



From Drought to Deluge: Skyelark Ranch owner Alexis Robertson (left) tells CalCAN staff what it was like to spend her first five years ranching in drought. This is her first "normal" winter. On the right, Oroville dam's auxiliary spillway is used for the first time in 50 years.

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## News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

February 16, 2017

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### Apply Now for On-Farm Water/Energy Conservation Projects

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET) provides financial assistance for farmers and ranchers to implement irrigation systems that save water and energy while reducing greenhouse gases on California agricultural operations.

CDFA opened the grant application period on February 1<sup>st</sup> for its sixth round of SWEET grants.

If you're a farmer interested in making improvements to your irrigation system, here are some questions you might be asking:

***What can I use this for?***

Grants of up to \$100,000 can be used for any combination of the following:

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*Farm Bill Listening Sessions*

- Weather, soil or plant based sensors for irrigation scheduling
- Micro-irrigation or drip systems
- Conversion of a diesel pumps to solar, wind, electric, or natural gas
- Improved energy efficiency (e.g., retrofitting or replacing pumps)
- Low pressure irrigation systems
- Variable frequency drives to reduce energy use and match pump flow to load requirements.
- Reduced pumping (e.g., improved irrigation scheduling)
- Other management practices that save water and energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., soil management practices such as cover cropping and compost addition that increase water-holding capacity)



For examples of funded projects, click [here](#).

***What if I don't own my land?***

That's fine. You do not need to get approval from your landowner to apply. However, it's generally a good idea to communicate with them about your project and make sure you're in compliance with your lease agreement.

***How do I apply and when's the deadline?***

Follow this [Step-by-Step Application Guide](#) and apply by Tuesday, March 14 at 5:00 pm.

***How can I learn more and get help with my application?***

You can start by checking out CDFA's [FAQ Sheet](#). You can also attend a hands-on application assistance workshop provided by local Resource Conservation Districts or Extension staff, listed [here](#).

A total of 22 workshops are being offered in the following counties:

- Northern CA: Butte, Trinity, Tehama
- Central CA: Fresno, Santa Cruz, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Ventura
- Southern CA: Imperial, San Diego

The SWEEP application is intensive. These workshops are intended to make the program application more accessible. We also recommend reaching out to your local conservation, agricultural, and irrigation professionals for advice.

*CAFF & Farmers  
Guild Merge*

*Funding Opportunities*

*Events*

*Jobs*



CalCAN is a statewide coalition that advances state and federal policy to realize the powerful climate solutions offered by sustainable and organic agriculture.

[Learn more...](#)

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***Have comments about the application?***

Email [brian@calclimateag.org](mailto:brian@calclimateag.org) with your thoughts. Though we have [noted some improvements](#) in this round's application, we still think there is room for more, so welcome your feedback.

***Want more information on SWEEP?***

See CalCAN's analysis of the program. Click [here](#) and [here](#).

## CalCAN Summit Forecast

CalCAN is hosting its [fifth California Climate and Agriculture Summit](#) on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>. The event sold out earlier than ever, reflecting a growing interest in agriculture's climate solutions and CalCAN's work. Over 300 farmers and ranchers, researchers, agricultural professionals, and policymakers will participate in the two-day event.



We look forward to kicking off the Summit with keynote addresses by Karen Ross, CDFA Secretary, and Glenda Humiston, Vice President of the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Their talks will be followed by a panel of farmers sharing their experiences about the benefits of on-farm biodiversity. The remainder of the first day will include 15 breakout sessions on a wide range of climate change and agriculture science, policy and practice topics. On the second day, we will tour three diverse farms in the Yolo County area.

Stay tuned for summaries of the events and presentations that will be posted in early March.

## **State's Updated Climate Plan Released: Agricultural Solutions Improved, But More Ambitious Goals & Actions Needed**



Last year, California adopted ambitious greenhouse gas emission reductions targets, seeking to cut emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. That reduction is roughly equivalent to cutting per capita emissions in half by

the year 2030. To get there, the state is developing a Scoping Plan that lays out how the reductions can be achieved through renewable energy development, energy efficiency measures, low carbon transportation and other strategies, including “climate smart agriculture.”

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) released for public comment its third update to the state’s Climate Change Scoping Plan last week.

We have come a long way since the 2008 Scoping Plan when agricultural solutions to climate change were largely ignored. We were pleased to see in the current draft Plan that agriculture has gained further recognition for the solutions it may offer in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, generating renewable energy and sequestering carbon in soils and woody biomass.

But more can be done. We would like to see the Plan identify more specific and ambitious goals for the agricultural sector, given the urgency of the climate crisis, the well-established science behind many working lands climate strategies, and the multiple economic, environmental, and social benefits of those strategies.

See our analysis of and recommendations for the Scoping Plan [here](#).

## Healthy Soils Summit Packed the House



On January 11th, hundreds gathered in Sacramento to participate in the Healthy Soils Summit put on by California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Both agencies now have Healthy Soil Initiatives. The NRCS program is ongoing, while funding for the CDFA Healthy Soils Initiative is expected to reach farmers in summer 2017.

According to an NRCS press release, the aim of the meeting was to “explore roles and collaborative opportunities for managing California soils for health and natural fertility, while reducing greenhouse gases.”

The event was extremely well attended by a diverse group of farmers, researchers, non-profit organizations, and government representatives.

For a summary of the Summit's highlights, read our blog post on the day [here](#).

## **Sustainable Ag Lands Conservation Program Draft Guidelines Released**

The Strategic Growth Council and the Department of Conservation recently released the draft program guidelines for the third round of funding for the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALCP). Part of the Council's smart growth climate programs, SALCP funds easements on agricultural lands at risk of sprawl and rural ranchette development. The program also provides funding for local governments to adopt land use policies that protect at-risk agricultural lands. No significant changes were made this year to the draft program guidelines.

