

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

California Department of Food and Agriculture
Remotely Hosted to Accomodate Covid-19 Safety Measures

**January 14, 2021
9 AM to 3 PM
Remote Access**

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/efasap/meetings_presentations.html

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Member in Attendance

Jeff Dlott, SureHarvest (Chair and Member)
Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD (Member)
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm (Member)
Michelle Buffington, PhD. CalEPA, ARB (Member)
Scott Couch, CalEPA, State Water Board, (Member)
Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch (Member)
Leonard Diggs, Pie Ranch (Member)
Greg Norris, USDA NRCS (Subject Matter Expert)
Doug Parker, PhD. UC ANR (Subject Matter Expert)

State Agency Staff and Presenters

Scott Weeks, CDFA
Joyce Mansfield, CDFA
Steph Jamis, MSc, CDFA
Guihua Chen, PhD, CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD, CDFA
Carolyn Cook, M.Sc., CDFA
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA

AGENDA ITEMS 1 and 2 – Introduction and Minutes

The public meeting of the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel began at 9:03 am. Chair Dlott introduced the Science Panel members. He accommodated comments and suggestions on the minutes by Panel members. No comments or suggestion were provided. Member Cameron introduced a motion to move the minutes. Member Buffington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously without opposition.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Selection of Vice Chairperson

Chair Dlott introduced the agenda item. Dr. Gunasekara provided an overview of the by-laws and the need to fill the Vice Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson according to the bylaws “shall serve as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson”.

Member Redmond introduced a motion to appoint Member Dawley as Vice Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Member Cameron. The motion passed unanimously without any oppositions, and Member Dawley was appointed for a three-year term of Vice Chairperson.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Panel on Regenerative Agriculture

Three panelists introduced by chair Diott as part of an invited panel of learning more about Regenerative Agriculture. The panelists were Wendy Miller from TomKat Ranch, David Stuart, PhD, from Food & Nutrient Impact, LLC, and Cynthia A. Daley, PhD, from California State University Chico.

Wendy Miller at TomKat Ranch spoke about the regenerative lab experience at TomKat Ranch. She discussed the 6 core principles and co-benefits of regenerative agriculture such as social justice, improving conditions for farm workers, increase biodiversity, climate stability, water cycle function, improved income. Included case studies to showcase the points.

Dr. Stuart who received his advanced degree from UC Berkeley spoke about specific types of farming systems with cacao trees with overstory/canopy systems which is very similar to rainforest systems and helps with carbon capture. He noted the cacao industry had many challenges, including poverty for farmers and child labor which became a driver for change in the chocolate industry toward environmental sustainability. Since then the discussion and efforts have progressed further into regenerative agriculture. Dr. Stuart discussed consumer motivations, education and outreach efforts.

Dr. Daly from CSU Chico is the Director of the Center for Regenerative Agriculture. She presented examples of practices and new teaching courses at CSU, Chico on regenerative agriculture.

The Science Panel members were provided an opportunity during and at the end of the presentation to ask questions. The panel members asked several questions and responses were provided by the panel members.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Update on Proposed Incentives for Climate Smart Agriculture Planning Activities

This agenda item was presented by Ms. Jamis from the CDFA OEFI SWEEP team. Following the presentation several members had questions about the activities including what the potential funding source might be. Dr. Gunasekara noted that funding for this effort will become available when funding is made available for any one of the current CSA programs under OEFI. The amount to be allocated from the CSA program funding to this effort will be determined by the Secretary of CDFA.

AGENDA ITEM 6 –SWEEP Program Updates

A presentation on SWEEP program updates was provided by Mr. Weeks from the CDFA OEFI SWEEP team. Members asked several questions including the amount of funds allocated for the program in the Governor's proposed January budget. The CDFA team responded by noting that the total proposed amount for SWEEP was \$40 million. Another question from a member was the availability of SWEEP acres by county. The CDFA OEFI SWEEP team responded that obtaining that information would be possible for presentation at a future EFA SAP meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - SWEEP 2016 Round 1 Project Outcomes

A presentation to the members on this agenda item was made by Dr. Olivier Jerphagnon from AgMonitor, previously known as Powwow. Several members asked questions of Dr. Jerphagnon who responded to each member's question.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - Healthy Soils Program Updates

A presentation on the Healthy Soils Program Presented by Dr. Joshi. Members asked several questions including if PM 2.5 reduction from practices are primarily due to reduced diesel use. Dr. Joshi responded that is the case for No-Till and for Whole Orchard Recycling, PM 2.5 is eliminated

since there is no burning of the woody material.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – Technical Assistance Program Updates

An update presentation on this agenda item was presented by Ms. Cook. Member asked several question including if it is possible to do before and after comparisons of number of applications from SDFRs to determine if the applications increased as a result of technical assistance. Ms. Cook responded that this analysis is possible. Another question from a member was an inquiry on how an SDFR determined on an application. Ms. Cook responded that it is and it is a self-identification system with categories taken from the Farmer Equity Act.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – Public Comments

Chair Dlott and Joyce Mansfield facilitated public comments.

Public comment was made by several public participants. Questions included if crop carbon enrichment qualifies as a regenerative practice, when the next round of funding for the Healthy Soils Program will be available, if the technical assistance providers funded through CDFA OEFI CSA were available to non-grantees of HSP/SWEEP/AMMP grants, if there was a way to incentivize cover crops beyond grants, will funding be available for farmers for the planning program, if the Science Panel will consider a deeper soil carbon sample at 30 cm as new research shows this is important and may be vulnerable to future warming and what other things in the State Legislature would the Science Panel like to see passed including potential loan guarantees for and educational funding. Chair Dlott and CDFA team members responded to some of the questions.

A public comment was made to suggest planning grant funds should go to technical assistance providers as they have good credentials to help farmers and ranchers with plans.

There was also a recommendation for a future Science Panel discussion. Recent budget discussion in the state involved shifting AMMP and DDRDP CSA funding in Governor's proposed January budget to a Climate Catalyst Fund (revolving loan program). The proposal was to hear from iBank on how the loan program would work and fit into CDFA CSA activities.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – Next meeting and Location

April 15, 2021, remotely conducted to accomodate Covid-19 safety measures.

Chair Dlott introduced the motion to adjourn the meeting which was moved by Member Dawley. The motion was seconded by Member Diggs. Panel members unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2.33 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.
Liaison to the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel