



News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

June 16, 2014



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Final cap-and-trade budget includes climate-friendly farming

After months of speculation and debate, Governor Brown and California's legislature have agreed on how to allocate a total of \$872 million in cap-and-trade auction proceeds as part of the state's FY 2014-15 budget package.

We are pleased to report that the persistent efforts of CalCAN and our many partners have yielded results—the deal

CalCAN is a coalition of organic and sustainable agriculture organizations that advances policies to provide resources for climate-friendly farming practices.

includes investments in farmland conservation and in agricultural practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon.

Most of the cap-and-trade funds go to high-speed rail, clean transportation and land use planning projects known as “Sustainable Communities Strategies.” However, the budget also includes over \$30 million for agricultural projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Of that, \$15 million will support agricultural energy and operational efficiency projects. \$10 million will fund agricultural water use efficiency projects at the farm level, approved in this year’s drought package. Of the \$130 million that will go to implementing regional Sustainable Communities Strategies, \$6.5 million will go towards agricultural land preservation as a component of integrated land use and transportation projects.

The deal also specified that high-speed rail, transit and Sustainable Communities Strategies will receive 60 percent of the future funds in on-going, continuous appropriations. The remaining 40 percent, which could reach billions of dollars in future years, will be allocated annually as part of the regular budget process.

This is a good start, and CalCAN will keep working to ensure that the money funds innovative solutions with multiple environmental and health benefits. We will also continue to advocate for larger investments over time in sustainable agriculture and farmland conservation to support farmers and ranchers in addressing one of the biggest threats to California agriculture.

This success would not have been possible without the active involvement of many of you making your voice heard in Sacramento—thank you!

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Amidst Drought, CAFF Study Finds Farm Water Use Efficiency Under-Served

A [new study](#) finds that efforts to address California's chronic water scarcity and drought have neglected to support crucial steps farmers can take to optimize their water usage. With the current drought already devastating agriculture across the state, California must do a better job of supporting on-farm water use efficiency practices, the authors say.

The new study, entitled *Beyond the Irrigation District: Investing in On-Farm Water Stewardship for California's Future*, was conducted by [Community Alliance with Family Farmers \(CAFF\)](#), a non-profit organization that advocates for California's family farmers, and jointly released with CalCAN. The authors examined past state water bonds—Propositions 50 and 84—and found that few dollars went toward supporting farmers in improving water use efficiency on their land.

[Read more...](#)

Read a related piece in the Modesto Bee: ["Water-saving techniques should be taught to farmers, study urges"](#)

National Climate Assessment Calls for Agricultural Adaptation

On June 2, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a [nationwide strategy](#) to curb greenhouse gas emissions. The [Clean Power Plan](#) aims to reduce carbon emissions from the power sector by 30% below 2005 levels by the year 2030.

Governor Brown, who recently called California "the [epicenter](#) of climate change," [welcomed](#) the Plan and highlighted the environmental and economic successes of California's clean energy policies. The Obama administration plan allows for state's flexibility in developing their programs to meet emission reduction targets, including the potential development of more state cap-and-trade programs. This could bring a renewed push to develop [agricultural offset protocols](#), and allow California's cap-and-trade program to serve as a model as states move forward.

[Read more...](#)

Agriculture Census Shows Fewer

Farms, More Organic Production

On May 2, the USDA released its most recent Census of Agriculture [data](#). Every five years, the Census quantifies trends in U.S. farmer demographics, production methods, yields, and sales.

Conducted in 2012, the Census describes the practices of 3.2 million farmers managing 2.1 million farms on over 914 million acres of farmland across the country. Dominating the nation's total agricultural production and leading the country with [9 of the 10](#) top counties for value of sales, California agriculture comprised a major portion of national data. This post explores some of the national and statewide trends in the data, and what they can tell us about where the industry is headed.

[Read more...](#)



Economic Impacts of Drought on Central Valley Agriculture

Excerpted from a [post](#) published by UC Davis on May 19, 2014. The full report is available [here](#).

California's drought will deal a severe blow to Central Valley irrigated agriculture and farm communities this year, and could cost the industry \$1.7 billion and cause more than 14,500 workers to lose their jobs, according to preliminary results of a new study by the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences.

Researchers estimated that Central Valley irrigators would receive only two-thirds of their normal river water deliveries this year because of the drought.

The analysis predicted several severe impacts for the current growing season, including:

- Reduced surface water deliveries of 6.5 million acre-

feet of water, or 32.5 percent of normal water use by Central Valley growers. An acre-foot is enough water to cover an acre of land in a foot of water, or enough water for about two California households for a year.

