



News from the California Climate & Agriculture Network

June 20, 2017

Update on Healthy Soils Program Timeline

At the request of CalCAN and many of our partners, CDFA agreed to release a draft [Healthy Soils Program](#) Request for Proposals (RFP) for public comment. The program will fund both incentives and demonstration projects that reduce on-farm greenhouse gas emissions and/or sequester carbon. The draft will likely be out in July. If you would like to receive notices about the draft RFP and the program generally, click here for the CDFA Healthy Soils listserv: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/subscriptions/#environmental>

We expect that the final RFP will be out by August, followed by workshops CDFA will offer to prospective applicants. Grant applications will be due six weeks later, and projects will be required to start in November.

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State Legislature Approves Budget, Climate Change Investments Delayed

Last week the state legislature approved a \$125 billion state budget. The budget bills are silent on the FY 2017-18 expenditures for climate change programs, including the Climate Smart Agriculture programs, because efforts to extend the state's cap-and-trade program, the source of funding for the climate programs, stalled out.

Assembly Bill 378, the cap-and-trade extension bill that coupled greenhouse gas reduction requirements with air pollution regulations, failed to pass out of the Assembly. The industry-backed cap-and-trade extension, AB 151, never made it to the floor and Senate Bill 775, the Senate's only proposal, did not receive a hearing.

But there is still plenty of time in the legislative session for a deal to be struck to extend cap-and-trade beyond 2020. Since funding for the climate change programs began in 2014, the final decision on program allocations has always come at the end of session, well after the budget deadline. The uncertainty around cap-and-trade and possible program reforms only increases the uncertainty around funding for FY '17-'18.

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Dairy Farms Model Methane Reduction Solutions

The Bordessa family has been dairy farming in California for five generations and now have two farms just outside the tiny hamlet of Valley Ford in western Sonoma County. They are organic dairy producers, members of the [Organic Valley](#) farmer-owned dairy cooperative, and their cows are typically on pasture 90 percent of the year. Gary and Jarrid Bordessa, the father and son team at the helm of the farm's operations, think a lot about balancing the ecological health of the land with economic viability. Managing manure is an important aspect of achieving this balance.

Because their cows are on pasture for so much of the year, most of the manure is distributed across the landscape, and Jarrid says the fertility the manure provides is one of the keys to the health and productivity of their pastures. Manure from the milking barns or free stalls where the cows are housed when the pastures are too wet

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to graze is flushed with recycled water and collected in cement pits. At the end of each pit is a low-tech “weeping wall,” a screen of wooden slats through which solids are separated as the water moves through the screen, pressurized by gravity. The liquid is either recycled for flushing barns or is used to fertigate pasture. The solids are dried, composted and used on pasture to enhance soil health and add fertility.

by sustainable and organic agriculture.
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The Bordessas are not alone in their commitment to continually improve their manure management strategies for greater environmental benefit. To showcase examples of innovative approaches to manure management and related emission reductions, CalCAN produced a series of [six case studies profiling dairy producers](#). The profiles feature manure management techniques that reduce methane emissions while providing numerous other benefits such as improved air and water quality and soil health.

[Read more here](#), and [click here](#) to download a copy of the case studies.

Progress Made on Funding Farmland Conservation

Funding for farmland conservation, healthy soils and climate change adaptation got a big boost last week. [Senate Bill 5](#), the park and water bond measure authored by Senate Pro Tem Kevin de León, passed the floor with more than the two-thirds vote needed (31 ayes, 9 noes). The measure provides much needed funding for a host of natural resource conservation activities. The bill now has to be reconciled with the Assembly version, AB 18 (E. Garcia, D-Coachella).

CalCAN, with our agriculture and conservation allies, successfully sought the inclusion of \$25 million in the bond measure for the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP). Without new funding, the program is out of funds with only limited dollars available for High Speed Rail mitigation.

[Read more...](#)



Push for Transparency in

Water Well Drilling Forges Ahead

A CalCAN-supported bill, Senate Bill 252, cleared the Senate in early June with strong support and now moves to the Assembly for consideration. SB 252 would address this groundwater “crisis of the commons” by requiring greater transparency and opportunity for local input before new well permits are issued in [critically overdrafted groundwater basins](#) while we wait for local agencies to implement the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act](#) (SGMA).

Five years of extreme drought and significant new perennial crop plantings have fueled [a torrent of drilling](#) in vulnerable aquifers. As a result, family farmers and many rural residents are seeing their wells go dry and/or contaminant levels rise as larger entities drill deep new wells. As farmers and rural residents plan for the impacts of climate change, including more frequent and intense droughts, they deserve to know when a new, neighboring well might impact their shared groundwater resource.

California is moving toward more sustainable management of our groundwater resources. SB 252 is a modest, but important step in achieving those goals.

