



### In This Issue

[California Farmland Protection Act](#)

[Farm Bill Action Alert](#)

[CalCAN Summit Recap](#)

[Comments on Cap-and-Trade Investment Plan](#)

[Grants](#)

[Support CalCAN](#)

### Quick Links

[About CalCAN](#)

[Donate to CalCAN](#)

[Tell a Friend](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

March 8, 2013

## CalCAN Champions the California Farmland Protection Act

*NOTE CORRECTION: The California Farmland Protection Act is **Assembly Bill 823**.*

CalCAN, the [Community Alliance with Family Farmers](#) and the [American Farmland Trust](#) are co-sponsoring a bill (AB 823) in the California legislature to require permanent protection of one acre of farmland for every acre converted to residential, industrial and infrastructural development projects. AB 823 would, for the first time, establish a minimum statewide farmland mitigation standard for development projects subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).



The bill was introduced by Assemblymember Susan Eggman (D-Stockton), the chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, and is co-authored by Assemblymember Das Williams.

If this requirement had been clarified when CEQA was first enacted in 1970, we would have permanently saved between one and two million acres of farmland in California by now. Agriculture is crucial to the economy and quality of life in our state, and it is a key component to limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

You can track the status of the bill [here](#) (enter the bill number at the top right of the web page).

For a fact sheet on AB 823, click [here](#).

For background on the need to protect California farmland from urban sprawl, large-scale solar facilities and more, please see the recently released CalCAN report called "[Triple Harvest: Farmland conservation for climate protection, smart growth and food security.](#)"

We will keep you updated on the progress of the California Farmland Protection Act, and alert you about making calls to your representative as needed.

## **Tell Congress to fix their Farm Bill mistake on conservation funding**

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a unique program that financially rewards participating farmers and ranchers for the environmental benefits they produce on their land, including practices that provide habitat for wildlife.

Last fall, Congress made an honest mistake that prevents thousands of farmers from signing up for CSP this year. Unless the Senate acts to fix the situation next week, opportunities for farmers to implement smart conservation practices will be severely limited.

The problem can be fixed at no cost by correcting the technical error that is currently preventing USDA from conducting a 2013 sign-up for the program and leaving over 9,000 farmers high and dry.

On Monday, the Senate will take up their own version of the bill to fund government programs through the rest of 2013 — and they have a chance to fix the CSP mistake and to restore funding for key sustainable agriculture programs. But they've got to know these issues matter.

The House failed to include these priorities in the funding bill it passed this week — the Senate can fix this!

### **Call Today and Tell Your Senators to Fix the CSP Mistake! Speak out today!**

Please call California Senators Barbara Boxer (202-224-3553) and Senator Dianne Feinstein (202-224-3841).

An example message is:

"I am calling about the Continuing Resolution. Please tell the Senator to fix the Conservation Stewardship Program so USDA can hold a farmer sign-up this year. This program is important to farmers in California and must be available."

Making a call takes only a few moments. Please call now!

## CalCAN Summit in Review

CalCAN hosted "Future of Farming: California Climate and Agriculture Summit" at UC Davis on Feb. 21st. The summit was sold out with 240 participants from varied backgrounds. About 20% of the group were farmers or ranchers, another 20% were researchers and students, with a bit more than 20% representing non-profit organizations. RCD and Extension staff comprised about 10% of the group, as did government agencies. This diversity and the interdisciplinary conversations that were fostered was cited by many as one of the most valuable aspects of the event.



*Assembly Speaker Pérez addresses CalCAN Summit*

CalCAN was pleased to recognize three partners with awards:

- **Farmer Leadership Award:** Russ Lester and Jenny Lester Moffitt, Dixon Ridge Farms
- **Science Leadership Award:** Dr. Valerie Eviner, UC Davis
- **Legislator Leadership Award:** Speaker John Pérez



*Leadership award recipients with CalCAN staff*

A complete list of the program and speakers, as well as powerpoint files for some of the presentations is available on the [CalCAN website](#).

Here is a sample of participant feedback:

*— I think the mix of state agency representatives, farmers, students, researchers and activists was effective and should be*

*maintained in future meetings.*

*— Continue to include real life agriculturalists in the mix with the science presentations.*

*— I wanted to hear a bit more about the roadmap for CalCAN's future and how its network operates. I think its model is a powerful one and should be shared and discussed widely.*

*— Topics and speakers were all interesting it was hard to pick which session to attend.*

## **CalCAN's Comments on Cap-and-Trade Investment Plan**

In February, the California Air Resources Board held a three-part series of workshops to gather input on how the state will invest funds generated by the public auction of allowances under the new cap-and-trade program. About \$140 million has been raised in the first two quarterly auctions to date, and the legislature will be considering how to re-invest this money back into California communities to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CalCAN has long argued that a portion of these funds should be allocated to research, technical assistance, incentives for growers and farmland protection to encourage farming practices with climate and other environmental and health benefits. CalCAN and our partners provided comment at all three hearings, and submitted a letter signed by 40 organizations and farmers making our case. The letter can be viewed [here](#).

## **Grant Opportunities**

### **Conservation Innovation Grant Pre-Proposals Due**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting pre-proposals for fiscal year 2013 Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). Up to \$375,000 is available for the California statewide CIG competition, with individual awards capped at \$75,000. The deadline is March 22, 2013.

CIG is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. CIG enables NRCS to work with other public and private entities to accelerate technology transfer and adoption of promising technologies and approaches to address some of the Nation's most pressing natural resource concerns.

NRCS California is requesting CIG project pre-proposals that focus on water quality and quantity, air quality and climate change, energy conservation, waste recycling, and wildlife.

The CIG announcement, with detailed proposal requirements, can be found at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or the California NRCS Programs [webpage](#), or by contacting [Erik Beardsley](#), state CIG program specialist.

#### **Organic Transitions Program (ORG) Proposals Due**

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture is accepting proposals for its FY2013 Organic Transitions Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Program (ORG). Applications are due April 5, 2013. The total program funding for FY2013 is \$3.7 million with individual awards capped at \$750,000.

The overall goal of the ORG is to support the development and implementation of research, extension and higher education programs to improve the competitiveness of organic livestock and crop producers, as well as those who are adopting organic practices. ORG prioritizes environmental services provided by organic farming systems in the area of soil conservation and climate change mitigation. Two new priorities have been added to support (1) the development of educational tools for Cooperative Extension personnel and other agricultural professionals who advise producers on organic practices and (2) the development of cultural practices and other allowable alternatives to substances recommended for removal from the National Organic Programs National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances.

More information is available [here](#).

### **Supporting CalCAN**

Here are some ways you can make a difference by supporting our work:

- [Make a donation to CalCAN](#). We rely on tax-deductable gifts — no amount is too small.
- Check out [our blog](#) with lots of reflections on climate change and agriculture.
- Friend us on [Facebook](#).
- Follow us on [Twitter](#).
- [Tell-a-Friend](#). Forward this email to introduce us to your colleagues, family and friends.