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## News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

May 23, 2017

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### CalCAN Attends International Conferences on Food, Climate & Soil Carbon Sequestration

In early May, on behalf of CalCAN, Executive Director Renata Brillinger attended two unique and thought-provoking international conferences in Paris, France. The following is a report back on the two events.

The by-invitation conferences were loosely coordinated and overlapping, and both were the first of their kind. They were attended by approximately 350 people from at least 40 countries and every continent. Several CalCAN partners attended, as did Jenny Lester-Moffitt, Deputy Secretary with CDFA.

The [Future of Food in a Changing World](#) was organized by the [Global Alliance for the Future of Food](#), a collaboration of philanthropic foundations. The first conference brought together 250 experts and leaders from the local to the global to gain deeper insights into the connections between climate change and food systems, to craft visions of the food systems we need today and tomorrow, and to chart potential pathways to get there.

The second conference was titled [Sequestering Carbon in Soil: Addressing the Climate Threat](#) and was organized by Breakthrough Strategies & Solutions,

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philanthropic consultants. I served as a conference planning committee member along with others from Canada, Germany, France, Ghana and California. We met for six months leading up to the conference to provide input on the conference objectives, structure, content, speakers and participants.

[Read more...](#)

## Healthy Soils Program Poised to Launch

California is poised to lead the way with its soon-to-be-launched [Healthy Soils Incentives Program](#), the nation's first program to directly incentivize farmers for adopting practices that improve soil health, sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions overall.

According to the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) most recent [proposed Healthy Soils program framework](#), farmers and ranchers will be eligible to apply for up to \$50,000 to defray the costs of adopting healthy soils practices over the course of three years. The [Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel \(SAP\)](#) - the body responsible for advising CDFA in the design of the program - met last week to review the latest proposed framework. CDFA expects to release applications for the program sometime in July.

[Read more...](#)



## Dairy Farm Tour Focuses on Reducing Greenhouse Gases

CalCAN and Organic Valley hosted a dairy farm tour on April 21st in Sonoma County to help inform state agency staff about dairy manure management strategies to reduce methane emissions (a potent greenhouse gas).

The tour followed a [morning workshop](#) organized by CDFA to gather stakeholder input on the design of a new Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP) that will launch this summer with an initial investment of \$9-\$16 million in grants to dairy producers for projects that reduce methane emissions. The workshop was attended by a dozen local dairy producers, CalCAN, Organic Valley and a number of other experts and stakeholders.

When dairy manure decomposes in anaerobic conditions, such as in the manure lagoons found on many dairy farms, microorganisms (called methanogens) consume the manure and release methane, which has 72-75 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide. Please refer to the CDFA website for [background on the program](#).

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## Wins for Sustainable Agriculture in FY 2017 Federal Spending Package



*Written by the [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition \(NSAC\)](#)*

After three continuing resolutions (CR), which cumulatively delayed the fiscal year (FY) 2017 appropriations package by over seven months, Congress has finally reached an agreement on funding levels for the remainder of FY 2017. Despite a particularly contentious political environment, one area on which Congress was largely able to agree in the omnibus spending bill was support for sustainable agriculture programs. Overall, we at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) are pleased with the bill, which includes increased funding for: the [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\)](#) program; [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\) loan programs](#); [Value Added Producer Grants \(VAPG\)](#) program; Conservation Technical Assistance; the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA); and the [Agriculture and Food Research Initiative \(AFRI\)](#), among other programs. We are also thrilled to report that the bill does not cut mandatory farm bill funding from the [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#), our nation's largest working lands conservation program.

[Read more...](#)

### CalCAN Webinars on California's New Healthy Soils Initiative

In June, the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) will release a call for grant proposals from farmers and ranchers to fund management practices that improve soil health. CDFA will provide almost \$4 million in grants for practices such as mulch and compost addition, conservation plantings, cover cropping, reduced tillage, and more, as well as another \$3 million for demonstration projects. The funding comes from the state's cap-and-trade program and must be invested in activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or sequester carbon by improving soil health. Join us on any of these identical webinars to get a preview of the program.

