



Defining Regenerative Agriculture

For State Policies and Programs

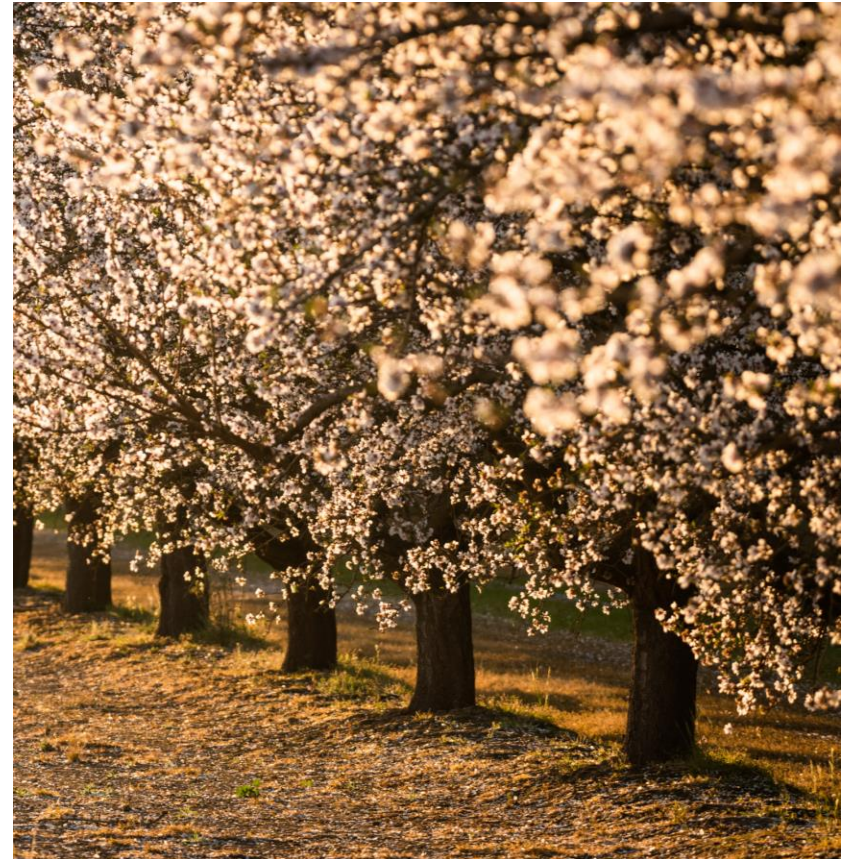
January 11th Listening Session

Defining Regenerative Agriculture

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Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions
2. Regenerative Agriculture Definition Process Overview
 - Project Background
 - Process and Timeline Overview
 - Opportunities for Public Input
3. Regenerative Agriculture Framework and Definition
 - Science Advisory Panel Framework Overview
4. Recap of December 6, 2023 Public Listening Session Themes and Input
5. Public Comment/Q&A
6. Adjourn



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Staff Introductions

- Doria Robinson, Member, California State Board of Food and Agriculture/Executive Director, Urban Tilth
- Josh Eddy, Executive Director, California State Board of Food and Agriculture
- Virginia Jameson, Deputy Secretary for Climate and Working Lands, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
- Jeff Dlott, Chair, CDFA Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel
- Sam Magill, Senior Facilitator/Mediator, Sacramento State University

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Motivation:

- Roots in *Ag Vision for the Next Decade* that started in 2021
 - Foster Climate-Smart, Resilient and Regenerative Food Systems
- Interest in “Regenerative Agriculture” continues to grow
 - legislation, funding focus in government programs, and policies
- A need for a science-based criterion to help inform a designation or recognition of the term regenerative
- State Board of Food and Agriculture is best positioned as an advisory body to the Governor and Secretary to complete a public process for a definition for state policies and programs

