
News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

January 15, 2015



[Register Now](#)

CalCAN Summit Registration Open Earlybird rates end Feb. 7th

Don't delay registering for the [4th California Climate and Agriculture Summit](#). The Summit begins with a farm tour in the Yolo County area on March 24th, followed by a full day of plenary, workshop, and poster presentations at the UC Davis Conference Center on the 25th.



Governor's Budget Includes Modest Investments in Climate-Friendly Farming

Governor Brown kicked off his historical fourth term in office with an inaugural address that included an ambitious climate protection agenda. We were pleased to hear him call for agricultural climate

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solutions in the speech, saying, “We must manage farm and rangelands, forests and wetlands so they can store carbon.”

Four days later, he released his budget draft for fiscal year 2015-16, including allocations for a total of \$1 billion in cap-and-trade revenue. The draft budget includes: (1) \$15 million for agricultural energy efficiency that this year was spent on anaerobic digesters and biofuels, and (2) funding for farmland conservation (an unspecified portion of a \$200 million budget for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program; this year \$5 million was for farmland conservation).

[Read more...](#)

Take Action on USDA's Conservation Stewardship Program!

One of the biggest – and best! – federal conservation programs that helps working farmers manage their land sustainably is in trouble. It’s called the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and it’s widely popular with farmers across the country. It currently covers over 60 million acres of land in the U.S. CSP rewards farmers for protecting and maintaining healthy soil and clean water for generations to come.

Unfortunately, USDA-imposed restrictions make it harder for good conservation farmers to access the program and receive support for the highest-impact environmental practices on their farms. USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service is seeking input until January 20 from farmers and the public on its rules for CSP – meaning we have a chance to fix these issues and make sure CSP works for farmers!

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) is [leading a campaign](#) to ensure CSP has an even bigger impact on our nation’s land and water, reaches even more farmers (including new farmers), and ensures taxpayer dollars are invested wisely in America’s agricultural legacy.

Here’s how to help:

Step 1: [Sign a letter](#) to USDA NRCS Chief Jason Weller.

Step 2: [Submit your own comments to NRCS online](#) or via mail. *Individualized comments are critical, especially if you’re a farmer and you have used CSP. It only takes a few more minutes -- NRCS needs to hear your story about why CSP is important, and what changes need to be made to improve it.*

With your help, we’ll show that farmers and consumers want

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federal conservation programs to work for our nation's farms, farmers, and the environment!



Full Belly Farm Honored for Conservation Efforts

Congratulations to [Full Belly Farm](#) for receiving the prestigious 2014 Leopold Conservation Award! The award recognizes agricultural operations that exhibit responsible natural resource management, economic sustainability, land health, leadership, innovation and outreach. CalCAN is honored to work with Full Belly co-owner Judith Redmond, a core member of our Farmer Advisory Council.

[Read more...](#)

Whole-Farm Revenue Protection

The Risk Management Agency recently released the new Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) insurance policy. Farmers now have until late February or early March to sign up, depending on the county they farm in. The 2014 Farm Bill created the new option, aimed at diversified farms, including mixed grain and livestock operations, local food producers, organic farmers, and others for whom single commodity insurance protection is not a good option.

Noteworthy improvements with WFRP include: an 80 percent premium subsidy when a farmer grows at least three crops, a premium discount for increased diversification up to 7 crops, replant coverage for crops lost early enough for replanting, and more.

For more details, [read our blog](#) on the top 6 improvements with WFRP.

**Whole Farm Revenue Insurance Webinar
January 21, 2015 - 3:00pm EST**

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) and the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI–USA) are holding a webinar to discuss the Risk Management Agency's new WFRP insurance policy. The webinar will feature presentations from all three organizations on what WFRP is, how it works, and which farmers it may work for. To register for free, click [here](#).



Lost California Rangeland Posing Greenhouse Gas Risk

An inventory of Central Valley, Sierra foothills and Central Coast rangelands found that nearly half a million acres of rangeland vanished between 1984 and 2008. Scientists say the disappearance of rangelands will challenge the state's ability to reach greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions goals, and may also imperil endangered species.

State pollution regulators are now considering the inclusion of rangelands in California's cap-and-trade program. Valerie Eviner, Associate Professor at UC Davis and CalCAN advisor, notes that avoiding rangeland conversion will have a significant impact on reducing GHG emissions.

[Read more...](#)



Recent Research: Cover Crops Sequester Soil Carbon

A 12-year University of Illinois study shows that the use of cover crops increases the amount of sequestered soil organic carbon using three different soil management systems. The studied plots were given no-till, chisel plow and moldboard plow treatments, with and without hairy vetch and cereal rye cover crops.

Read the full paper [here](#).

Events

Drought-focused soil nutrient management forum offered for growers

Forum runs from Jan. 12 – Jan. 23

Wine grape growers are invited to participate in an online forum to discuss vineyard nutrient management in limited water conditions. The free forum is hosted by the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program (UC SAREP), FarmsReach and Sustainable Conservation.

Farmers and UC Cooperative Extension advisors from different regions will answer questions and share resources throughout the discussion. Participants can post a question in the forum and receive an e-mail when there is a reply.

To participate in the forum, sign up [here](#) at no cost.

Grazing for Change

Feb. 27 – March 1, 2015 - Chico State College of Agriculture

Join leading holistic management practitioners and scientists to learn how to use livestock to improve soil, decrease dependence on water, grow more grass and improve profits. This is a practical, results-oriented event. Speakers include Alan Savory, Christine Jones, Bill Burrows and more.

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

**Restoring Health to Agricultural Ecosystems:
Principles and Practices from Soil to Communities
March 4 – 6, 2015 - Paicines Ranch, Paicines, CA**

In this practical and dynamic workshop featuring soils ecologist Dr. Christine Jones, we will explore principles and practices for creating healthy agricultural ecosystems.

Emphasis will be placed on the importance of soil carbon and the connections between soil health and the health of all life.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Jobs

Deputy State Director for California, American Farmland Trust (AFT)

AFT is a national conservation organization founded in 1980 to conserve and protect farmland, promote environmentally beneficial farming practices and help keep farmers on the land. The Deputy State Director will report directly to, and collaborate closely with, AFT's California State Director and will be broadly responsible for advancing the mission of the organization through policy research and advocacy, public education, personnel management, budgeting and fundraising. The successful candidate must be willing to locate reasonably close to Sacramento so as to be highly accessible to leaders in the state capital.

Inquiries and applications, including a resume, should be directed to: Edward Thompson, Jr. at ethompson@farmland.org

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