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News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

March 19, 2014



Show your support for the Sustainable Farmland Strategy Act!

Assembly Agriculture Chair Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton) recently introduced the Sustainable Farmland Strategy Act (AB 1961), which recognizes the significance of

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CalCAN is a coalition of

California's farmland resources. AB 1961 is co-sponsored by CalCAN, Community Alliance with Family Farmers and American Farmland Trust.

We urge you to [send a letter of support](#) for AB 1961 by March 24th before the bill is heard in its first legislative committee.

California loses an average of 30,000 acres of farmland annually. The conversion of farmland slowed during the recession, but as the economy picks up now is the time to discuss the future of California farmland, a finite resource that's central our food and farm economy.

AB 1961 requires that counties with significant farmland resources inventory their agriculturally zoned land, as well as state their goals and policies to retain farmland and mitigate for its loss. That information must then be compiled on the county website. Counties with less than four percent of their land base in agriculture are not required to complete a Sustainable Farmland Strategy. AB 1961 highlights the need at the local level to discuss and plan for the future of our farmland resources.

Take Action!

Please show your support for AB 1961 by faxing a letter now. A sample letter of support can be found [here](#).

For more information:

- [Bill text](#)
- [Factsheet](#)



California Turns to Business of Reducing Climate Risk

Although California continues to invest in combating global warming emissions, we have yet to see comparable efforts

organic and sustainable agriculture organizations that advances policies to provide resources for climate-friendly farming practices.

[Learn more...](#)

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In this Issue:

Support the Sustainable Farmland Strategy Act (AB 1961)

California Starts Looking at Climate Adaptation

New State Climate Change Plan Released

President Obama's Budget & Climate Change

Farmer Profile: Robert Abbott, Abbott Ranch

CalCAN Joins the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

Funding

Events

Jobs

mobilized in the name of climate change preparedness and adaptation. How do we, as a state, prepare for the inevitable risks climate change poses for our communities?

It is in this context that the Natural Resources Agency recently released its public review draft of a document entitled [Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk](#). This plan is an update to the original California Climate Adaptation Strategy which was produced in 2009 under an Executive Order from Governor Schwarzenegger.

Overall, the draft plan makes a strong case for putting state resources to work on making our communities resilient to rising temperatures and more extreme weather events. In the Agriculture section, it highlights a number of excellent ideas for increasing resiliency, including protecting farmland from development and increasing [water use efficiency](#).

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New Climate Change Plan Looks to Farmers, Ranchers for Solutions

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) recently released a [new Scoping Plan](#), which lays out measures the state is pursuing to achieve [AB 32](#)'s goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. This update to the original [Scoping Plan of 2008](#) goes a lot further than the original in laying out strategies that reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions while also achieving economic and environmental co-benefits.

CalCAN has long advocated for increased investments in agricultural research and grower technical and financial assistance to support agricultural systems that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We have made the case for investing in agricultural systems that have multiple 'wins',

like increased energy efficiency, improved air and water quality, and input savings.

We were pleased to see that CARB's new plan calls for research, technical assistance and financial incentives that provide resources for farmers and ranchers to implement reduction strategies. What's not clear in the plan is how we're going to get there.

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President Obama's Budget & Climate Change

Despite producing [mixed results](#) for sustainable agriculture interests, President Obama's 2015 budget request is an encouraging sign that the federal government is getting serious about climate change, and particularly about adapting to its impacts.

The President's proposal includes a \$1 billion dollar [Climate Resilience Fund](#), which is intended to strengthen preparedness of states and communities for increasingly extreme weather like floods, droughts, and wildfires. The fund would support investment in research, technologies, and infrastructure across numerous agencies and sectors, including agriculture.

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Farmer Leader Profile: Robert Abbott, Abbott Ranch

Robert Abbott is a third generation avocado and lemon grower working the same land his grandfather purchased in 1923. A true family farm, Abbott Ranch (also known under the name [Hilltop and Canyon Farms](#)) prides itself on ensuring that future generations will inherit trees and soils at least as productive and healthy as they have been in the past. The ranch lies in the southern coastal region of Santa Barbara County, an ideal climate for growing the subtropical fruits.

Robert and his father, Duncan, love to farm, but they acknowledge the many obstacles that today's growers face: water and labor costs, pressure from new pests, competition from south of the border, a volatile market – and the vagaries of a changing climate.

[Read more...](#)



CalCAN Joins the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

We are pleased to be new members of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition's (CRCC) steering committee. CRCC is a collaboration of the California Cattlemen's Association, Defenders of Wildlife and other stakeholders concerned about balancing ranching viability and ecosystems protection. Executive Director Renata Brillinger serves as CalCAN's representative to the coalition. Click [here](#) for more information about CRCC.

Funding

Organic Farming Research Foundation Research Grants

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) has announced that funding is available for research projects on any agricultural production, social, economic, or policy-related topic of concern to organic farmers or ranchers. OFRF invites proposals from all applicants residing in Canada, Mexico, and the United States for funding of up to \$15,000 per year. OFRF will now accept proposals in the spring for one annual grant cycle, rather than the previous system of two grant cycles per year. **The deadline for proposals is Thursday, May 15, 2014.**

[Click here](#) for more information.

Events

Our Land: A Symposium on Farmland Access in the 21st Century

April 26 and 27, 2014
UC Berkeley

In the next two decades 400 million acres of U.S. farmland will change hands. Will that land be consolidated into larger holdings and treated as a commodity or investment asset? Or will it prove the foundation for a new business, a next-generation farmer, a passionate entrepreneur? Join us for a weekend program to tackle the historical context, long-range implications and economic impact, and stewardship potential of the transition ahead. Speakers include: Wes Jackson, Anuradha Mittal, Joel Salatin, Raj Patel, Gary Nabhan, Gayle McLaughlin and more.

[Click here](#) or more information and to register.

Jobs

CUESA Executive Director

CUESA (the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to cultivating a sustainable food system through the operation of the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market and its educational programs. CUESA is seeking an experienced, dynamic, articulate, sensible, visionary, consensus-building leader to manage the organization and shepherd it into the next stage of development.

[Click here](#) for more information.

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