

**Science Advisory Panel on Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture  
Quarterly Meeting  
May 14, 2025  
9:00am – 10:30am**

**Panel Members in Attendance**

Leonard Diggs, Pie Ranch  
Dr. Jeff Dlott, PhD, LandScan (Chair)  
Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch  
Jonathan Wachter, California Natural Resources Agency, Member  
Jamie Whiteford, Ventura County RCD  
Erin Uchida, CARB  
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm  
Jeana Cadby, Western Growers  
Jon Gustafson, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA, Non-Voting Member

**Not in Attendance**

Brianna Saint Pierre, CalEPA, State Water Resources Control Board  
Shanna Atherton, California Department of Conservation, Member  
Erik Porse, PhD, California Institute for Water Resources, Non-Voting Member

**9:00 Roll Call and Introduction of New Member(s)**

- Chair Dlott – Informational
  - Chair Dlott called meeting to order at 9:04 and the panel conducted a quick round of introductions

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- New member introduced: Jeana Cadby, Western Growers, Environment and Climate Director

**9:10 Approval of February 2026 minutes**

- Chair Dlott – Decisional
  - Motion moved by Member Diggs and seconded
  - Minutes approved and passed
  - L. Rastegarzadeh (Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program), attendee comment on expressing interest on learning more about the meetings

**9:15 OARS and Climate Smart Agriculture Update**

- Carolyn Cook & Deputy Secretary Virginia Jameson Informational
  - Carolyn Cook provided an update on OARS including:
    - Concept proposals for HSP and SWEEP due May 15 at 5PM. Anticipate inviting Full Proposals in early July
    - Open applications for Dairy Plus (\$34M available), and BIFS (\$2M – up to \$1M per project) coming soon.
    - Beginning work on equipment sharing program (\$15M appropriation). Funding to single entity and funding for equipment and technical assistance with outreach to second category already underway.
  - Panel Comments:
    - Chair Dlott asking if there has been contact with potential block grant applicants.
    - Carolyn Cook informed panel about Q&A rounds and support from UC ANR technical assistance and office hours.
    - Member Cameron: Interest from San Joaquin Valley?
    - Carolyn Cook: Have heard folks from this area have interacted with UC ANR team but application process does not show all applicants that will submit by deadline
    - Member Whiteford: In regard to equipment sharing program – will yard rental costs be an allowable expense for storage of equipment?
    - Carolyn Cook responded that this is something we have heard as a potential need. We are developing structural framework and it is still something to be decided but it is on our radar.

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- Member Wachter: Regarding equipment sharing, what is the timeline for development?
- Carolyn Cook responded CDFA hopes to have framework established by June for public comment.
- Deputy Secretary Jameson:
  - A Farmland Summit is scheduled for July 1, stemming from Nature Based Solutions and targets for all landscapes from AB 1757. Goal to reach 3M acres of cropland, practices on grasslands and conservation of grasslands. CDFA and CNRA partnering to lead these events. Invites have not opened yet for the Farmland Summit which will take place at the Chico State University Farm but look for future notifications coming from CDFA. Summit will focus on farmer-to-farmer learning and sharing experiences.
  - Overview of presentation for MMRV project done in past by Dr. Nina Bingham. Dr. Bingham getting close to launching work group and has been working to find a contractor for the panel. CDFA has also begun drafting a scope of work and will be sending it to interested panel members soon. Did send invites out to potential panel members and have heard from about 15 with a goal of having a diverse panel of members from various sectors and will start scheduling soon. Goal to create a report to inform the work of CDFA and SAP panel moving forward.
  - Panel Comments:
    - Member Whiteford: Will the Farmland Summit be a one-time event?
    - Deputy Secretary Jameson: Planned as a one-time event but can talk about more in the future. Hold October 16 for the grasslands summit but have not confirmed a venue. This is the last year of Newsom Administration and trying to create ways for stakeholders to come together to look at barriers of implementing soil health practices.
  - Public comments:
    - Comment from Q&A box: What was the target year for 3 million acres of healthy soils projects to be implemented again?

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- Kolodji Corp: Question around manure management program (Dairy Plus) - is there a date when that will be open to public and who is eligible?
  - Carolyn Cook: That program should open this June and will be open to dairy operators that have manure management practices of dairy digesters to contribute to the project. List of practices eligible is on the website.
  - Kolodji: Submitted email to Director Mata around SWEEP Program questions
- Anna Mariscal: Question around HSP Block grant. Question was submitted during a webinar around tribal participation and eligibility of being awarded during block grants. Is there a waiver of sovereign immunity that is needed to award tribal lands? Webinar stated that HSP Team needed to speak to liaison and wanted to follow up about that.
  - Carolyn Cook: Did not have an answer during the Q&A period. Do intend to offer flexibility to these groups but do not have experience with these waivers at OARS.
  - Anna Mariscal: This has been a significant barrier for us to support tribes with their land stewardship goals.
- Lisa (small farmer) - Looking at many different grants for our farm. Who can I speak to about what we do and what is available?
  - Carolyn Cook: Recommend reaching out to local RCD because they can tell you about services and support being offered by many organizations. If you are interested in CDFA programs, we have partnership with UC ANR Climate Smart Ag team who is located throughout California and can provide information on programs and eligibility.

