



News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

July 20, 2015

Senate Bill 367 Receives Strong Support from Legislature

After sailing through the Senate and two Assembly committees with nearly unanimous votes, Senate Bill 367, the Agriculture Climate Benefits Act, is one committee hearing away from a vote in the full Assembly and then the Governor's desk.

Sponsored by CalCAN and CAFF and authored by Senator Lois Wolk, SB 367 proposes investing \$65 million this year of the state's cap-and-trade funds in permanent farmland easements and on-farm demonstration projects that build soil, protect wildlife habitat and generate renewable energy.

The bill passed through the Assembly Agriculture Committee



on June 1 and the Natural Resources Committee on July 13, with overwhelming and bipartisan support in both committees. If it clears the Appropriations Committee in August, SB 367 will be considered by the full Assembly.

With such strong votes thus far, there are good indications the bill will make it to Governor Brown's desk this fall. We will call on you to voice your support and ensure SB 367 flies through the Assembly!

[Read more...](#)



California Invests in Farmland Conservation to Halt Sprawl & Climate Change

For the first time, California is focusing its farmland conservation efforts to meet its climate change objectives. The cap-and-trade funded Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program is the country's first climate change and farmland conservation program aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with sprawl development.

At its June 30th meeting, the Strategic Growth Council approved seven conservation easement projects covering a little over 14,000 acres for a total of \$4.1 million. The Council also approved five Agricultural Land Strategies planning grants to support local governments in identifying critical agricultural lands at risk of development and to develop strategies to protect those lands.

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Note: The Department of Conservation plans to hold a hearing for public input on SALC in mid-August, so stay tuned!

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

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Energy Use in a Time of Drought

Amidst California's ongoing drought, farms and ranches have taken a variety of steps to adjust their practices to cope with less water and sustained heat.

A new report commissioned by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) finds that, as a result of these coping mechanisms, the agriculture sector consumes noticeably more electricity in drought years than in normal years. What's more, the increase in electricity usage varies significantly by agricultural sub-sector.

A detailed look at this data reveals some of the opportunities to achieve even greater water and energy efficiencies so that agricultural producers can survive future droughts without suffering astronomical energy costs on top of all the other stresses a drought can bring.

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Field and Orchard Crops Declining

Amid Drought

Field crop acreages are declining across the state, as water shortages and uncertainties continue to challenge California growers. Water scarcity has forced farmers to fallow land and sacrifice thirsty annual crops for more drought-tolerant perennials. According to the USDA National Agriculture Statistics Survey (NASS), acreages shrunk for several major field crops this year, including corn, sunflower, rice and cotton.

Some growers have forfeited annual plantings, instead opting to use their limited water supply to irrigate perennial crops, such as nut orchards. The booming almond market in particular encourages growers to plant new orchards, as potential profits can offset the cost of water for irrigation. Despite expanding acreage, however, nut orchards are also suffering amid the fourth year of drought. The Almond Board of California predicts that drought-related stress on trees will shrink the almond crop by about 3 percent.

[Read more...](#)



Farmer Climate Leader: Phil Foster

At Pinnacle Organic Farm, Phil and his wife Katherine have been farming organically for 25 years. They produce an average of 60 crops on 300 acres on two ranches near San Juan Bautista and Hollister, CA.

Soil building is a key principle at Pinnacle Organic. Phil uses cover crops and since 1995 he has produced all of the compost the ranches need on-site. These techniques have dramatically increased carbon sequestration on the farm: between 1991 and 2011, soil organic matter doubled on one site and tripled on the other.

In addition to building soil carbon, Phil uses a variety of strategies on his farm that have multiple climate and environmental benefits. His drip irrigation system reduces water consumption, which is critical during times of drought, and protects water quality by minimizing runoff. Phil's approach to pest control avoids the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production of synthetic pesticides. Pinnacle Organic is also a leader in clean energy, producing around 150 kilowatts (kW) of on-farm solar energy and running most farm vehicles on biodiesel.