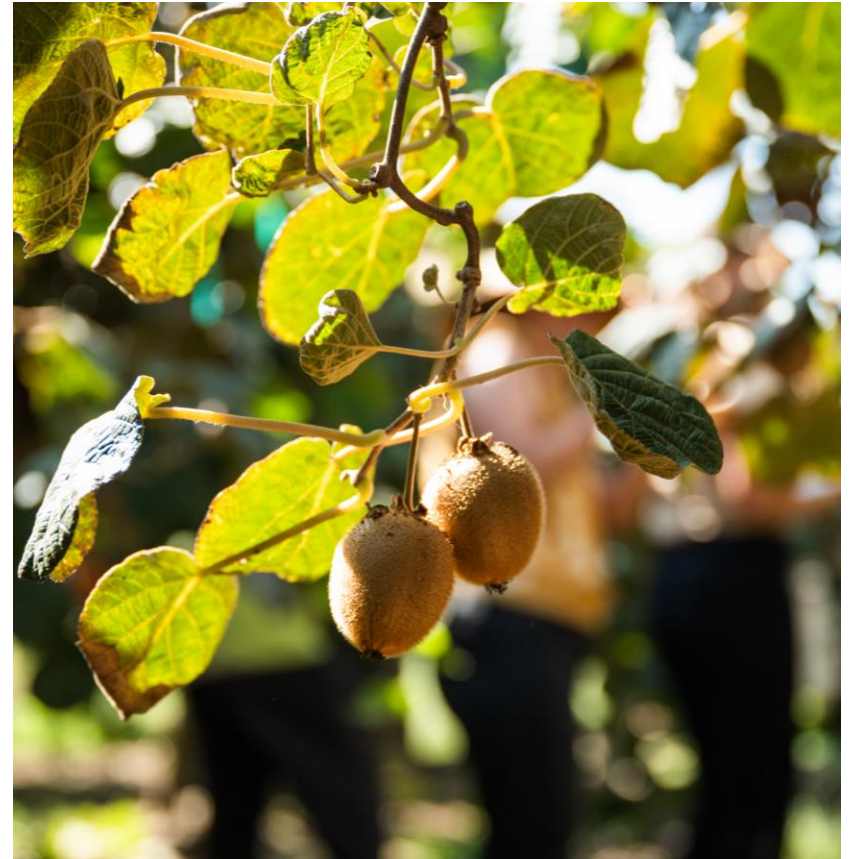


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Approach:

- Understanding of the diversity of opinions, the evolving marketplace and the priority of equity and inclusion – focusing on public input, transparency and engagement.
- Five Public Listening Sessions (Virtual)
- Establishment of a Regenerative Agriculture Work Group to consider public input, the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel (EFA SAP) Framework and make a draft recommendation to the State Board for consideration.