**9:30 Climate Resilience Strategy for California Agriculture**

- Virginia Jameson - Informational
  - Chair Dlott provided some broad background around strategy.
  - Deputy Secretary Jameson explained the Climate Resilience Strategy was created to foster climate-smart, resilient, and

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regenerative food systems and information included on how to meet this priority.

- Strategy lays out opportunities for future actions, highlights challenges, explores connections with local, statewide, federal and private-sector initiatives and provides equity principals for all to be served.
- Primary audience for this document includes universities, state agency partners, California Legislature and public, non-profit and business partners, tribal government, farmers and ranchers.
- Deputy Secretary Jameson provided an overview of the timeline over the past 2 years including convening with CDFA staff, engaging with public, speaking with panel and creating draft.
- Strategy broken down into three overarching pillars covering: 'Support a thriving and resilient food sector,' 'Protect natural systems critical to agriculture,' and 'Encourage resilient agricultural practices.' Within pillars, there are chapters on specific items including pest management, water systems, clean air, healthy soils practices and ranching and rangeland management. Within chapters, there are also strategies with four assigned goals: 1) Improve the bottom line for farmers, 2) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, 3) Support economic development, and 4) Provide health and environmental benefits.
- Highlighting a few chapters:
  - Fostering a robust and sustainable agricultural economy: key objective to improve the economic resilience of California farms and ranches in the face of climate change
  - Boost biodiversity on farmlands: increase beneficial biodiversity on-farm to improve resilience of farms, plants and animals to climate change.
  - Improve ranching sustainability and rangeland management: utilize climate-smart practices to promote resilient ranching and rangeland management.
  - Advancing climate-smart and healthy soils practices: meet state nature-based solution climate targets and support healthy and resilient soil ecosystems for growing food and fiber. Specifically calling out work around compost that is already planned.
- Panel Comment:

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- None
- Public Comment:
  - Johnny Siliznoff: Are these Powerpoints going to be available
    - Deputy Secretary Jameson: Yes, they will be available soon.
  - Marisa Raya (UCD Researcher): Surprised of why there is no link in farm size and climate adaptation. Thought there would have been more of a focus on this to allow for diversity and provided some background and data around small farms, yields, biodiversity, challenges. Missing an opportunity to transition land and could highlight opportunities for beginner farmers such as zoning. These may be good topics for upcoming summits and maybe message isn't getting across to policy makers.
    - Deputy Secretary Jameson: Thank you for comment – we knew there were going to be items we were going to miss in the document.
  - Mark Rigau: Work with small farmers to educate and assist them with navigating the challenges around groundwater sustainability plans. New to UCD and looking to see how law clinic with enthusiastic students can expand their impact to different areas including climate change. Agree that small farms help hold communities together and the loss of small farms is something we want to try to prevent. Hope to speak more with panel and Deputy Secretary in the future.
  - Kolodji Corp: Slide on inclusivity, this was very useful and most dramatic slide including ways to improve inclusivity.
    - Deputy Secretary Jameson: Clarified the slide on equity principles. Slides will be available on the website after the meeting.
- Chair Dlott expressing congratulations to team for the hard work and creation of the Strategy.

General Public Comments:

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- Kolodji Corp: Don't have measurement practices for certain items. Expressed there was an email sent around this topic to the panel members and Director.
  - Deputy Secretary Jameson: Thank you for comment. There was a study written in Washington Post about effects of CO2 on food and nutrition. Interested in this topic. [Carbon pollution is making food less nutritious and risking health of billions - Washington Post](#)
- Anna Mariscal: In August 2025 meeting, it stated cultural burning was going to be a practice included in HSP.
  - Carolyn Cook: Cultural burning will be integrated but want to do it through an interactive process with tribes and outreach. We are busy right now getting application process going but do intend to have separate solicitation for cultural practices and other HSP practices that may be of interest to tribes.
  - Anna Mariscal: As you plan to do interactive process, wondering how we can help support CDFA and local tribes.
  - Carolyn Cook: Expressed interest in meeting with you to make connections with tribes.

Chair Dlott: Next Scheduled Meeting is August 14.

**10:30 Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn meeting; moved by Member Cameron; seconded by Member Uchida