



# CalCAN

CALIFORNIA CLIMATE &  
AGRICULTURE NETWORK

## CalCAN at 10 YEARS

A Decade of Breaking Ground  
& Sowing Seeds

October 2019



Dear Partners,

October 2019

The California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN) is marking our 10th anniversary! This milestone is an occasion to celebrate the accomplishments of our coalition and partner network and to document and share that history.

CalCAN was founded in 2009 as a coalition of five California sustainable and organic agriculture organizations. We came together because the state was just getting underway in its implementation of the country's most ambitious climate change law, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) but with very little attention being paid to agricultural issues. We recognized a need and opportunity to advance sustainable agriculture's powerful climate solutions in the climate policy arena. In only a decade, CalCAN has grown into a seven-member coalition with five staff, two offices, a network of 4,000 members, and an annual budget of \$800,000.

Our central goal is to secure resources for farmers and ranchers to address climate change, including financial incentives, technical assistance and research so they can optimize on-farm climate solutions and ensure the long-term viability of California agriculture in the face of climate change.

We advocate for solutions that are diverse, synergistic and grounded in the economic and practical realities of farming and ranching.

We focus on biological, knowledge-based tools that store carbon, reduce on-farm greenhouse gas emissions, enhance resilience and improve the health of our ecosystems and communities.

We do this work in close collaboration with innovative farmers and ranchers, researchers, advisors, and other advocates who increase our influence, amplify our collective voice, inspire and motivate us.

CalCAN has come of age at a time when scientists, policymakers and the general public are awakening to the tremendous potential of sustainable agriculture to curb climate change. We have established a reputation as one of California's most influential and knowledgeable representatives of agriculture on climate change issues. This CalCAN at 10 Years report summarizes the "Why, How, When, What and Who" of our past decade of work.

Influencing agriculture policy in a state as large, complex and influential as California requires persistence, strategic partners, a long view and patient investment. With CalCAN's 10-year track record of policy accomplishments, we can confidently say that the investments in our coalition are paying off. Thank you for your interest and your support!

On behalf of the CalCAN Team,

Renata Brillinger, Executive Director

& Jeanne Merrill, Policy Director



## CalCAN STAFF



**Brian Shobe**  
Associate Policy Director



**Lauren Lum**  
Campaign Organizer



**POLICY CONSULTANT**  
**Rebecca Marcus**  
RMarcus Government Strategies

*"Working with CalCAN has been a career highlight for me — this is why I got into the field, and you have offered me a wonderful opportunity to actually help out with all of the exciting and VERY effective work that you do. CalCAN is the most rewarding organization I've worked with."*

— Valerie Eviner, Associate Professor,  
Department of Plant Sciences, UC Davis





## CalCAN COALITION MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



**Dave Runsten**  
Policy Director



**Reggie Knox**  
Executive Director



**Jane Sooby**  
Outreach and  
Policy Specialist



**Rebecca Spector**  
West Coast Director



**Andy Fisher**  
Executive Director



**Dave Henson**  
Executive Director



**Jo Ann Baumgartner**  
Executive Director

## FARMER & RANCHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Al Courschesne**, Frog Hollow Farm  
(Contra Costa County)

**Bruce Rominger**, Rominger Brothers Farm  
(Yolo County)

**Craig McNamara**, Sierra Orchards (Yolo County)

**David Gates**, Ridge Vineyards  
(Santa Cruz, Sonoma and Napa County)

**George Davis**, Porter Creek Vineyard (Sonoma County)

**Greg Rawlings**, Jacobs Farm/Del Cabo  
(Santa Cruz and Monterey County)

**Jim Cochran**, Swanton Berry Farm (Santa Cruz County)

**Joe and Julie Morris**, Morris Grassfed Beef  
(San Benito County)

**Jon-Mark Chappellet**, Clos Du Val Winery  
(Napa County)

**Judith Redmond**, Full Belly Farm (Yolo County)

**Jutta Thoerner**, Manzanita Manor (San Luis Obispo)

**Kelly Mulville**, Paicines Ranch (San Benito County)

**Rich Collins**, Collins Farm (Solano County)

**Rosie and Ward Burroughs**, Burroughs Family Farm  
(Stanislaus County)

**Russ Lester**, Dixon Ridge Farms (Yolo County)

## SCIENCE & TECHNICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Amélie Gaudin**, Department of  
Plant Sciences, UC Davis

