

# Farmer & Rancher Climate Leaders Healthy Soils Program Participants

*The Healthy Soils Program, administered by the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA), provides grants to farmers and ranchers who adopt management practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration in soil and plants.*

*More info is available on CDFA's website: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysouils/>*

## MCGINNIS RANCH

**Watsonville, Monterey County**  
**Award Amount: \$12,577**

“We can reduce our carbon emissions and fertilizer applications and save water at the same time. It’s a win-win-win.”

- Sandi McGinnis-Garcia



Sandi McGinnis-Garcia grew up helping on the farm that her dad started in 1968, but she didn’t expect to become a farmer herself. When her dad retired in 2015, she and her niece Sara partnered to take over the farm, where they grow mixed vegetables, flowers, strawberries, and cane berries. As they transition from a conventional operation to becoming certified organic, they are focused on building organic matter in their soils that are so sandy they can feel like walking on a beach. With the support of Santa Cruz Resource Conservation

District, Sara successfully applied for and secured a Healthy Soils grant. With the funds, they will add compost to all of their fields and plant a diversity of cover crops over the next three years to build the soil so it better holds onto nutrients and water. They will also plant a hedgerow (long-living woody plants) along field borders to attract more pollinators to their fields, provide wildlife habitat, and serve as a windbreak. Sandi sees all three soil-building techniques as important for sequestering carbon and reducing their long-term dependence on costly amendments.

The California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN) is a statewide coalition that advances state and federal policy to realize the powerful climate solutions offered by sustainable and organic agriculture.



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