

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/healthypoils/>

JW FARMS

Prunedale, Monterey County
Total Awards Amount: \$49,716



Farmer Esteban Martinez grows organic strawberries on 21 acres in coastal Monterey County. He's been farming for 20 years and in 2017 purchased the land where he currently farms. The rolling hills and sandy soils make the landscape prone to erosion particularly during heavy rains.

To mitigate this erosion, improve soil health and increase biodiversity on his farm, Esteban has successfully secured two Healthy Soils Program (HSP) grants. His first HSP award in 2018 helped him plant a hedgerow along two edges of one 14-acre field including natives like ceanothus, coffeeberry, coyote brush and toyon. A second HSP grant awarded in 2021 will allow Esteban to extend the hedgerow and incorporate edible trees like mulberry and elderberry. The perennial hedgerows contribute to soil health by covering the surface of the soil, reducing wind and water erosion, and establishing deep roots that promote water infiltration and carbon storage.

As an ambitious and strategic farmer, Esteban is working to establish a farmer cooperative with other regional growers. Thank you to Esteban Martinez and Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District for making this farmer profile possible.

"The current hedgerows have helped with erosion control. But they also attract pollinators and beneficial insects, beautify the farm, and act as a barrier to the synthetic inputs from the adjacent farm."

- Esteban Martinez

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.