**Ann Thrupp**, Down-to-Earth Innovations

**Cynthia Daley**, Center for Regenerative  
Agriculture & Resilient Systems,  
Chico State University

**Hunter Francis**, CAFES Center for  
Sustainability, California Polytechnic  
State University

**Jeff Creque**, Carbon Cycle Institute

**John Garn**, ViewCraft

**Karen Buhr**, California Association  
of Resource Conservation Districts

**Karen Heisler**, Mission Pie

**Kate Scow**, Department of Land Air  
& Water Resources & Director of  
Russell Ranch, UC Davis

**Kerri Steenwerth**, USDA Agricultural  
Research Service

**Rex Dufour**, National Center for  
Appropriate Technology (NCAT)

**Stefanie Kortman**, California State University,  
Monterey Bay

**Sonja Brodt**, Sustainable Agriculture  
Research & Education Program, UC Davis

**Stephen Wheeler**, Department of Human  
Ecology, UC Davis

**Timothy Bowles**, Department of Environmental  
Science, Policy, & Management, UC Berkeley

**Tom Tomich**, Agricultural Sustainability Institute

**Valerie Eviner**, Department of Plant Sciences,  
UC Davis

**Wendell Gilgert**, Point Blue  
Conservation Science

**Wendy Millet**, TomKat Ranch  
& Educational Foundation



# WHY

## RESPONDING TO THE THREAT & OPPORTUNITY

Farmers and ranchers are experiencing more extreme and unpredictable weather, threatening their livelihoods and our food security. The record-setting drought of 2012-16, the heat waves in the summer of 2018, and recent wildfires of unprecedented destruction, frequency and scale make it abundantly clear that agriculture is uniquely vulnerable to climate change.

Science tells us that sustainable and organic agricultural practices and farmland conservation are among the most promising approaches to both climate change mitigation and adaptation. This knowledge is the foundation for CalCAN's focus on achieving a fundamental shift in California's farming system to one that is sustainable, regenerative and resilient.

California is an economic giant whose agricultural industry is facing significant challenges and opportunities. It is also a global hotspot for ambitious climate change policies. Accomplishing bold agricultural climate solutions in California will have an outsized influence on many other regions of the world whose governments are carefully watching California's climate experiment.



**We envision an agricultural system that is increasingly resilient—a system that stores carbon, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, protects our natural resources, improves air and water quality and public health, sustains our food security, provides for economically vibrant agricultural communities, and conserves California's uniquely productive agricultural lands.**

## CalCAN'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1

Addressing climate change with organic and sustainable agriculture practices offers multiple environmental and public health benefits for all Californians.

2

Policy change can be highly effective in driving a widespread transition to sustainable and organic agricultural practices.

3

Engaging and consulting with farmers and other agricultural and environmental leaders will achieve meaningful policy change that works on the ground.

4

Recognizing that agricultural sustainability is a continuum leads to opportunities for improvements on all farms.

5

Leveling the playing field for small-scale, diversified, and under-resourced farmers should be a high priority for using limited public resources to incentivize agricultural climate benefits.

6

The disproportionate impact of climate change on low-income communities necessitates climate policies that benefit those communities and mitigate impacts on them.

*"It's the unpredictability that's having the most impact. Is the well going to hold out? How do you plan? We planned for a hot summer and then had the coolest we've had in six years. We keep hearing the hottest this, the driest that. Every year it just seems like it's the most something."*

— David Cooper, Oak Hill Farm, Glen Ellen, CA

## OUR METHOD & PARTNERS

CalCAN uses climate policy as a strategic lever to create incentives and other resources that encourage farmers and ranchers to employ management practices with multiple environmental benefits. We advocate for financial incentives and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers because those resources can overcome real or perceived barriers to adopting new practices, including concerns about yield losses or upfront capital costs.

California's new suite of Climate Smart Agriculture programs—for which CalCAN has been a leading champion—now provide some of the necessary funding, research and technical assistance. As these programs are scaled up and better integrated, we expect to see a diffusion of knowledge and a shift in practices throughout California's agriculture. There are early indications that this transformation is already underway.

