

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING ACT SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL**

**Fresno Agricultural Commissioner's Office
1730 South Maple Avenue
Fresno, CA 93702**

October 23, 2013

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Members

Jeff Dlott, PhD, Member and Chair
Mark Nechodom, PhD, Member
Don Cameron, Member
Mike Tollstrup, Member
Jocelyn Gretz, MSc, Member

Subject Matter Experts

Luana Kiger, MSc, Subject Matter Expert
Doug Parker, PhD, Subject Matter Expert

CDFA Staff

Amrith Gunasekara, PhD
Carolyn Cook

INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Dr. Dlott. Introductions were made and a quorum was established. This was the first meeting for Dr. Parker and Ms. Gretz who were replacing Dr. Jackson and Dr. Thrupp as subject matter expert and a voting member, respectively.

AGENDA ITEM 1 - UPDATES

Dr. Gunasekara provided an update on the recently completed Climate Change Consortium (CCC) initiative. The Consortium was comprised of 21 people representing growers from the top ten specialty crops; agricultural associations and stakeholders; researchers from the University of California and California State University systems; an agricultural commissioner; a certified crop advisor/ pest control advisor; and a member of the California Resource Conservation District. The Consortium was organized to identify solutions for climate change impacts to California's valuable specialty crop industry. The recommendations were presented at this meeting to the Science Panel members since it included several scientific research strategies for consideration by CDFA. These research strategies included pollination services; a topic that was discussed in the Science Panel as well as referenced in the NRCS CIG proposal which failed to receive funding (notification letter dated 5/10/2013). Other updates on the Ecosystem Services database, regulatory permits projects and Qualitative Assessment Model outreach activities was presented by Dr. Gunasekara to the members.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – ECOSYSTEM SERVICES SUMMIT

The potential of organizing an Ecosystem Services Summit was discussed by Dr. Gunasekara. The goal would bring together the funders and implementers of Ecosystem Services in agriculture to discuss projects the funders might be interested in. Ms. Kiger noted that it might not be effective to bring together all funders since each funder might have different interests. Members discussed the importance of connecting the topic of Ecosystem Services back to Ag Vision. The panel requested further consultation on this topic with the Secretary.

3. REWARD/RECOGNITION SYSTEM FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Consistent with Section 566 (a) of the Food and Ag Code, Dr. Gunasekara noted that giving an Ecosystem Services award can be an incentive for growers. Dr. Gunasekara presented an overview of several existing awards to the Science Panel members including the Leopold Conservation Award, Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Awards (GEELA) and the Integrated Pest Management Innovator Award. Several questions were posed by the Science Panel members including the extent to which an Ecosystem Services award would be different from existing awards, specific niche the award is trying to highlight and potential for partnering on an existing award (e.g., Berkeley Food Institute awards). Two suggestions were proposed by the Science Panel members. They included partnering on the 1. Department of Pesticide Regulations Integrated Pest Management Award and 2. GEELA. Dr. Gunasekara noted that he would contact the GEELA coordinator to explore opportunities for partnering on the award and creating a new agriculture category for farmers and ranchers. Suggestions were also made that the award should not be under the banner of the CalEPA since growers and ranchers might not apply given the regulatory nature of the agency. Ms. Kiger noted that the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development might be a good place to house the award. Preliminary language would be drafted for review by the Science Panel and inclusion in the GEELA.

4. FUTURE DIRECTION

Dr. Gunasekara revisited a presentation made to the Science Panel on January 18th 2012 by Dr. Jeff Dlott. Dr. Gunasekara noted that future projects for the Science Panel to consider should include the following to be consistent with the regulatory mandate;

- Research and review, data upon which proposed environmental policies and regulatory programs are based to ensure that the environmental impacts of agricultural activities are accurately portrayed - Addresses Food and Agriculture code 568 a 3
- Assist government agencies to incorporate benefits identified into environmental regulatory programs - Addresses Food and Agriculture code 568 a 4
- Recommend to appropriate state agencies data that the panel approves - Addresses Food and Agriculture Code 568 a 1

Several potential projects were identified by CDFA staff. They included;

- Identify the number of regulations/permits that agriculture has
- Establish any scientific reasons for these regulations/permits
- Evaluate options for streamlining the regulations/permits
- Share information with pertinent agencies - regulatory certainty

Ms. Gretz noted that a guidebook for growers on how to show and quantify the benefits of Ecosystem Services would be beneficial. There was a need for tools for landowners to quantify Ecosystem Services on working lands. Dr. Parker noted that there should be a community of Ecosystem Services since market systems may not function as expected. Mr. Cameron noted that it is important to show to a broad audience what growers are already doing in terms of Ecosystem Services. Additional discussion and public comment on the direction of the Science Panel was required and would be listed as an agenda item for the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 5. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting would be held in the Sacramento region. The meeting would be held at the USDA NRCS offices in Davis, California. Dr. Gunasekara will organize a Doodle poll to gather member availabilities. The expected time period for the next meeting would be January, 2014.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.

01/31/2014

Date