- Following of an additional 410,000 acres, representing 6 percent of irrigated cropland in the Central Valley.
- The loss of an estimated 14,500 seasonal and full-time jobs. About 6,400 of these jobs are directly involved in crop production.
- A total cost of \$1.7 billion to the Central Valley's irrigated farm industry this year, including about \$450 million in additional costs of groundwater pumping.
- About 60 percent of the economic losses will occur in the San Joaquin Valley and Tulare Lake Basin.

The additional pumping will cost an estimated \$450 million and still leave a shortage of 1.5 million acre-feet of irrigation water, about 7.5 percent of normal irrigation water use in the Central Valley, according to the forecast.



Impacts to Ecosystem Services on California Rangelands: Scenarios

The 18 million acres of rangelands in the Central Valley of California provide multiple benefits or “ecosystem services” to people—including wildlife habitat, water supply, open space, recreation, and cultural resources. Most of this land is privately owned and managed for livestock production. These rangelands are vulnerable to land-use conversion and climate change.

To help resource managers assess the impacts of land-use change and climate change, U.S. Geological Survey scientists and their cooperators developed scenarios to quantify and map changes to three main rangeland ecosystem services—wildlife habitat, water supply, and carbon sequestration.

Project results will help prioritize strategies to conserve these rangelands and the ecosystem services that they provide.

More information, an online tool and associated data are available [here](#).

A fact sheet with information about the project can be found [here](#).



Using Farm Bill Programs to Benefit Wildlife

Defenders of Wildlife has published two reports that provide an overview of conservation programs in the new Farm Bill and offer recommendations on how to use these programs to benefit wildlife:

A Guide to Farm Bill Conservation Programs

This report provides an overview of the 2014 conservation programs and reviews their changes, challenges and opportunities within the context of the 2014 Farm Bill.

Targeting Farm Bill Program Funding to Advance Conservation Priorities

This report evaluates the potential conservation impacts of the 2014 Farm Bill and gives recommendations on the best ways to target agricultural programs to yield the best wildlife outcomes.

Funding

USDA announces program to conserve sensitive land and help beginning farmers and ranchers

Farmers, ranchers and landowners committed to protecting and conserving environmentally sensitive land may now sign up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Retiring farmers enrolled in CRP could also receive incentives to

transfer a portion of their land to beginning, disadvantaged or veteran farmers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP).

The Conservation Reserve Program provides incentives to producers who utilize conservation methods on environmentally sensitive lands. For example, farmers are monetarily compensated for establishing long-term vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat.

Click [here](#) to see the full announcement posted by the USDA and links for more information on applying.

Events

Tomorrow: PG&E Webinar on New Renewable Energy Option

PG&E is hosting a free online webinar **tomorrow (June 17th) at 12:00pm** that will describe Net Energy Metering Aggregation, which can lower your energy costs and improve the efficiency of your renewable energy system. The intended audience is contractors, developers, and architects, but it should be useful for anyone with an introductory knowledge of renewable energy systems and electrical metering.

No registration is required. At the scheduled time, go to pge.conferencing.com and enter the Participant Login code [4159730770](#). A call-in option is also available. Find out more details by clicking [here](#) and pressing the “Show Classes” button.

To view CalCAN's Fact Sheet and list of resources on the NEM Aggregation program, go to <http://www.calclimateaq.org/net-metering>

Save the Date: California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Annual Conference: “*What Works in Conservation*”

November 12–15, 2014 • Ventura, CA

The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts is seeking presentations on non-traditional partnerships, urban conservation, agricultural practices, successful and emerging projects, agricultural conservation, storm water management, creative and unusual ideas, ideas for engaging your community, and new funding models and strategies.

CARCD is seeking 15–45 minute presentations of interest to RCDs and partners. Deadline for abstracts is June 30, 2014.

[For more information click here.](#)

Governor's Environmental & Economic Leadership Award Nominations

For the first time in the history of the Governor's Economic and Leadership Awards (GEELA), the category of Agricultural Ecosystem Services has been added for statewide recognition. The new category will spotlight the multiple benefits gained from farming and ranching, including innovative and sustainable approaches to water and energy conservation, food crop production efficiency, and management of working lands.

GEELA honors individuals, organizations and businesses that have demonstrated exceptional leadership and achievements in conservation, environmental protection, public-private partnerships, and strengthening the state's economy.

Applications are due July 11, 2014. Click [here](#) for more information.

Jobs

UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems

Apprenticeship in Ecological Horticulture

The apprenticeship is a full-time, 6-month residential program that trains adults in the concepts and practices of organic gardening and small-scale sustainable farming. It blends experiential learning with traditional classroom studies on topics that include soil management, composting, pest and weed control, crop planning, irrigation, farm equipment, and direct marketing techniques. Graduates have established their own commercial farms and market gardens, developed farm and garden based educational programs, run urban garden programs, and more.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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