



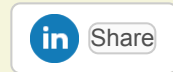
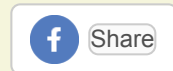
## News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

*December 14, 2015*

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**New CalCAN Policy Brief:  
Diversified Strategies for Reducing Methane**



## Emissions from Dairy Operations

California's climate change regulators are intensifying their efforts to reduce emissions of some particularly potent greenhouse gases—dubbed '[short-lived climate pollutants](#).' The state's new emissions targets could have potentially significant implications for dairy farms in the state, as well as the distribution of cap-and-trade funds to incentivize climate-friendly agricultural practices.

In response, CalCAN recently submitted a policy brief to the California Air Resources Board in which we recommend an approach that moves beyond the state's almost exclusive focus on anaerobic digesters to include dry manure management strategies as well as pasture-based dairying systems. Digesters are an expensive—and potentially unreliable—technological 'fix' that are not a feasible option for many California dairy operators. Where they can produce benefit, we suggest that the state do more to shift the financial risk of digester investment away from dairy operators, and at the same time promote co-digestion facilities that can make use of non-manure waste streams and provide flexibility.

By diversifying the portfolio of manure management strategies available to dairy operators, we can ensure that the industry as a whole is encouraged to mobilize behind the state's critical climate change goals.

As the Air Resources Board moves to adopt a final short-lived climate pollutant strategy in the coming months, we urge them to implement a strategy that offers a diversified, accessible approach reflective of the diversity of the dairy industry.

Click [here](#) to download the report.



## Agriculture & the Paris Climate Talks

'COP 21', the twenty-first United Nations climate change conference, has lofty goals to develop an international, legally binding agreement on climate. The conference has already taken on an historic significance; many experts claim a successful outcome in Paris is the world's best and perhaps last chance to avoid locking in a catastrophic 2°C rise in

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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average global temperatures by the end of the century.

The 2015 Paris Climate Conference also comes at a time when the importance of agricultural climate solutions is more evident than ever before. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) celebrated 2015 as the 'International Year of the Soils'. Agricultural management strategies that build soil carbon are increasingly recognized by researchers as a huge opportunity to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions.

[Read more...](#)



### Healthy Soils Farm Tour

On December 1st, CalCAN organized a farm tour for legislative and agency staff to explore on-farm practices used to build healthy soils at two organic farms. Participants visited [Dixon Ridge Farms](#), a walnut producer near Winters, and [Soil Born Farms](#), a diversified farm and teaching center east of Sacramento.

The farmers shared their experiences with a range of practices that improve soil health such as using compost, mulch and cover crops for fertility to replace chemical fertilizers, livestock rotations, riparian restoration, and reduced tillage.

In addition to the farmer hosts, there were a number of soil experts on hand to share their research and knowledge on carbon sequestration, reducing GHGs and improving soil structure and water-holding capacity. They included Louise Jackson from UC Davis, Kerri Steenwerth from USDA ARS, Jim Komar and Joe Williams, Margaret Smither-Kopperl from NRCS and Pelayo Alvarez from Carbon Cycle Institute. CDFA Deputy Secretary Jenny Lester-Moffitt spoke to the group about the agency's [Healthy Soils Initiative](#).

## Reports

### **Climate-Ready Soil: How Cover Crops Can Make Farms More Resilient to Extreme Weather Risks**

A report from the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) says cover crops can suck tons of carbon pollution from the air, significantly cut crop losses, and prevent the loss of a trillion gallons of water. The report states that planting cover crops on half the corn and soybean acres in the top 10 agricultural states (California, Iowa, Texas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Illinois, Kansas, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Indiana) could sequester more than 19 million metric tons of carbon annually – the equivalent of taking more than four million cars off the road.

Download the report [here](#).

### **California Food Policy Council 2015 Report on Legislation Related to Food and Farming**

This report tracks and analyzes bills critical to food production and food access in the state legislature (including the CalCAN-sponsored bill SB 367). It was produced by the California Food Policy Council, a collaborative of local food policy groups working to ensure that California's food system reflects the needs of all of its communities.

