

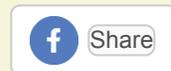


News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

October 16, 2015

Council Considers New Funding, Changes to Farmland Conservation Program

The [Strategic Growth Council](#) met this week to review new draft guidelines for California's groundbreaking Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) program. There was plenty of good news for the farmland conservation program, including a [staff recommendation](#) to increase program funding from \$5 million to \$40 million in SALC's second round.



However, the draft guidelines also raised some concerns about the future of the planning grants portion of the program.

SALC is the country's first climate change program aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the conversion of farmland to sprawl development. The program currently funds two types of activities:

conservation easements on agricultural lands at risk of development, as well as planning grants for local governments to assess their farmlands and develop policies that protect their agricultural resources.



From Bay Nature. Livermore, CA.

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Conserving farms is good investment

The following opinion piece was printed in the Sac Bee on Oct. 14, 2015. It was written by Rich Rominger, a Yolo County farmer, a former state secretary of food and agriculture and a former deputy secretary at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Rich is a CalCAN farmer advisor and long-time proponent of farmland conservation.

By Rich Rominger

Yolo County, where my family has farmed for five generations, has lost farmland to development, as part of more than 1 million acres of farmland lost in the state in the last 25 years.

Our farmlands are a finite resource; once converted to urban or suburban development, they are lost to agriculture.

With that loss, we chip away at our ability to grow food and protect watersheds, open space and wildlife habitat.



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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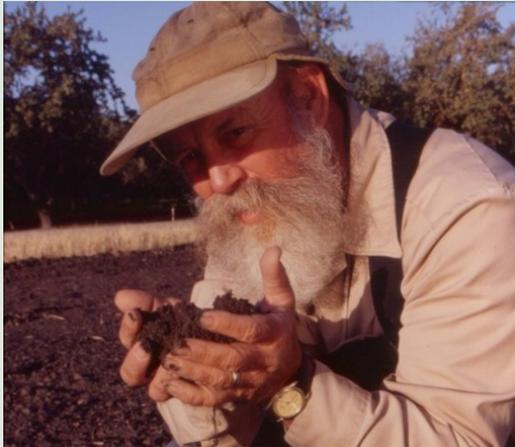
Adaptation Bills

Specialty Crop Block Grant Workshops

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We also forever alter our carbon footprint. Thanks to a 2012 study by UC Davis researchers, we know that protecting farmland from development is an important strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The study found that an urban acre in our county emits 70 times more greenhouse gases than an acre of irrigated cropland.

[Read more...](#)



From the Heart of the Drought: An interview with farmer Tom Willey

In California's Central Valley, farmers have been coping with diminishing water supplies, rising water costs, and other impacts of the ongoing drought. At [CalCAN's Climate and Agriculture Summit](#) in March, Tom Willey of [T&D Willey Farms](#) discussed the impacts of drought and how he has responded to water shortages on his farm in Madera County.

Since 1981, Tom has grown an array of organic vegetables on his 75-acre farm with his wife Denesse. Specialty markets, restaurants, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members enjoy Tom's produce. Until recently, Tom served as Slow Food USA's governor for the Central Valley, and he also advocates for sustainable agriculture through his writing, speaking, event organizing, and his monthly radio program, "Down on the Farm."

CalCAN Communications Associate Sharon Licht recently checked in with Tom for an update on his farm and the Central Valley as a whole.

[Read more...](#)



California Looks to Dig Deeper on Greenhouse Gas Emissions, 2030 Targets Considered

Governor Jerry Brown dropped by unannounced to a recent public workshop in Sacramento, where he gave a [forceful speech](#) on the enormity of the climate challenge and the collective willpower needed to address it.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) and partner agencies, including CDFA, were discussing a draft vision for how the state plans to achieve the [Governor's goal](#) of cutting the state's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. This updated 'Scoping Plan' document will provide a roadmap for California to follow as we progress toward this ambitious goal.

Governor Brown highlighted the scale and the immediacy of the task at hand. He stressed that there are multiple solutions to climate change that require new forms of cooperation and "heroic" efforts to achieve.

[Read more...](#)

Adaptation Efforts Take Shape in California as Governor Signs Bills

The California legislature closed out its session last month by approving a new effort to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector by 2030. There was, understandably, a great deal of attention paid to this historic bill, [SB 350](#) (De León).

Lost in the shuffle, however, was news about some intriguing climate change adaptation efforts in California. Governor Brown moved to focus state planning toward climate resiliency on all fronts, while legislators passed two bills that address state and local preparedness.

Both bills received the Governor's signature yesterday.

While there is still much more work to be done, these steps forward provide a ray of hope amidst the often dire-seeming news that our agriculture industry could be significantly challenged by climate change in the coming decades, as suggested by a recent USDA report.

[Read more...](#)

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Workshops

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) will present three workshops and two webinars on the 2016 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program competitive solicitation process. Workshops will feature an overview of the program, a review of the concept proposal questions, a live demonstration of the online application system, helpful grant writing tips and more. There is no cost to attend the workshops or webinars; however, space is limited and CDFA requests that attendees register in advance.

To register, email grants@cdfa.ca.gov with your name and contact information, the workshop/webinar you would like to attend, and the number of seats required. Further details will be provided with confirmation of registration.

Workshops and webinars will be held at these locations on the following dates:

ORANGE COUNTY: November 3, 9:30 – 11:30am

FRESNO COUNTY: November 4, 9:30 – 11:30am

WEBINAR 1: November 5, 1:30 – 3:30pm

SACRAMENTO COUNTY: November 10, 9:30 – 11:30am

WEBINAR 2: November 12, 9:30 – 11:30am

For more information, please visit www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants.

Climate Hubs Fellows Program **Application deadline: Nov. 20, 2015**

The USDA Climate Hubs Fellows Program is hiring post-docs and post-masters to work with the ten regional Hubs and Sub-Hubs to accomplish their [mission](#). Fellows from this program will obtain experience developing on-the-ground solutions for vulnerabilities faced by operational land managers and learn to work with established research and outreach communities.

For more information on these positions, [click here](#).

Online Course in Ecological Soil Management

The Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign is offering an 8-week online course in Ecological Soil Management, from Oct. 19 to Dec. 9. The course includes:

- Theory and practice underpinning soil management for organic and sustainable farming systems.
- Why and how soil health and its stewardship are the foundation of organic and sustainable production.
- Emphasis will be on organic systems, soil management and rotation planning.
- Blended course draws on farmer and researcher strategies, data, and experiences and, uses farm case studies developed with support from Organic Valley and content developed for National eXtension's eOrganic Community of Practice.

For more information and to register for credits, [click here](#).

Non-credit students can register [here](#).

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Thank you for your interest in the California Climate and Agriculture Network.*

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