May 22, 10:00 – 11:00am (in partnership with CalPoly's Center for Sustainability)

Register

here: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/f7da2100f641f8c8cde7dc3c8da9331e>

May 26, 10:00 – 11:00am (in partnership with Chico State's Regenerative Agriculture Institute)

Register

here: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/362693a281723b867510d14dfea9e911>

May 30, 10:00 – 11:00am (in partnership with UC Davis Agriculture Sustainability Institute)

Register

here: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/0f72f8e741098877cde7dc3c8da9331e>

## Documentary Film: Evolution of Organic

This documentary chronicles the story of organic agriculture over the past five decades, as told by some of those who built the movement. It also looks ahead to new trends in the industry, including a recent focus on soil carbon sequestration and climate solutions. CalCAN's Renata Brillinger and several CalCAN farmer partners are featured in the film, which headlined the Green Film Festival on April 20th. [Click here](#) to learn more. It is now available on

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/217097542> Password: organic



## Take Part in a Cover Crop Survey

Cover crops can improve soil health, conserve resources and improve farm profitability. Now, your experience with what works and doesn't work can help shape the future of cover crop initiatives nationwide. Farmers who plant cover crops, used to plant cover crops, or have never tried cover crops are all encouraged to take this short survey, now in its fifth year. The survey is being conducted by the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC), USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE), and the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), with help from Penton Media through their Corn and Soybean Digest publication. [Click here](#) to access the survey.

## Funding

### Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

**Deadline: August 1, 2017**

The Strategic Growth Council's SALC Program is now accepting applications for its third round of Agricultural Conservation Easement grant and Strategy and Outcome grant funding. Full applications must be submitted by August 1, 2017 for consideration this funding cycle. Organizations interested in applying for funding are encouraged to submit a pre-proposal (optional) by June 1, 2017, prior to completing a full application.

Grant application materials can be found on the SALC Program website at: <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/SALCP/Pages/Apply-for-Funding.aspx>. For additional information, please contact the SALC Program at (916) 324-0850 or [cfcf@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:cfcf@conservation.ca.gov).

There are three technical assistance workshops coming up. Get more information and RSVP to [cfcf@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:cfcf@conservation.ca.gov).

June 5, 1:30 – 3:00, 7351 Rosanna St., Gilroy

June 15, 1:00 – 2:30, webinar

### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

**Deadline: May 26, 2017**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has \$19 million available for eligible farmers to implement conservation practices that benefit air quality, which help to reduce on-farm emissions. Through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to eligible agricultural producers for addressing their natural resource concerns, including the air quality concerns from their farming operations.

EQIP payments are available to:

- Replace old diesel-powered farm equipment with similar new equipment powered with the cleanest Tier emissions-certified diesel engines;
- Repower irrigation engines with new electric motors or new Tier 4 emissions-certified diesel engines;
- Adopt no-till or reduced-till conservation tillage practices;
- Utilize combined-tillage implements that perform multiple tasks in a single pass;
- Stabilize unpaved roads and traffic areas to limit dust;
- Establish windbreaks and shelterbelts at Confined Animal Feeding Operations;
- Chip debris from orchard or vineyard removals;
- Apply the safe handling and disposal of chemically-treated wooden stakes;
- Use “low-dust” nut harvesters instead of the conventional harvesters (New in 2016).

NRCS accepts EQIP applications year round and establishes cut-off dates for making funding selections. May 26, 2017 is the next cut-off date when funding decisions will be made for all eligible and ranked applications. For more information, contact your nearest USDA Service Center or [click here](#).

### **USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Grants**

**Deadline: July 13, 2017**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced \$6.3 million in available funding for projects to support resilient agriculture and forestry production systems. Funding is made through NIFA’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. The long-term goal of the AFRI [Resilient Agroecosystems and Climate Challenge Area](#) is to improve sustainable agriculture and food systems. In FY 2017, this Challenge Area will invest in one priority area: climate, land use, and land management. Projects may investigate the consequences of land-use changes, such as increased productivity, greenhouse gas emissions and/or other climate feedbacks. Projects may look at how agricultural and forestry systems responds to these changes. Projects may also study the social, political, and economic factors that influence land management. [Click here](#) for more information.

### **Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Grants**

**Various deadlines**

The 2018 Calls for Proposals for [four Western SARE grant programs](#) have been released. The grants programs include (click on each to get more information):

- [Research & Education pre-proposal](#) (due June 1, 2017)
- [Professional Development](#) (due Nov. 1, 2017)

- [Farmer/Rancher](#) (due Dec. 6, 2017)
- [Professional + Producer](#) (due Dec. 6, 2017)

### **Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety Small Grant Program**

**Deadline: July 14, 2017**

WCAHS is dedicated to improving the health and safety of farmers, farmworkers and their families and communities through multidisciplinary research, education, and community trainings. WCAHS is seeking proposals that address research, outreach, or educational issues of agricultural health and safety in Arizona, California, Hawaii, and/or Nevada. WCAHS welcomes applications on a wide range of topics relevant to agricultural health and safety. [Click here](#) for more information.