While the draft program guidelines are out, the funding levels for SALCP are not yet decided. The third cap-and-trade auction for the current fiscal year takes place this month. How the auction fares will help determine the funding levels for SALCP as well as the larger Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) at SGC.

Since the program's inception, CalCAN has worked with land trusts and others in the conservation and agriculture communities to support robust SALCP funding and implementation. We will send out an update once SGC and DOC release their proposed funding levels for the program. Meanwhile, there are several opportunities to engage and offer comment on the new draft guidelines:

Click [here](#) from the guidelines. Public comments are due on March 17<sup>th</sup>. DOC will also host a workshop on the program guidelines on March 2nd. Details and RSVP information found [here](#).

## **Farm Bill Listening Sessions Hosted by CDFA Secretary Karen Ross**

CDFA is hosting listening sessions to inform their priorities for the next farm bill. The upcoming sessions are:

**1. February 22, 4:30-6:30 pm in Salinas**

Monterey County Farm Bureau  
1140 Abbott Street, Suite C  
Salinas, CA 93901

**2. February 23, 1:00-3:00 pm in Los Angeles**

Los Angeles Trade Technical College (Meeting Room TBD)  
400 West Washington Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

"The farm bill is as important to



San Francisco and Los Angeles as it is to the Central Valley,” said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross in a recent CDFA news release on the listening sessions. “This legislation ensures a robust farm safety net, promotes farming and ranching practices that are environmentally sound, and provides important nutritional funding for our citizens.”



We agree. The farm bill is the primary agricultural and food policy legislation that funds key farm programs that support on-farm conservation, local food systems, rural development, food and nutrition programs and much, much more.

Members of the California Caucus of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition will be joining several of the listening sessions, weighing in California’s farm bill priorities.

It is up to Congress to renew the farm bill every five years, and the current farm bill (the Agricultural Act of 2014) will expire next year. Now is the time to weigh in and share your priorities with CDFA and Secretary Ross.



*Note: CAFF is a founding member of CalCAN and continues to be an invaluable partner. They recently merged with Farmers Guild, another wonderful grassroots farmer organization that we have seen rapidly grown since its inception 5 years ago. Here’s what they wrote about the development:*

The merger of Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) and the Farmers Guild allows us to combine efforts, membership and strengths to create one robust organization that provides a stronger, more united voice for family farms and sustainable agriculture throughout California. The youthful energy and grassroots organizing that has made the Farmers Guild a success enables CAFF to build bridges between an established generation of agriculture and a newer crop of farmers.

CAFF has been working with and advocating for California family farmers and sustainable agriculture for nearly 40 years. Through our initiatives, we provide increased access to and awareness around eating healthy and local while also

strengthening family farms — the cornerstone of healthy and economically viable communities.

The Farmers Guild was founded five years ago and has seen dramatic community growth, particularly with new farmers. By encouraging, inspiring and celebrating the resilience of local agriculture, the Farmers Guild has quickly built a network of community alliances across Northern California. Now with 11 local guild chapters, including the recent addition of the first Southern California chapter in San Diego, the Farmers Guild has connected a large group of crop growers and ranchers through its events, social media and sharing of practical resources, from farmer to farmer and guild to guild. These local Guilds will continue after the merger with even more resources at their disposal.

Read more about CAFF, Farmers Guild, and the merger [here](#).

## Funding Opportunities

### California Joint Agricultural Water Efficiency Program

*Proposals due April 21, 2017*

The California Department of Water Resources and the California Department of Food and Agriculture are accepting joint applications involving funding for both agricultural water suppliers and agricultural operations. The program includes \$3 million in funding for agricultural water suppliers to pressurize the delivery of water directly to growers, and an additional \$3 million for growers to receive that water and utilize it through technologies such as drip, subsurface drip, and micro-sprinkler irrigation systems. Agricultural water suppliers will be the lead applicants for the joint program and will work with agricultural operations. Learn more [here](#).

### \$300,000 for an Even Bigger Idea on Compost: The Rathmann Challenge

The [Rathmann Challenge](#) is seeking organizations that have a vision to expand the use of compost in the United States. Applications are now available for the 2017 Rathmann Challenge – Mitigating Climate Change by Expanding the Use of Compost. Challenge submissions open on February 15, 2017. The Challenge is an opportunity for innovative thinkers who know how to implement a successful program. The first \$100,000 is awarded for past outstanding work and includes an exclusive opportunity to apply for an additional \$200,000 in support of an Even Bigger Idea®. Should an organization choose to put them together, they'll have \$300,000 to turn their vision into a reality. For more information, click [here](#).

## Events

### Farmers Guild-Raising and Agrarian Lovers Ball

February 18, 2017

Shone Farm – Forestville, CA

Hosted by CAFF and Farmers Guild

The [Farmers Guild–Raising](#) brings together farmers, ranchers and local food advocates who collectively share skills, explore hot topics in sustainable agriculture, and work to build a united voice on behalf of family farms. This year’s “Intergenerational Exchange” theme will showcase the cross-generational benefit of the CAFF/Farmers Guild merger, and the event will conclude with awards, presentations and a public commemoration at the Agrarian Lovers Ball.



## Jobs

### Director

#### UC Davis Student Farm

The [Student Farm at UC Davis](#) (SF) is a learning community where students from many disciplines work to create, maintain and explore sustainable food systems on a 20+ acre farm. The SF Director has primary responsibility for overall vision and administration as well as the programs' educational, research and public service functions. The Director collaborates with staff and students to ensure the SF learning community collectively develops and achieves its short-term and long-term goals focused on just and sustainable agriculture and food systems, experiential learning, and student leadership and empowerment. Learn more [here](#).

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