[Read more...](#)

New CalCAN Team Member

We are pleased to introduce you to Amy Winzer, our recently hired Program & Operations Coordinator. She will add capacity to enhance our communications strategies and expand our network of partnerships and alliances. Amy joins us with five years experience in farming, environmental education, nonprofit administration and communications, and program management. She has worked on several sustainable farms in California and managed a variety of small-scale, diversified production and educational gardens. Her passion for agriculture took root while earning her B.S. at UC Berkeley as she coordinated a comprehensive urban garden internship program, and contributing to agricultural research.



Trump Budget Proposes Draconian Cuts to Farm Bill

The following is a press release from the [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#) (NSAC), of which CalCAN is a member. CalCAN and a 15-member caucus of NSAC will work together in coordination with NSAC to oppose the Administration’s draconian budget proposal.

President Trump’s FY 2018 budget request seeks to cut nearly \$230 billion (21 percent) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) bottom line, a reduction that would effectively cripple the Department’s ability to serve American family farmers effectively.

The Administration's budget request seeks to affect more than just FY 2018 appropriations; it also seeks to undo the rigorous work of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees by rewriting the farm bill and raiding programs with mandatory funding. Of particular concern to NSAC are policy changes that propose to cut \$193 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and eliminate the [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#), [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#), [Specialty Crop Block Grants \(SCBG\)](#), and [Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program \(FMLFPP\)](#).

[Read more...](#)

Conservation Benefits of Diversified Crop Rotations: New Report from the Union of Concerned Scientists

The conservation benefits of diversified crop rotations have long been known—from healthier soil and less erosion to fewer pests and better water retention, diversified rotations can help farmers address a multitude of environmental concerns. A new report by the [Union of Concerned Scientists \(UCS\)](#) highlights how these rotations can also increase yields and reduce the amount of money farmers have to spend on inputs.



UCS' report, [Rotating Crops, Turning Profits: How Diversified Farming Systems Can Help Farmers While Protecting Soil and Preventing Pollution](#), details the impacts of on-farm diversification, the barriers to making the transition from a two-crop rotation to a more diversified rotation, and the ways in which policy can remove these barriers. Diverse crop systems, simply put, are those that include three or more crops in a rotation, rather than the usual one or two. *Rotating Crops, Turning Profits* builds onto an experiment led by Iowa State University (the "Marsden Farm Study") that studied the combined effects of a diverse, no-till crop system on a farm's yield and profitability. Taking this one step further, *Rotating Crops, Turning Profits* digs into the implications of a diversified system, not just on the farm, but for downstream communities.

[Click here](#) to read the full report.

Farmer Guides on Organic Farming & Soil Health

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) released a new series of educational guides designed to help organic farmers and ranchers enhance the soil health and overall resilience of their operations. Each guide begins with tools and practices set in the context of the challenges and opportunities identified by organic producers in OFRF's 2016 National Organic Research Agenda. The first three guides in the series are now available to download free of charge (the remaining four guides will be released soon). The series

includes:

- Building Organic Matter for Healthy Soils: An Overview
- Weed Management: An Ecological Approach
- Practical Conservation Tillage

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

Leopold Award Nominations Due July 14th

Are you a California farmer, rancher or forester committed to sound environmental stewardship? Know someone who is? Sustainable Conservation, Sand County Foundation and the California Farm Bureau Federation are seeking nominees for the 2017 California Leopold Conservation Award. Nominations are due July 14th.

The award recognizes private landowners' commitment to responsible environmental stewardship and land management. Finalists will be selected in part based on their commitment to responsible and sustainable land management, the overall health of their land, implementation of innovative practices, and outreach and leadership in their communities.

Judges will evaluate nominees in two categories: Nurseries and Crops, and Livestock. The grand prize of \$10,000 will be presented at the California Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention in December. [Click here](#) for more information about this year's award and a nomination form.

Events

Webinar: Business Opportunities of Greenhouse Horticulture as a Comprehensive Climate Smart Agriculture Solution

June 22, 2017 • 9:00 - 11:00am

The California Department of Food and Agriculture, in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, United States Department of Agriculture, UC Davis and Wageningen University will be co-hosting a joint webinar on climate smart agriculture. The webinar will focus its discussion on possible business opportunities between the two regions and the role of emerging technologies related to greenhouse horticulture. Potential topics will include the use of hydroponics, energy-efficient LED lightening, resource use efficiency, automation and the role of regulations. [Click here](#) to register for free.

Organic Stone Fruit Jubilee

June 24, 2017 • 5:00pm - 8:30pm

Mokichi Okada Association's Oasis Garden, Clovis

This fruit-filled evening features tasting and sales of 60+ varieties of peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots, and pluots direct from organic growers! Also enjoy fresh fruit pies, farm tours, presentations, Japanese Tea Ceremony, kids craft corner, live music, and local food vendors. [Click here](#) for more information.

Jobs

Policy Director

Napa County Farm Bureau (NCFB)

The Policy Director represents the interests of the members and their elected Board of Directors in an informed, dignified manner; works with the Executive Director and the Board of Directors to develop and implement a long-range strategy which achieves NCFB's mission. [Click here](#) for more information.

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