## **Events**

### **Nature's Value - What is, what was, and what can be**

**May 24, 2017, 8:00am – 3:00pm**

**Blue Note Napa/Napa Valley Opera House, 1030 Main Street, Napa**

This event will look into hot topics in our watersheds, including hydrology, fish, water quality, groundwater, climate change, and a means to value and monitor our natural resources. CalCAN's Renata Brillinger will be speaking about climate and agriculture policies. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

### **Soil Health Assessment Field Days**

**May 25 at Macon Seed, Turlock**

**June 22 at Full Belly Farm, Guinda**

Join us for these tailgate-style, on-farm workshops as we learn about innovative assessment and management strategies for soil health in a variety of cropping systems at three unique California locations. The workshops are being sponsored by USDA's Western SARE program and are free and open to the public. For information and to register, [click here](#).

### **Benefits of Soil Management for Farming Systems training**

**June 6, 9:00am-1:00pm**

**UC WSREC in Five Points**

This workshop provides a unique learning opportunity on how long-term use of soil health principles and practices affects farming system function and performance. The practices that will be showcased include reduced disturbance tillage and the use of cover crops and compost. The training will include presentations of systems management goals and practices by farmer presenters, research-based topics based on published systems management findings by study investigators, as well as opportunities for direct learning and discovery by participants that will include in-field observations of changes resulting from the management practices. Please RSVP online at <http://ucanr.edu/SoilMgmt>.

### **Napa County Watershed Symposium**

**Ecology of Soil Health Summit**

**Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado**

**June 5-7, 2017**

The importance of healthy soils for sustainable agriculture and land management has been widely recognized in recent years, resulting in the emergence of ambitious initiatives to promote and incentivize practices that improve and regenerate soils. The soil ecology community has a unique systems perspective that can inform and improve understanding of soil health and efforts to transform science into practices and technologies that enhance sustainable land management. The goal of this international summit is to advance the

development and implementation of science-based programs that enhance soil health. This meeting will bring together scientists, students, program managers, land managers, and industry representatives. Register by May 12:

<http://soilhealthsummit.colostate.edu/>

### **Special Legal Considerations for Managing Farm and Ranches**

**June 8, 2017**

#### **Monterey County Agricultural Center, 1432 Abbott St., Salinas**

Attorneys, accountants, and business advisers: 9:00 am – 12 noon ([click here](#) to register)

Ag educators and technical assistance providers: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm ([click here](#) to register)

### **Microbial Underpinnings of Soil Health**

**June 15, 8:30am-12pm**

#### **UC Davis Russell Ranch Sustainable Agriculture Facility**

Soil health is dependent upon the abundance, diversity, and activity of soil microbial communities. At our hands-on, participatory workshop, we will engage in different aspects of the soil's many microbiomes: who are the players, where do they live, what do they do, what practices maintain and regenerate them, how do we measure them?

The workshop will include exhibits and demonstrations, short experiments, and calculation exercises to help shed light on these crucial but invisible members of our farms and ranches. We hope to provide an overview of what exists for soil biology and new directions it may take, and discuss the relationships between soil and human health. Registration required by [clicking here](#), but the event is free and open to the public.

## **Jobs**

### **Organic Farming Research Foundation**

#### **Development Director**

OFRF is looking for someone who has a passion for organic food/farming and who would enjoy being part of our small but dynamic team. Information is available [here](#).

### **American Farmland Trust (AFT)**

#### **California Regional Director**

AFT, a national non-profit conservation organization, is looking for an outstanding mid-career executive to become the director of its California operation. The California Regional Director is responsible for leading and organizing AFT's research, public education, demonstration and policy advocacy activities in California in coordination with the national AFT office to advance the organization's mission of "Saving the Land that Sustains Us" by protecting farmland, promoting environmentally sound farming practices and helping farmers stay on the land. AFT's principal California office is in Sacramento, but the Director may be located elsewhere if necessary and practical. [Click here](#) for more information.

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