

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/>

BENITO VALLEY FARMS

Hollister, San Benito County
Award Amount: \$75,000



"Applying the compost has improved the health of my crops and the productivity of the soil. It's challenging to stay in business and this grant has helped us a lot."

-Linda Chu

Linda Chu manages 700 acres in northern San Juan Bautista in San Benito County, growing Asian vegetables. Linda has been farming for over 20 years and recently has been interested in trying new practices to increase soil organic matter and reduce pesticide and herbicide use, thereby improving water and air quality.

With the Healthy Soils grant, Linda is applying compost to her fields and will plant a hedgerow along her property which borders a canal. Each winter, rain washes soil from Linda's farm into the canal, something the hedgerow will prevent while also providing habitat for birds and beneficial insects and pollinators. Linda is applying compost to the fields nearest the canal as a way to reduce the use of chemical fertilizer near the sensitive riparian area, thereby reducing chemical runoff and enhancing water quality.

Using compost also improves soil structure, making it more porous so it can hold more water which reduces erosion and cuts down her irrigation demand.



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.