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The Press Democrat

WINNER OF THE 2019 PULITZER PRIZE

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Farming and carbon

EDITOR: We were pleased to see the May 19 column “Keeping carbon down on the farm,” which echoes our positive experience with regenerative farming at Fetzer Vineyards. We farm 960 acres and have found regenerative practices to improve soil fertility, drought resiliency and biodiversity levels, and to support soil’s natural ability to reintegrate carbon from the atmosphere.

In an effort to share how such practices positively impact carbon storage, we recently released the results of a study that found our organic and biodynamic vineyards store more soil organic carbon than a neighboring conventional vineyard. Studies like ours highlight farmers’ unique ability to reduce negative environmental impacts in real time, ultimately helping to restore the carbon balance — a vital element in the fight against climate change.

We appreciate that Gov. Gavin Newsom recognizes the power of soil management for tackling climate change and that he proposed \$28 million for the Healthy Soils Program. We hope the Legislature will go even further, also funding impactful programs like on-farm water conservation and projects that turn livestock manure into compost.

With financial support from the state’s Climate Smart Agriculture programs, California farmers and ranchers can continue to play a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

JOSEPH BRINKLEY

Director of vineyard operations, Fetzer Vineyards, Hopland