INVESTING IN CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE’S CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

California launched the country’s first Climate Smart Agriculture programs in 2014. The programs provide technical and financial assistance for the state’s farmers and ranchers to adopt practices that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, increase carbon sinks, and protect agricultural lands. The programs support the improved resiliency of our farms, ecosystems and communities and some have earmarked funding for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers (SDFRs).*

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS CONSERVATION PROGRAM (SALCP)

SALCP funds projects that permanently protect at-risk farmland from sprawl development. It also provides planning grants to local governments to improve farmland conservation planning and policy development.

- Launched in 2014 by the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) in conjunction with the Department of Conservation (DOC)
- Amount awarded to date: $230.6 million
- GHG reductions: 19.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)
- Total projects to date: 149

STATE WATER EFFICIENCY & ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (SWEEP)

SWEEP funds on-farm water use efficiency projects, including solar-powered water pumps and soil moisture monitoring equipment that decrease water and energy use, thus reducing GHG emissions.

- Launched in 2014 by the CDFA
- Amount awarded to date: $80.5 million
- GHG reductions annually: 80,077 metric tons of CO₂e
- Total projects to date: 828
- Funding for SDFRs: $8.39 million for 128 projects

HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM (HSP)

HSP provides grants to farmers and ranchers to implement practices that increase carbon stored in soil and woody plants. The program also provides demonstration project funding to NGOs and academics in partnerships with farmers to encourage farmer-to-farmer learning and adoption of practices.

- Launched in 2017 by California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA)
- Amount awarded to date: $41.5 million
- GHG reductions annually: 109,809 metric tons of CO₂e
- Total projects to date: 646
- Funding for SDFRs: $7.3 million for 130 projects

ALTERNATIVE MANURE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (AMMP)

AMMP provides grants to dairy and livestock producers to transition from manure lagoons to dry manure handling and storage, including composting of manure and pasture-based systems to reduce potent methane emissions. The program also funds demonstration projects to showcase alternative manure practices and accelerate their adoption through farmer-to-farmer education.

- Launched in 2017 by CDFA
- Amount awarded to date: $69.1 million
- GHG reductions over 5 years: 1.1 million metric tons of CO₂e in the form of methane
- Total projects to date: 117

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) PROGRAM

The TA program provides grants to technical service providers to assist farmers and ranchers to develop HSP, SWEEP and AMMP projects, apply for funding and implement the projects.

- Launched in 2019 by CDFA
- Amount awarded to date: $2.1 million, including $525,000 earmarked to support SDFRs
- Total grants to date: 33
- In 2020, technical assistance providers assisted 177 SDFRs, 743 small or mid-scale farms, and 107 non-English speakers

* SDFRs are “Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers,” defined in California Food and Agricultural Code Section 512 as: “a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group… whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.” Note: SDFR data has only been collected for some grant cycles.

Photo credits: TA: Jason Halley, HSP: USDA NRCS
CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE IN ACTION

Stories from farmers and ranchers about the many benefits of these programs are available on the CalCAN website.

TO DATE, THESE PROGRAMS COLLECTIVELY:

- Funded more than 1,750 Climate Smart Agriculture projects on farms and ranches in 56 counties
- Reduced California’s GHG emissions by nearly 20.8 million metric tons of CO₂e over the life of the projects, equivalent to removing 4.5 million cars from the road for a year
- Saved more than 35 billion gallons of water annually, enough to fill 70,500 Olympic-sized swimming pools
- Permanently conserved more than 115,000 acres of agricultural land throughout the state
- Cost between $11-173 per metric ton of CO₂e reduced, among the most cost-effective of California’s climate investments

For more background see these CalCAN reports:
- Resilient California Report
- SWEEP Policy Brief
- HSP Progress Report

DATA SOURCES: California DOC, CDFA, and the US EPA’s Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator. All data were current as of January 2021 and are subject to change.