

Climate Smart Agriculture: Investing in Ag Sustainability, Food Security & Health

Background

From on-farm renewable energy to farm management practices that reduce fossil fuel inputs and increase carbon storage in agricultural lands to farmland conservation, California's farmers and ranchers are playing a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To support these efforts, California has invested over \$180 million since 2014 in agricultural solutions to climate change.

In his FY 2016-17 Budget, Governor Jerry Brown proposes \$2 billion in California Climate Investments, including the following Climate Smart Agriculture programs:

State Water Efficiency and Enhancement

Program (SWEEP): Provides grants for growers to improve irrigation management, saving water and energy while reducing GHG emissions. Nearly 530 projects funded to date. The top 5 counties for projects funded are Fresno, Butte, Tulare, San Luis Obispo and Monterey¹.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation

Program (SALCP): Part of the Strategic Growth Council, SALCP funds conservation easements on agricultural lands at risk of sprawl and rural ranchette development. To date, easements have been funded on 33,000 acres in 17 counties. The program also funds local government policy efforts to improve farmland conservation and prevent urban sprawl.

Healthy Soils Program: The Healthy Soils Program - new this year - will fund on-farm soil management projects and demonstration projects that improve carbon storage on farms and ranches, while also improving air and water quality.

¹ For more on SWEEP, see our 2016 progress report: calclimateag.org/sweep

Dairy Methane: The Dairy Methane programs include grants for dairy digesters and the new Alternative Manure Management Practices Program, to fund changes in dairy management that reduce potent methane emissions.

Recommendations

1. **\$20 million for SWEEP:** Demand for the program continues to exceed program funding. For example, CDFA was only able to fund \$16 million in projects for Round One (2016) after receiving over \$40 million in requests. California must continue to conserve water resources. We seek to restore funding for SWEEP to \$20 million (Governor Brown proposes \$7.5 million for FY '16-17)
2. **\$20 million for Healthy Soils:** Originally proposed in 2016 by Governor Brown at \$20 million, Healthy Soils funding was cut in the final budget to \$7.5 million for FY '16-'17. To be able to reach a critical mass of the state's 76,000 farms and ranches, we seek a return to \$20 million in Healthy Soils funding.
3. **Ten percent allocation for SALCP.** Demand for SALCP continues to outstrip funding. Of the more than \$50 million requested last year, \$40 million was granted to ag conservation easements and local government projects. To date, SALCP has received 10% of SGC's GGRF allocation. We support this on-going allocation for SALCP. We are not seeking additional funds.
4. **Maintain non-digester dairy methane program.** The Governor proposes level funding for Dairy Methane program (\$50 million), but does not specify in his budget that the Alternative Manure Management Practices Program will continue. We seek clarity in the budget that AMMP will remain a key program within the Dairy Methane Strategy. We are not seeking additional funding.