Over the past decade our team has developed relationships with legislative offices and government agencies, sponsored and supported bills and budget allocations, and engaged in rulemaking to improve program implementation. We have cultivated a network of Sacramento-based partners who work on conservation, environmental and climate issues. CalCAN serves as one of the few representatives of farmers in these collaborations and coalitions.

We have also developed a statewide network of partners who serve as advisors, spokespeople and advocates, including several hundred farmers and ranchers, scientists, other agriculture professionals and technical assistance providers.

In these ways, a relatively small number of committed partners can have an outsized influence on policy outcomes.

*"As farmers, we appreciate what CalCAN does to help make funding available for operational changes that support the environment and climate."*

— Jana McClelland,  
McClelland Dairy, Petaluma, CA

## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

In their own words, here are some examples of how CalCAN and our partners work together.

### ANNUAL LEGISLATOR EDUCATION DAY



*"There is no better way to ensure that environmental programs that benefit farmers are funded than to go out and talk to your elected representatives and share your experiences."*

— Patricia Carrillo, Executive Director,  
Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association, Salinas, CA

*"CalCAN brought together a great group of farmers, ranchers and technical assistance providers. They spoke from first-hand experience and conviction, describing the ways that agriculture has a big role to play in combating climate change."*

— Judith Redmond, Co-owner, Full Belly Farm, Guinda, CA



*"Because farmers and ranchers are such busy people, taking a day off their normal schedules is a big deal. I can confidently say it was worthwhile. We forged connections with agriculture communities across the state, grew our understanding of the policy arena, and further developed relationships with decision-makers in the Capitol."*

— Jeff Borum, Soil Health Conservationist, East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District

### DISTRICT MEETINGS WITH STATE LEGISLATORS

*"Working in small towns with family farms, it is difficult to make sure the needs of our farmers are met at the state level. I am grateful for the work CalCAN does to make sure that funding goes towards climate-friendly agricultural practices and farmland conservation. This work is not just good for our local community but for all of California and its residents."*

— Brittany Heck Jensen, Executive Director, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District



*"My three daughters and I attended a CalCAN Legislator Education Day and left with renewed hope in our political system. Our representatives were completely engaged with us about our concerns about the future of family farming in California."*

— Nathanael Siemens, Fat Uncle Farm, Kern County

### CalCAN'S SUMMIT

*"I think it was a wonderful venue to have an honest and open conversation on how we can work together to address climate change."*

— Kandi Manhart, Executive Director, Glenn County RCD



*"The actions and efforts of CalCAN has forced me to examine how we approach research within the agricultural system – it's a constant learning process for me. I value the CalCAN conference because of the broad range of organizations and practitioners that attend."*

— Kerri Steenwerth, Soil Scientist, USDA Agricultural Research Service



2009

A group of sustainable and organic agriculture organizations comes together to form CalCAN and hires co-directors Renata Brillinger (Executive Director) and Jeanne Merrill (Policy Director).

2010

CalCAN sponsors its first of several bills (SB 1241) calling for cap-and-trade investments in agricultural climate solutions, catalyzing and framing the debate in the California legislature. Though none of these bills pass, they lay the groundwork for the launch, four years later, of the state's first Climate Smart Agriculture programs.

2011

A CalCAN-sponsored bill expands the state's Net Energy Metering (NEM) program and makes it easier for farmers and ranchers to connect their on-farm renewable energy projects to the grid.

2012

A CalCAN-supported bill creates a new program called Net Energy Metering Aggregation (NEMA) allowing farmers to aggregate their meters and maximize their potential for generating renewable energy.

2013

CalCAN releases *Triple Harvest: Farmland Conservation for Climate Protection, Smart Growth and Food Security*, highlighting UC Davis research finding that an acre of urban land emits 70 times more greenhouse gas emissions than an acre of irrigated cropland. A CalCAN-led coalition advocates for farmland conservation as part of the state's land use and transportation climate strategies.

CalCAN co-sponsors the Sustainable Farmland Strategy Act (AB 1961) which would have required counties to develop strategies for protecting agricultural land, but the bill does not advance due to opposition by developers.

