

# 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/>

## 4J HORSE & LIVESTOCK CO

Jamul, San Diego County  
Award Amount: \$100,000



*"We are traditional ranchers using current science to help manage our operations. By growing grass, we are storing carbon and water, and helping prevent drought which matters for our bottom line."*

-John Austel

John Austel began a grass-fed cattle operation as part of a 4H project with his three sons, starting with 10 bred cows. Now, with a herd size of over 100 head and 5,600 acres, they are deepening their understanding of how cows are a necessary tool for carbon sequestration, water storage, ecosystem health, wildfire risk reduction, and landscape resilience.

John and his three sons have divided the ranch into 150- to 350-acre pastures. and within one year of prescribed grazing, they saw positive results. In collaboration with the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (RCD), John received a 2018 CDFA Healthy Soils Program Demonstration Project grant to expand the practice of high-intensity grazing on his pastures.

Through strategic planning, technical assistance, and financial support from the RCD, John is able to engage younger ranchers to share how prescribed grazing is good for business, good for the cows and good for the soil.



**CalCAN**  
CALIFORNIA CLIMATE &  
AGRICULTURE NETWORK

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.