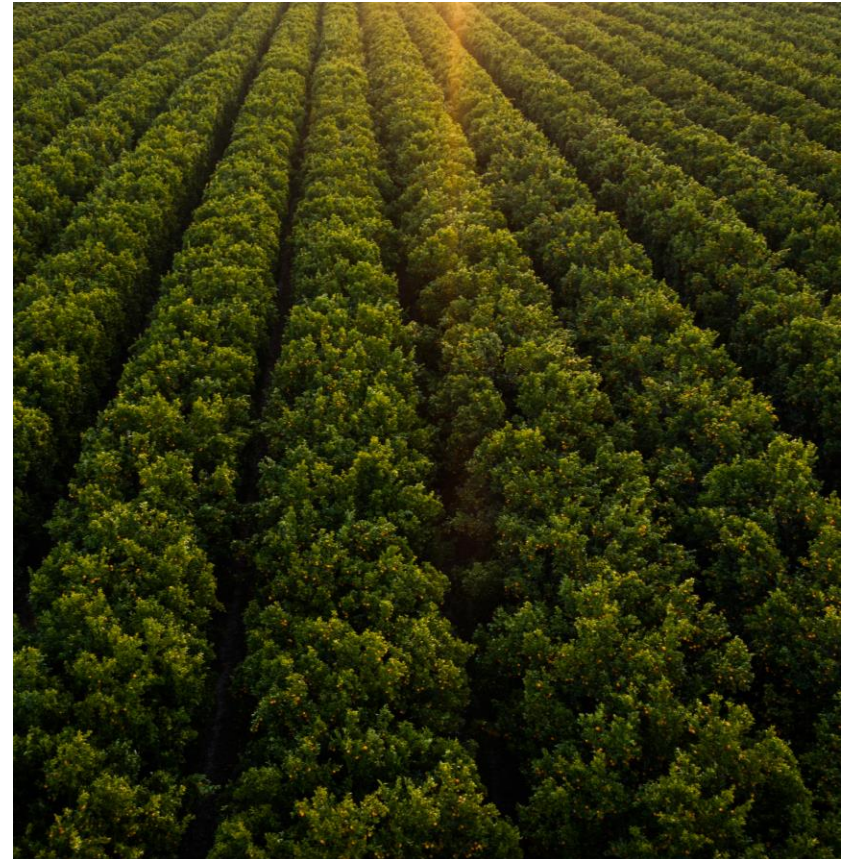


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Timeline:

- EFA SAP Framework Recommendation (Completed 2023)
- Public Listening Sessions (Dec 2023 – May 2024) – 5 Sessions
- Task Force Meetings (Feb – June 2024) – 3 Meetings
- Board Recommendation to CDFA (June/July 2024)



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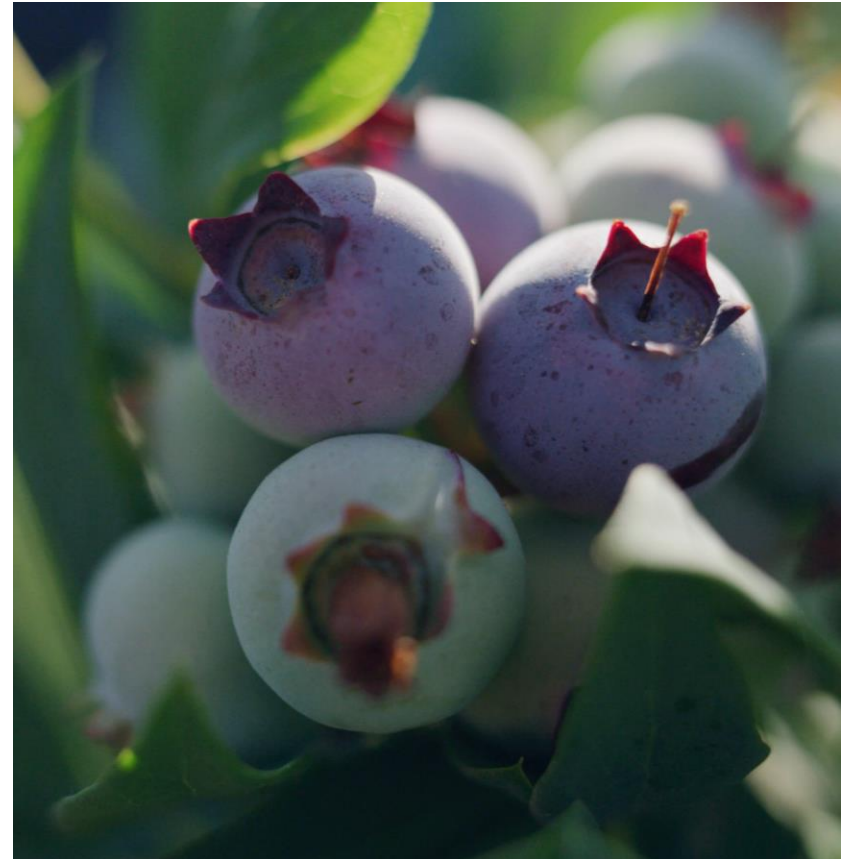
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EFA SAP Framework Recommendation:

- Process
- Framing Elements
- Recommended Framework

Current Members:

- [Dr. Jeff Dlott](#) (Chair)
- [Dr. Michelle Buffington](#) (Member)
- [Don Cameron](#) (Member)
- [Leonard Diggs](#) (Member)
- [Scott Couch](#) (Member)
- [Vicky Dawley](#) (Member)
- [Judith Redmond](#) (Member)
- [Keali'i Bright](#) (Member)
- [Amanda Hansen](#) (Member)
- [Erik Porse](#) (Member)