[Read more...](#)

State Investments Will Utilize Natural Resources to Fight Climate Change

Forests, farms, wetlands, and urban greening have been tapped by the State of California to help fight climate change. The State recently awarded grants totaling over \$45 million to projects that use natural resource solutions to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

“Green space plays a vital role in climate change reduction by storing emissions in trees, plants and soils,” said Assemblyman Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood). “These investments move California toward our climate change goals while preserving the natural and working landscapes that define our state.”

Governor Brown has identified projects that store carbon in our natural and working lands as an integral ‘pillar’ in his climate change strategy announced earlier this year, alongside goals to increase renewable energy production and cut petroleum use by 2030.

[Read more...](#)

New Life Cycle Assessment Fact Sheets

CalCAN has produced two fact sheets in collaboration with the [UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program](#). One provides an overview of the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) model: how it works, its limitations and challenges, and its applicability as a decision-making tool in agriculture. The other is a summary of an LCA produced by the Agricultural Sustainability Institute (ASI) for five important California orchard crops: almonds, peaches, pistachios, prunes, and walnuts. This project is one of several LCA models that ASI developed to analyze carbon and energy footprints and evaluate the greenhouse gas emissions

associated with the production of various foods.

Check out the fact sheets [here!](#)

Also, ASI will offer a webinar on their LCA study on July 29th
– see the Events section below for details.

Events

Artisans of the Grasslands: Crafting the Future of Food and Agriculture Friday, Oct. 2 – Sunday, Oct. 4 San Francisco

This unprecedented event will be a venue for producers and consumers to come together and celebrate the cadre of people embracing the holistic paradigm shift in ecology, health, and diet. Join us, along with all thirty Savory Institute Hubs and everyone from gauchos, to Massai, to cowboys — all of whom are actively engaged in this movement. We are expecting an attendance of 600 – 700 enthusiastic participants and thousands more will be joining by web-streaming.

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

Webinar: Life Cycle Assessment of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Use in California Orchard Crops Wednesday, July 29, 12pm – 1pm

A webinar presentation by Dr. Sonja Brodt, UC Davis Agricultural Sustainability Institute, and Elias Marvinney, Horticulture and Agronomy Graduate Group, UC Davis

A life cycle assessment (LCA) analyzes the environmental impacts associated with a product. In this research an LCA approach is used to quantify energy use and emissions in orchard crop production both within and beyond the farm. This session will include an overview of LCA models for walnuts, prunes, peaches, almonds, and pistachios, and scenarios illustrating the greenhouse gas footprint associated with common management approaches.

[Download invitation](#) (PDF) or access webinar directly [here](#).
Contact Ryan Murphy (rmurphy@ucdavis.edu) for more information.

Jobs

Program Director, California Farm Academy Winters, CA

Applications due Friday, July 31

Land-Based Learning is hiring a Program Director, based at our main office at 5265 Putah Creek Road, Winters CA, at the Farm on Putah Creek. Resume review begins on July 31, 2015 or until the position is filled.

Learn more [here](#) (PDF).

Communications Director, Berkeley Food Institute Berkeley, CA

Applications due Friday, July 24

The Communications Director is vital to develop and execute a comprehensive, multidisciplinary communications program for the Berkeley Food Institute. The position is one-year, 50% (20 hours per week), with the possibility of converting to a career staff position, funding pending.

Learn more [here](#).

Ranch Manager at Bobcat Ranch, Audubon California Winters, CA

Audubon California is looking for a new Ranch Manager for Bobcat Ranch, a 7,000-acre cattle ranch located in Winters, CA. This is a part-time position that includes property management, coordination of research, grants, contracts and administration, and limited outreach. It may be expanded to full time if funding becomes available. The person must live on the ranch, and housing is included.

Our ideal candidate will have a range management background (on the ground, preferred), experience with land management, a degree in range science, biology, ecology or related field, a knowledge of rangeland birds, experience working with government agencies, and ability to oversee volunteers and work crews.

Learn more [here](#).

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