



In This Issue

September 28, 2011

Support SB 489!

Legislation Recap

Climate & Ag
Workshop for
Technical Advisors

Welcome CalCAN
Intern

Farmers Guide to CSP

UC Davis Sustainable
Ag Major

Ag Almanac

Quick Links

About CalCAN

Donate to CalCAN

Join Our Mailing List!

Urge Governor Brown to Sign SB 489!

[SB 489](#), the Renewable Energy Equity Act, authored by Senator Lois Wolk and sponsored by CalCAN, is still awaiting the Governor's signature. SB 489 would make it easier for farmers and ranchers to develop innovation renewable energy projects by allowing them to easily and effectively get those projects connect to the grid. The Renewable Energy Equity Act will help California produce homegrown clean, renewable energy and reduce our state's greenhouse gas emissions.

Governor Brown has until October 9th to sign or veto several hundred bills, and he could make his decision at any time. Make your voice heard and support sustainable agricultural solutions to climate change - [call or write Governor Brown today!](#)



CalCAN 2011 Legislative Wrap Up



Below is a short summary of two of the bills that impact sustainable agriculture and climate change from the 2011 state legislative year that just ended in early September.

Public Goods Charge renewal fails to get the votes: A bill to renew the Public Goods Charge (PGC) failed to get the necessary two-thirds vote to pass during the waning hours of

the legislative year. The PGC has been applied to the utility bills of most Californians for the past 14 years at a rate of \$1 or \$2 per month for residential customers and more for commercial/business customers. The PGC has raised more than \$350 million per year to fund "public goods" programs for energy efficiency (e.g., rebates for new energy-efficient appliances), renewable energy development, and research on climate change solutions.

Loss of the PGC could set California backwards in needed state funding for several important agriculture and climate related issues, including how agriculture can provide climate benefits by reducing greenhouse gas emission, producing renewable energy and adapting to changing weather patterns.

There is a dearth of California-specific data and information on these topics, and the potential loss of the PGC could further handicap California agriculture in finding productive solutions to the climate crisis. The Governor and various legislators supporting the PGC are currently exploring alternatives to ensure renewed PGC funding, but at this time the likelihood of success and the future of the program is unclear.

[SB 618](#) passed by legislature: Senator Wolk's bill to create a solar easement program for farmland enrolled in the Williamson Act passed in the last few days of session. SB 618 encourages development of new solar facilities on farmland that is no longer suitable for agricultural use. Only physically impaired or marginal land, as defined in the bill, can qualify for a solar easement. Any landowner who is currently enrolled in the Williamson Act can apply to the Department of Conservation to participate in a solar easement, but they must make the case why their land is no longer agricultural productive. This bill attempts - we believe successfully - to strike a balance between the sometimes competing land use needs of large-scale solar development and the critical protection of California farmland.

Soil, Water, Energy: Farming Strategies for Coping with Climate Change

CalCAN is co-hosting this free day-long workshop for the staff of NRCS, RCD and Cooperative Extension. The workshop will include presentations from UC researchers and NRCS and Extension specialists on climate change impacts on California agriculture, opportunities in agriculture to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, how energy savings can help the bottom line and the latest on conservation tillage research.

The workshop will include presentations from UC researchers and NRCS and Extension specialists on topics including: climate change impacts on California agriculture; opportunities in agriculture to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, with a focus on soil building and salinity management; and renewable energy resources for growers. There will also be a tour of a local farm using sustainable farming practices that demonstrate some of the principles covered in the workshop.

Date: Friday October 21, 2011

Time: 9:00am - 3:00pm

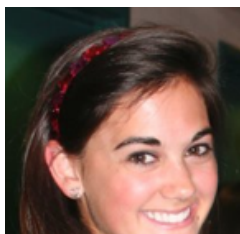
Arrive by 8:45am for coffee & pastries; we will start at 9:00am sharp. Lunch will be provided.

Location: USDA Service Center/RCD Office · 82901 Bliss Ave., Indio, CA 92201

RSVP: To ensure your space in the workshop, please RSVP by October 12 to Renata Brillinger at renata@calclimateag.org. There is no registration fee (it is funded by SARE).

Welcome to CalCAN's New Intern

We are pleased to welcome Elena Idell to a three-month policy internship with CalCAN this week.



Elena is currently a senior at the University of California, Davis, majoring in Environmental Science and Management, and has had considerable experience as a



teacher naturalist. She will be doing writing and research projects to support CalCAN's various policy initiatives.



National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Farmers' Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program

CalCAN is a proud and active member of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), and they recently released an updated version of their publication [Farmers' Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program](#). The Guide is intended to help family farmers, ranchers, and foresters understand the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) enrollment process. In addition, it provides clear information on conservation activities eligible for CSP payments to improve conservation performance and environmental benefits.

CSP is not like any other conservation program. It provides comprehensive conservation assistance to whole farms and working lands to resolve particular resource concerns in a given location. It offers farmersthe opportunity to augment the foundation of their good current conservation efforts by earning payments for actively managing and maintaining them, expanding them, and adding new conservation activities-even while they work their lands for production. CSP is for working farms, built on the belief that we must enhance natural resource and environmental protection at the same time we produce profitable food, fiber and energy.

The Guide is available for download on the NSAC website:
<http://www.sustainableagriculture.net/publications>

UC Davis Launches Agricultural Sustainability

Undergraduate Major

The University of California at Davis is launching an undergraduate major focused on agricultural sustainability. Students will focus on the social, economic and environmental aspects of agriculture and food - from farm to table and beyond. The program is designed to help students obtain a diversity of knowledge and skills, both in the classroom and through personal experiences on and off campus. Continuing students have already begun transferring into the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems major. Applications for freshmen and transfer students to enter the major will be available in November.

Introducing the Ag Almanac

[Sustainable Agriculture Education](#) (SAGE) recently released the [California Agricultural Almanac](#), an interactive web-based mapping portal that for the first time brings together information on farming areas, crops, farms, markets and farm-related events. The Almanac lets you dynamically explore local as well as statewide agriculture. It is searchable for regions where crops are produced, details on crop seasons, and locations and other details on farms, markets and agricultural events.

Data for the Almanac is provided by partnering food and farming organizations, including Community Alliance with Family Farmers, a CalCAN coalition member. It is an ongoing project that will be continuously expanded and updated.

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