Regenerative Agriculture: Guiding Framework Overview

12/13/2022

Expert
Roundtable

EFA SAP
Discussion

Public
Comment

2/9/2023

Literature
Review
Leading to
Draft
Framework
Guiding
Principles

EFA SAP
Discussion

Public
Comment

2/17/2023

EFA SAP
Subcommittee
Refined Draft
Framework
Guiding
Principles

3/9/2023

EFA SAP
Discussion of
Framework
Guiding
Principles

Public
Comment

Approval of
Guiding
Principles

5/11/2023

EFA SAP
Discussion of
Draft Letter to
State Board of
Food and
Agriculture

Public
Comment

Approval of
Letter

Timeline

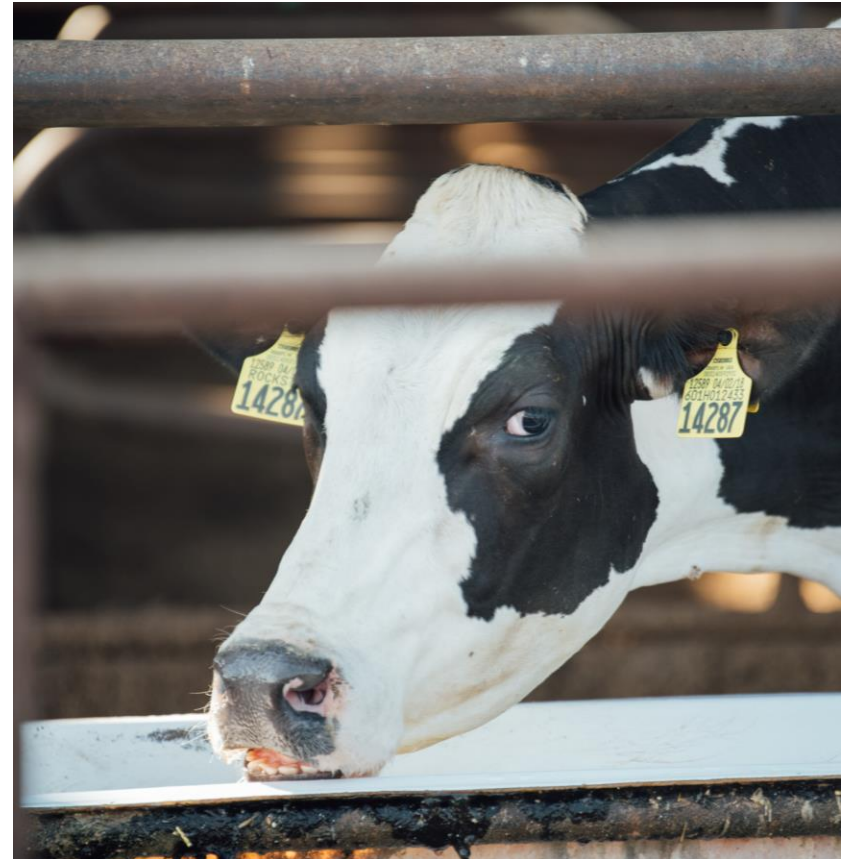


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Framing Elements

- The need to define the desired goals and outcomes from “regenerative agriculture,” including environmental, social, health, and economic goals.
- A need to guard against greenwashing.
- A definition that would accommodate site-specific contexts, which as we know in California are incredibly variable with more than 400 crops and more than 1,500 soil series.
- Careful consideration on how data would be shared given many farmers concerns about anonymity and privacy.



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Recommended Framework for Definition

- Being applicable, relevant, and useful for California Agriculture.
- Leading to positive impacts on California's environmental, social, human health, and economic goals, including climate goals.