CalCAN forms a working group of agriculture conservation organizations to advocate for cap-and-trade investments in farmland conservation.

The state launches the **Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALCP)** with \$5 million in grants for permanent easements on farmland that limits urban development and rural lot subdivision.



**Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALCP)**  
Provides grants to permanently protect agricultural land from development.

2014

At the height of the drought,

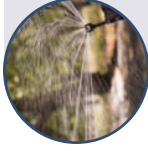
Governor Brown establishes

the **State Water Efficiency &**

**Enhancement Program (SWEEP).**

By 2019 the program funded

\$73 million in grants to more than 700 farmers  
for on-farm water and energy conservation projects.



**State Water Energy & Enhancement  
Program (SWEEP)**

Provides grants to farmers for reducing water  
and energy use. We advocate for funding and  
continual improvement of SWEEP.

2015

CalCAN releases a *Blueprint* roadmap for a state Climate Change and Agriculture Program.

CalCAN sponsors its third bill (SB 367) attempting to establish funding for agricultural  
climate solutions. In spite of growing support, the bill does not advance.

Governor Brown establishes the  
Healthy Soils Initiative but funding  
is delayed as the cap-and-trade  
market collapses.



**Healthy Soils Program**

Provides grants to farmers for practices  
that sequester carbon and reduce GHG  
emissions. CalCAN wrote the legislative  
language that created the program.

2016

CalCAN wins legislative language that establishes the **Healthy Soils Program** to provide  
grants to farmers for practices that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas  
emissions. It also directs the state to incentivize dry manure management practices and  
increased grazing to reduce  
methane emissions on livestock  
operations, leading in 2017  
to the creation of the

**Alternative Manure**

**Management Program (AMMP).**



**Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP)**

Provides grants to dairy producers to reduce potent  
methane emissions by switching to dry manure  
management practices. CalCAN wrote the legislative  
language that led to the creation of the program.

2017

The cap-and-trade program is extended to the year 2030. To get the bill passed,  
a deal is made that cuts funding to the Healthy Soils and AMMP programs.

CalCAN successfully champions SB 732 which creates a new agricultural  
conservation planning grant program for local governments.

California farmers and ranchers receive \$6.1 million for the first grants in  
the country to support healthy soils. Another \$31 million is awarded to dairy  
producers through the new AMMP program.

SALCP approves its fourth round of grants for farmland protection, now totaling  
\$124 million and protecting more than 90,000 acres, far exceeding the 55,000 acres  
of farmland protected in the previous 20 years of bond-funded farmland conservation.

2018

A CalCAN-sponsored bill (AB 2377) secures funding for technical assistance  
for farmers and ranchers applying to the Climate Smart Agriculture programs.

Governor Newsom and the legislature nearly double the funding for  
the Healthy Soils Program from \$15 million (2018-19 FY) to \$28 million  
(2019-20 FY). A record number of farmers and ranchers receive grants for  
soil improvement projects for a total investment of \$12.8 million.

Farmer and rancher demand for Climate Smart Agriculture  
grants grows, exceeding available funding.

2019

***CalCAN celebrates its 10th anniversary!***

A total of **\$323 MILLION** has been invested and budgeted for Climate Smart Agriculture to date.

# INDICATORS OF CalCAN GROWTH FROM 2009 — 2019

Staff size	1.5	5
Organization budget	\$300,000	\$800,000
Number of charitable foundation supporters	4	24
Number of CalCAN Network members	0	More than 4,000
Number of CalCAN-sponsored bills introduced or language inserted in bills or propositions	0	19
Number of bills sponsored by CalCAN or including CalCAN language signed into law	0	10
Number of CalCAN conferences, hearings, legislative briefings, lobby days and farm tours organized	2	Over 40

## CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE PROGRAM IMPACTS TO DATE (supported by CalCAN advocacy)\*

Total dollars budgeted for California's four Climate Smart Agriculture programs	\$0	\$323 million
Total farm and ranch projects funded by the state	0	More than 1,400
Total acres of farmland protected	0	90,000
Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents reduced on California farms and ranches (as of January 2018)	0	48.5 million
Funding budgeted for technical assistance for farmers to apply to the programs	0	\$1.75 million
Funding earmarked for technical assistance for farmers of color	0	\$437,500

\* Approximate totals as reported by the California Department of Food & Agriculture (for Healthy Soils, AMMP, SWEEP) and the Department of Conservation (for SALCP).