Download the report [here](#).

## Funding

### **Water Efficiency Grants Deadline: January 8, 2016**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is accepting grant applications for the 2016 State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET) for projects that implement on-farm irrigation systems that reduce energy use resulting in greenhouse gas emission reductions and water savings. The maximum grant award is \$200,000 with a recommended 50 percent match of the total project cost. The maximum grant duration is 12 months. Project types include:

- Weather, Soil or Plant based sensors for irrigation scheduling
- Micro-Irrigation or Drip Systems
- Fuel Conversion
- Improved Energy Efficiency
- Low Pressure Systems
- Variable Frequency Drives
- Reduced Pumping
- Other Management Practices (e.g., soil building)

For more information:

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/EnvironmentalStewardship/WEEP.html>

### **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**

**Deadline: Feb. 26, 2016**

CRP is a federal program that assists agricultural producers with the cost of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Participants in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish native plant species on marginal agricultural lands for the primary purpose of preventing soil erosion and improving water quality and related benefits of reducing loss of wildlife habitat.

For more information FSA conservation programs, visit [your local FSA office](#) or [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

### **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**

**Application due dates vary by state**

USDA NRCS is making \$350 million in financial and technical assistance available to help landowners protect and restore key farmlands, grasslands and wetlands across the nation. ACEP funding comes from the 2014 Farm Bill and is intended to protect critical wetlands and encourage landowners to keep lands in farming and ranching. Land eligible for agricultural easements includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland and nonindustrial private forest land.

To enroll land through agricultural land easements, eligible partners may submit proposals to [your NRCS state office](#) to acquire conservation easements on eligible land.

To enroll land through wetland reserve easements, landowners may apply at any time at [your local USDA Service Center](#).

## **Events**

## **Sustainable Winegrowing and Certification Webinars**

**All webinars 10:00am – 11:30am**

**November 24, December 9, 22, January 13**

**Tuesday, February 2**

Participate in this free webinar to learn about the California Sustainable Winegrowing Program (SWP), how to complete a Self-Assessment using the SWP Online System and the steps required to become Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing (CCSW). The Performance Metrics project and online metrics tool will also be covered. The webinars are offered by the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance.

Visit the [online workshop calendar](#) and select your preferred date to register.

## **Grazing and Conservation Part II: Cooperating with Ranchers**

**January 28, 2016 - 9:30am – 1:00pm**

**David Brower Center, Berkeley**

Hear perspectives on the benefits and challenges of working with ranchers for grazing to benefit conservation on public and/or private conservation lands in the Bay Area. The speakers are:

- Robert Doyle, General Manager, East Bay Regional Park District
- Justin Fields, 5th generation rancher, Santa Clara County
- Nancy Schaefer, Program Manager, California Rangeland Trust

This workshop is offered by the Open Space Council in partnership with UC Cooperative Extension, Elkhorn Slough Coastal Training Program, California Rangeland Conservation Coalition, Central Coast Rangeland Coalition, and California Rangeland Trust.

To register: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-rainy-season-gathering-tickets-19333610349?aff=EventsCalendarPage>

## **Wildfire and Rangeland Management – Mediating Impacts to Conservation and Ranching**

**Jan. 21: Choice of tours (limited capacity) – Butte Fire (Calaveras County) \* Rim Fire (Tuolumne County) \* Tesla Fire (San Joaquin County)**

**Jan. 22 (9am – 3pm): Summit – Stockton**

From Drought to El Nino, catastrophic wildfire has significant impacts on California's resources and working landscapes. Join us in considering collaborative solutions that can mediate the wildfire's impacts to conservation and ranching. The summit will address challenges and opportunities to improve rangeland

management to reduce the incidence (scope and severity) of catastrophic wildfire and reduce the impacts of wildfire to ranch sustainability and conservation interests.

For more information and to register:

<http://carangeland.org/2016-summit/>

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

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