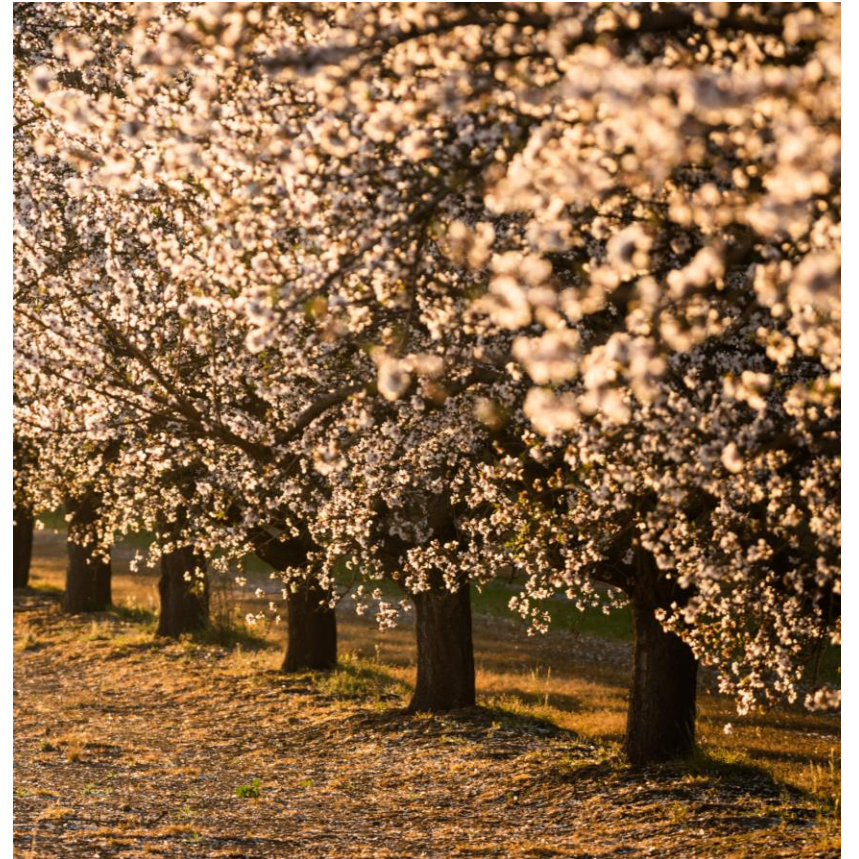


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Recommended Framework for Definition

- Providing measurable and verifiable outcomes, keeping in mind variability throughout the state, and – emphasizing outcomes farmers and ranchers can easily measure and that are not economically burdensome to measure.
- Allowing for context specific outcomes (in terms of scale, geographic location, diverse and/or innovative agricultural systems, goals, etc.)
- Include the idea that building soil health, including elements of physical quality, carbon sequestered, soil biodiversity, and alleviation of climate change (e.g., practices funded by the CDFA Healthy Soils Program) as a foundational element.



Recap of December 6th Public Listening Session Input

- First of **five** public listening sessions
- 303 unique participants!
- Key themes from comments:
 - Developing a “broader” vs “narrower” definition of regenerative agriculture.
 - Defining the “starting point”: existing organic standards vs. conventional as baseline. Multiple comments supporting both starting points.
 - Providing a definition that highlights the challenges of transitioning from conventional agriculture to regenerative is important. Conventional growers need to be “brought along.”
 - Greenwashing must be avoided!

Recap of December 6th Listening Session (cont)

- Other comments:
 - Human health for farmworkers, DACs in agricultural regions, and other potentially disadvantaged populations should be included in the definition.
 - Indigenous voices should be included in the definition.
 - Conventional growers may be hesitant to adopt organic standards as a baseline for regenerative agriculture.
 - The cost to growers to transition to regenerative may be substantial. Transitioning to regenerative may require BOTH financial incentives and regulatory compliance.
 - Education to show some regenerative practices (reduced tillage, etc.) can actually reduce cost will be useful.

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Public Comment

- What data gaps need to be addressed to create a working draft definition of regenerative agriculture for state policies and programs?
- What suggestions do you have regarding a “broad” vs. “focused” definition of regenerative agriculture for state policies and programs?



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Public Comment & Information (Updates)

- Public Comment Email: RegenerativeAg@cdfa.ca.gov
- Website: www.cdfa.ca.gov/RegenerativeAg/

