

## Report Finds California Farmers Delivering Climate Change & Drought Solutions

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A new climate-smart agriculture program, funded by cap-and-trade auction proceeds, is delivering significant on-farm water savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions, according to an analysis by the California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN).

Since the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET) began as an emergency relief effort at the height of California's severe drought, in 2014, the program has funded over 200 projects to improve on-farm water use efficiency. These projects are resulting in annual savings of 37,490 acre-feet of water—approximately 12.2 billion gallons/year—and estimated annual emissions reductions of 11,278 Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e—the equivalent of taking 2,374 passenger vehicles off the road each year.

“We’ve found that, when given the opportunity, farmers are delivering water savings and reductions in greenhouse gases,” said Jeanne Merrill, CalCAN’s Policy Director, “Now, we must extend the state’s climate change and drought program to reach all farmers. Our report details how to do that.”

With grants from the program, farms have installed soil moisture sensors, drip irrigation technologies, improved pumping equipment, and even put in solar panels to replace polluting diesel and gas generators.

CalCAN combed through nearly \$20 million in SWEET grants to produce its analysis. The authors find that more should be done to ensure small- and mid-scale agricultural producers can access the program, and that farmers in some particularly drought-plagued regions of the state received little to no SWEET assistance.

The report offers several recommendations to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the administering department, on how to strengthen program, including:

- Offer simplified application process for small projects equal to or less than \$25,000
- Fund technical assistance for project/application development
- Support soil management practices that increase water holding capacity

“We have seen on our farm that building healthy and productive soils can both conserve water and store carbon,” said Sean McNamara of Sierra Orchards in Winters, “Farmers are eager to take on these practices, and a boost from the state could go a long way.”

Meanwhile, on Monday CDFA announced the availability of \$50,000 in grants to fund one-time support for hands-on technical assistance to SWEET applicants. Details at:

[www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/SWEET](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/SWEET)

CalCAN’s report, along with an Executive Summary, is available for download at:

<http://calclimateag.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SWEET-Report.pdf>