

APPENDIX: STAFF DRAFT

NOTE: The Staff Draft definition consolidates all the target outcomes provided by the work group, connects to existing efforts, and provides some science-based criteria (NRCS standards) where applicable.

Target outcomes include:

- **Increased statewide implementation of [conservation practice standards](#) that improve soil health, sequestered carbon and reduce greenhouse gases.**
 - o A) Building soil health, soil organic matter and biodiversity;
 - o B) Restoring and maintaining water resources;
 - o C) Protecting air quality;
 - o D) Sequestering/reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- **Furthering California’s sustainable pest management through conservation practice standards. (USDA NRCS [pest management conservation system](#));**
 - o E) Using sustainable and integrated pest management to eliminate reliance on pesticides;
 - o F) Improving nutrient cycling to reduce use of external fertilizers;
- **Protecting the welfare and care of animals in agriculture; ([Animal Care Program](#))**
 - o J) Fostering wildlife and animal welfare;
- **Protecting spiritual and cultural traditions as well as supporting Native-led stewardship practices.**
 - o H) Supporting Native-led stewardship practices;
 - o G) Protecting spiritual and cultural traditions;
- **Minimizing negative impacts to other target outcomes;**
 - o L) Minimizing negative impacts to other target outcomes;
- **Maintaining positive impact on the economic vitality/livelihood of farmers and ranchers.**
 - o M) Maintaining positive impact on the economic vitality/livelihood of farmers and ranchers.
- **Build Healthy, Local Communities (Ag Vision)**
 - o I) Improving/enhancing human health and rural communities;
 - o K) Creating livelihoods and durable solutions leading to a healthy food and agriculture workforce;

CONTEXT:

California Public Resources Code (PRC) by AB 209 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 251, Statutes of 2022). *“Regenerative agriculture” means agricultural practices that focus on the health of the ecological system as a whole and not solely on high-production yields.*

STATE BOARD LETTER TO EFA SAP – October 2022

*...regenerative agriculture was defined in the California Public Resources Code (PRC) by AB 209 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 251, Statutes of 2022). This definition, while limited to a climate innovation program of the California Energy Commission, **does not meet a science-based criterion for the designation or recognition of the term regenerative.***

*...asks the EFA SAP to assist by conducting a review of existing definitions and literature to help **determine common science-based practices resulting in performance outcomes, such as net-zero emissions, that reflect California’s climate, working lands and sustainable agricultural priorities***

*By defining regenerative agriculture and its eligible practices, we are working to **formalize holistic methods of farming that are designed to protect, sustain and enhance natural resources and farming communities.***

EFA SAP Letter to Board – May 2023

... some key topics that emerged from the following Science Advisory Panel discussion included:

- *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.*
- *How data would be shared given many farmers concerns about anonymity and privacy.*

The recommended EFA SAP’s framework for a definition of Regenerative Agriculture includes:

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

3. **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.

4. Allowing for **context specific outcomes** (in terms of scale, geographic location, diverse and/or innovative agricultural systems, goals, etc.)

5. 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

Regenerative Agriculture Definition Work Group Letter – August 2024

DRAFT DEFINITION

Introduction

*“Regenerative agriculture,” as defined for use by State of California policies and programs, is an integrated approach to farming and ranching rooted in the **principles of soil health** leading to **improved target outcomes**. This approach recognizes and respects the traditions and innovations from the original Indigenous stewards of the land.*

Target Outcomes

Target outcomes for regenerative agriculture practices include:

- a) Building soil health, soil organic matter and biodiversity;*
- b) Restoring and maintenance of water resources;*
- c) Protecting air quality;*
- d) Sequestering/reducing greenhouse gas emissions;*
- e) Using sustainable and integrated pest management to eliminate reliance on pesticides;*
- f) Improving nutrient cycling to reduce use of external fertilizers;*
- g) Protecting spiritual and cultural traditions;*
- h) Supporting Native-led stewardship practices;*
- i) Improving/enhancing human health and rural communities;*
- j) Fostering wildlife and animal welfare;*
- k) Creating livelihoods and durable solutions leading to a healthy food and agriculture workforce;*
- l) Minimizing negative impacts to other target outcomes;*
- m) Maintaining positive impact on the economic vitality/livelihood of farmers and ranchers.*

Conclusion

Meeting target regenerative outcomes 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 organic and traditional ecological knowledge, for production systems.

Public Comments and Webinar Recordings

- Public Comments from Dec 2023 to Sept 2024
- Five Public Listening Session Recordings
- Two Tribal Listening Session Recordings
- Three Regenerative Work Group Recordings

All above documentation is available at www.cdfa.ca.gov/RegenerativeAg/