

## IX CONFLICT OF INTEREST

AAC members are not considered to be "public officials" as defined in Government Code Section 82048 and therefore are not subject to the state Political Reform Act. The Board of Supervisor's minute order establishing the AAC provides that the members represent the agricultural industry whose financial interests may be affected by actions taken by decision-makers on matters addressed by the AAC. It is recognized that the AAC is intended to represent the interests of the agricultural industry. Nevertheless, AAC members should remove themselves from all discussions and votes on matters in which they have a direct personal financial interest, or where the member's professional allegiance and/or

personal bias cannot be set aside to allow the member's fair consideration of the issues(s) at hand. In gauging such extra-legal conflicts of interest and/or duty, each member shall exercise careful judgment and introspection in giving priority to the interests of fairness and objectivity; if there is any reasonable doubt that the member has a conflict, the member shall refrain from participation in the committee's deliberations and vote(s). Should a member not refrain voluntarily, the member's participation on any item of official committee business may be prevented by a two-thirds vote of the committee members present, including the member in question.

## X. COMMITTEE AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. AAC Member Duties:

AAC members shall:

1. Punctually and fully attend all regular and special meetings of the AAC and all relevant subcommittee meetings, to the maximum possible extent;
2. Come to all meetings fully prepared, having reviewed the agenda and all related written/graphic material available before the meeting;
3. Conscientiously follow high ethical standards in putting the broad public interest ahead of any personal interest and/or bias, and to abstain from all discussions and votes where this is not possible;
4. Promote full and open discussion of all matters of official committee business;
5. Support the committee Chair, Vice-Chair and staff in maintaining order, keeping discussions relevant to the business at hand, and following proper procedures, while giving primary attention to matters of substance.
6. The AAC is responsible for communicating and reporting the AAC activities, recommendations and comments to the County decision-makers and county officials. This shall be done at the discretion of the AAC upon consideration of a matter. Depending upon the scope and interest of the AAC on a particular matter, the AAC may depend upon departmental staff to forward AAC comments within the framework of the overall staff report and recommendations; direct the Agricultural Commissioner's staff to draft a letter for signature by the Chair; and/or provide public testimony at a public hearing in compliance with Section VIII.X Appearance on the AAC's behalf.

Agricultural Commissioner's Staff Duties

1. Schedule all AAC meetings pertaining to Ag-related issues, making arrangements for all facilities, distribute written graphic materials, notices, agendas, etc. For such meetings, coordinate necessary staff participation and guest speakers;
2. For AAC meetings as appropriate, prepare recommendations and other material for AAC review and comment. Advise the AAC of matters of both substance and procedure;
3. Assist the AAC Chair in promoting full and open participation by all AAC members and other people in attendance at any meeting, keeping discussions pertinent to the business at hand;
4. Handle information requests for materials and general information related and general information related to the official business of the AAC;
5. Coordinate with the Chair on committee and sub-committee meeting schedules.

County Counsel:

Staff support to the AAC will not be provided by the County Counsel. Specific legal issues are to be directed through the Agricultural Commissioner's Office to County Counsel for response.