# THANK YOU

## CalCAN DONORS

CalCAN's work to advance climate and agriculture policy would quite simply not happen without the generosity of our funders.

We have the privilege of being supported by foundations and individuals—some of whom have been with us since the beginning—who understand the role of policy in making systems change. They also appreciate that, in an economy as large as California where agriculture is such an impactful industry, long-term investments are necessary.

We are deeply grateful for all of the donors who have contributed to CalCAN during the past decade. Below are those who have made the most consistent and significant commitments.

11<sup>th</sup> Hour Project

Blackie Foundation

Calhoun/Christiano Family Fund

Clif Bar Family Foundation

David & Lucile Packard Foundation

Farm Aid

Gaia Fund

New Priorities Foundation

Panta Rhea Fund

Patagonia

UNFI Foundation

William Zimmerman Foundation



*"We are honored to be aligned with CalCAN's critical efforts on behalf of healthy soil. Thank you!"*

— Avery Anderson Sponholtz,  
Globetrotter Foundation and the  
#NoRegrets Initiative



*"I have supported CalCAN since they formed 10 years ago, with the understanding that policy work takes time. CalCAN has made a real difference by bringing farmers and ranchers into a discussion about climate and together taking a constructive, strategic approach to making California's food and farming system more ecologically and economically resilient. Gaia Fund has so much confidence in CalCAN that the Fund recently made a four-year commitment to support their work."*

—Susan Clark, Gaia Fund

# THE NEXT 10 YEA

According to an October 2018 report from the International Panel on Climate Change, we have only 12 years to curb greenhouse gas emissions and avoid warming of more than 1.5°C and the concurrent worsening risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty. The same report identified soil carbon sequestration as having the greatest potential for climate mitigation at the lowest cost.

California is at a pivotal time in its efforts to respond to this scientific and moral imperative to dramatically bend the greenhouse gas curve. Maintaining the state's reputation as a global climate leader will require moving beyond mandates and rhetoric. We need to significantly invest in our farmers and ranchers, continually improve the effectiveness of climate and agriculture programs, achieve measurable greenhouse gas reductions, and ensure the resilience of our food and farming system.

## THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS WILL GUIDE OUR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND

### SCALE UP

We must scale up our investments in Climate Smart Agriculture to reach a critical mass of California's large and diverse farming community. We must increase our targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions from agricultural and natural lands. CalCAN will collaborate with other states and on federal climate and agriculture policy to share lessons learned and effective strategies.

### INTEGRATE

We must maximize synergies and integrate efforts across a range of programs and sectors such as healthy soils, water conservation, compost production, farmland conservation, public health, environmental justice, and coordinated urban and rural land use policy.



# FARMERS ARE CRITICAL

## ADVOCACY GOING FORWARD:

### STREAMLINE

Competing and complex regulations can limit the ability of farmers to achieve transformative farming systems. We should implement regulatory streamlining that does not increase the cost of compliance or lead to unintended environmental harms.

### LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

Small and mid-scale and socially disadvantaged farmers make significant contributions to our food security and urban and rural communities, yet often have few resources and are most vulnerable to a changing climate. We must make resources available for the farmers, farmworkers and rural communities most at risk.

It is with a sense of urgency and renewed commitment that we at CalCAN begin our second decade. We are more convinced than ever of the importance of using policy to catalyze and accelerate the climate solutions available on California's farms and ranches. And we are more inspired than ever by the vision of a healthy, just, economically robust and ecologically resilient food and farming system that will emerge as we do this work together.





Credit: Rosie Burroughs



Credit: Creatives by Chelsey



**CalCAN**  
CALIFORNIA CLIMATE &  
AGRICULTURE NETWORK

October 2019

The California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN) is a statewide coalition that advances policy reforms to realize the powerful climate solutions offered by sustainable and organic agriculture. Since 2009, we have cultivated farmer leadership to face the challenges of climate change and to serve as the sustainable agriculture voice on climate change policy in California.

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