



News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

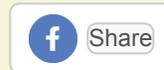
May 15, 2015

Good News! Progress on Cap-and-Trade Funding for Agriculture

There are some exciting signs that the work CalCAN has been doing for several years to advocate for cap-and-trade funding for sustainable agriculture is bearing fruit.

A CalCAN-sponsored bill (SB 367) to put in place the structure and funding for farmland protection and on-farm farming practices with climate benefits has passed through its first two Senate committees with flying colors, and it has a [long list of supporters](#) – see more below.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is launching a new [Healthy Soils Initiative](#) that identifies many



goals, including improving soil health to sequester carbon. We look forward to working with CDFA to implement the initiative, relying on the vision we laid out in our recently released [Blueprint for a California Climate and Agriculture Program](#).

And there is great news in Governor Jerry Brown's revised budget proposal, released on May 14th. Here is a summary of the investments the Governor proposes for agricultural climate solutions:

- Healthy Soils Initiative = \$20 million
- On-farm water use efficiency = \$75 million
- On-farm operational efficiency = \$25 million

In addition, we are pleased to see an allocation of \$7.5 million in assistance for unemployed farmworkers impacted by the drought. And, compared to last year, there is an almost tripling in the amount budgeted for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program to \$400 million. An unspecified portion of these funds will go to farmland conservation.

Governor Brown is proving himself to be a global leader on climate protection. We commend him for recognizing the importance of including agriculture in his cap-and-trade budget. While there is more work to be done, and the legislature has yet to bring forward its budget proposal, the Governor's budget is definitely a good start. Thank you for helping amplify the voice of sustainable agriculture to make our message heard!

[Read more...](#)

Unanimous Support in Senate Committees for CalCAN bill



On April 29th, [SB 367](#), introduced by Senator Lois Wolk and sponsored by CalCAN and the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), passed out of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee with a unanimous bipartisan vote of 7-0. This follows another unanimous vote

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

[Learn more...](#)

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in the Senate Agriculture Committee earlier in April.

SB 367 sets up and directs cap-and-trade funds to a statewide competitive grants program for demonstration projects that employ voluntary “climate-friendly” practices by farmers and ranchers that reduce GHG emissions and/or store carbon. It also calls for an increase in funding for the existing [Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program](#) to protect farmland from urban development and fund pilot projects that store carbon and reduce GHGs on farms.

SB 367 will next be considered in the Senate Appropriations Committee. Stay tuned for an update in late May asking you to call your Senators just before it (hopefully) gets voted on by the full Senate in early June!

[Read more...](#)

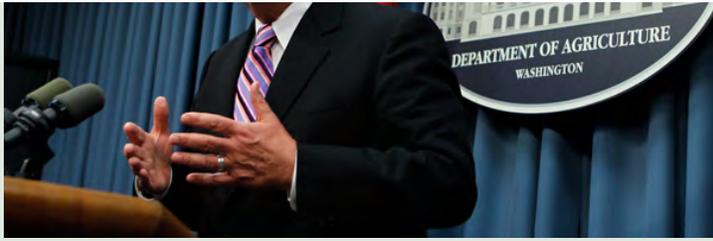


Conservation Till Builds Soil Carbon: A Ten Year Study

Results from a long term study on carbon sequestration in California soils were recently published in the [Agronomy Journal](#). A team of UC Davis soil scientists, Cooperative Extension advisers, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service partners carried out the project, and found numerous co-benefits associated with reduced tillage and cover crop use. Researchers found that combining these conservation practices in tomato-cotton rotations led to increased yield, reduced dust, reduced water use, decreased tractor use, and significant gains in soil carbon.

[Read more...](#)





USDA Launches New Climate Incentives Program

On April 23, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced the USDA's new climate change initiative, which will incentivize agricultural producers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon storage, and expand renewable energy production. USDA will partner with farmers and ranchers to work on ten 'building blocks' for climate action, such as Soil Health, Conservation of Sensitive Lands, and Energy Efficiency. One of the Department's ambitious goals is promoting no-till systems on over 100 million acres by 2025.

[Read more...](#)

Healthy Soils, Quality Food

In this video, one in a series from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Sutter County tomato farmer Scott Park of [Park Farming Organics](#) discusses the connections between soil management, crop quality, and profitability. Scott began farming conventionally in 1974, and transitioned to a soil health-based management system in the 1980s. USDA soil scientist Jim Komar points to four key principles of soil health-based systems: minimizing soil disturbance, keeping a living root in the soil, crop diversification, and maintaining ground cover. Scott describes how these principles have led to higher quality products, higher profits, and overall better environmental quality on his farm. "The profit is coming from being thoughtful with the soil... all the other falls in place easily," Scott says.

Watch the video [here](#).

Funding

Water–Energy Efficiency Grants from CDFA

Applications Accepted starting May 18th

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is opening a new round of water–energy efficiency grants. The State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) has already funded 154 on–farm projects with an initial \$9.5 million allocation last year, and now has another \$10 million available.

Under SWEEP, growers can receive financial assistance to install water distribution systems that save water and reduce greenhouse gases. Up to \$150,000 per operation can be used to fund a broad range of irrigation–related projects such as pump improvements, equipment to facilitate water saving measures and other quantifiable water distribution and greenhouse gas reduction management practices.

For more information and to apply, go to:

www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/SWEEP. For examples of successful projects, view the list of previous recipients by clicking [here](#).

Prospective applicants may contact CDFA's Grants Office at grants@cdfa.ca.gov with general program questions.

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Grant Programs

Pre–proposals due June 3, 2015

These grants involve Western Region scientists, producers, and others using interdisciplinary approaches to address issues related to sustaining agriculture. Proposals must incorporate both research and education and must include a minimum of three collaborating producers. The four grant programs include:

- Research and Education
- Professional Development
- Farmer/Rancher
- Professional + Producer

Learn more [here](#).

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Pre–proposals due July 8, 2015

\$235 million is now available through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), a new Farm Bill program that empowers local communities to work with multiple partners, farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to design solutions that work best for them. This will be the second round of projects funded through RCPP.

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack commented on the program: “This initiative allows local partners the opportunity to design and invest in conservation projects specifically tailored for their communities. These public-private partnerships...keep our land and water clean, and promote tremendous economic growth in agriculture, construction, tourism, and other industries.”

Learn more [here](#).

Events

Vineyard Irrigation Efficiency & Water Quality Management

Wednesday, May 20, 9 – 11:30 am

Benziger Family Winery in Glen Ellen

Join the [Benziger Family Winery](#) for this timely workshop to learn about water management resources available to grape growers, using proven vine and soil monitoring techniques to reduce water usage and mitigate risk without inducing excessive vine stress or diminishing fruit quality. Presentations will be followed by field demos on flow tests and soil moisture probes.

[Register here!](#) There is no charge to attend.

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