

***Recommendation from the California State Board of Food and Agriculture to CDFA Secretary  
January 2025***

**Defining Regenerative Agriculture for State Policies and Programs**

“Regenerative agriculture,” as defined for use by State of California policies and programs, is an integrated approach to farming and ranching rooted in principles of soil health, biodiversity and ecosystem resiliency leading to improved targeted outcomes.

Regenerative agriculture is not an endpoint, but a continuous implementation of practices that over time minimize inputs and environmental impacts and further enhances the ecosystem while maintaining or improving productivity, economic contributions and community benefits. “Regenerative agriculture” is an ongoing continuum of sustainability for California’s farmers and ranchers, informed by current science as well as the traditions and innovations from the original Indigenous stewards of the land.

Examples of target outcomes include:

- (a) Building soil health, soil organic matter and biodiversity. ([Healthy Soils Program](#)); ([AB 1757](#))
- (b) Increasing statewide implementation of conservation practices that improve soil health, sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gases; (USDA NRCS [Conservation Practice Standards](#))
- (c) Furthering sustainable pest and integrated pest management to reduce the reliance on pesticides; ([Accelerating Sustainable Pest Management: A Roadmap for California](#)); ([UC Statewide Integrated Pest Management](#)), (USDA NRCS [pest management conservation system](#))
- (d) Protecting the welfare and care of animals in agriculture; ([Animal Care Program](#))
- (e) Building healthy, local communities; ([Ag Vision](#))
- (f) Protecting spiritual and cultural traditions as well as supporting Native-led stewardship practices;
- (g) Minimizing negative impacts to other target outcomes;
- (h) Maintaining positive impact on the economic vitality/livelihoods of farmers and ranchers.

Regenerative agriculture will require processes, practices, monitoring, evaluation, and innovation to be customized to specific production systems, ecoregions, and local Indigenous cultural regions. Practice selection is based on the best available science and practice, including but not limited to, organic and traditional ecological knowledge, for production systems.

State agencies and departments shall coordinate with the Department, contingent upon resources, in the development of measurable and verifiable outcomes related to individual policies and programs and are responsible for incorporating verification and reporting.

*This recommendation is to inform State Agencies, Boards and Commissions on CDFA’s definition of regenerative agriculture as it relates to state policies and programs.  
This is not a definition for certification.*