

ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING ACT SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL (EFA SAP) CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

MEETING AGENDA

October 14, 2021

9 AM to 3 PM

REMOTE ACCESS

Webinar information

Registration URL: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1160567926343745292>

Webinar ID

308-372-451

Presentation materials will be posted at the following link prior to the meeting:

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/EnvironmentalStewardship/Meetings_Presentations.html

Topic	Presenter	Action Level
1. Chair and Member Introductions	Chair Dlott	Informational Item
2. Minutes	Chair Dlott	Action Item Requires EFA SAP Approval
3. Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation; Updates and Ecosystem Services Definition	Liaison Gunasekara	Informational Item
<p>Liaison Gunasekara will provide an update to the EFA SAP members and public stakeholders on recent funding allocations to OEFI programs. https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/. OEFI staff to create an updated definition of “ecosystems services” to focus on more nature-based source foundational aspects.</p>		
4. Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program (CAPGP); Updates	CDFA Staff	Informational Item

The CAPGP is a new program under CDFA Climate Smart Agriculture portfolio and allows for planning grants so agricultural operations in California can plan for climate change mitigation and adaption activities. A draft Request for Proposals for the Climate Smart Agricultural Conservation Agriculture Planning Program was released for public comment on 5/13/2021 through 6/15/2021 following the last EFA SAP meeting. Public comments have been collected and evaluated. CDFA is currently accepting a second round of public comments on the Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program. Provide all comments

The meeting complies with Bagley Keene requirements and the Governors Executive Orders on Covid-19 which allows for remote participation and voting at public meetings.

Questions regarding this public meeting can be directed to Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, at (916) 654-0433 or CDFA.OEFI@cdfa.ca.gov
 More information at: <http://cdfa.ca.gov/Meetings.html> and http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/EnvironmentalStewardship/Meetings_Presentations.html

before 5:00 PM PT on October 19, 2021 to cdfa.oefi@cdfa.ca.gov. The most recent changes to the CAPGP will be presented to this EFA SAP public meeting. <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/planning/>

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| 5. State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP); Updates | SWEEP Team, CDFA | Informational Item |
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The Draft SWEEP Request for Applications was released August 26, 2021 for public comment. The comment period closed on September 23, 2021. Public comment letters are available online. Recent major changes to the SWEEP solicitation will be presented at the EFA SAP public meeting. <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/sweep/>

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| 6. Healthy Soils Program (HSP); Updates | Healthy Soils Team, CDFA | Informational Item |
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An update on the Healthy Soils Program will be provided including recent changes to programs solicitations. <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysouls/>

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| 7. Water Efficiency Technical Assistance Program (WETAP); Draft Program Framework | Technical Assistance Team, CDFA | Informational Item |
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Staff will present the proposed framework for the new WETAP, being developed in response to one-time funding appropriated through the Budget Act of 2021. A draft Request for Grant Applications is currently posted for public comment. <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/>

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| 8. Technical Assistance Program; Updates | Technical Assistance Team, CDFA | Informational Item |
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An update on the Technical Assistance Program will be provided. <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/>

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| 9. Public Comment | Chair Dlott | Informational Item |
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| 10. Next Meeting | Chair Dlott | Informational Item |
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EFA SAP MEMBERSHIP

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/efasap/>

Jeff Dlott, PhD, Landscan, Member and Chairperson

Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD, Member and Vice Chairperson

Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch, Member

Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm, Member

Leonard Diggs, Pie Ranch, Member

Keali'i Bright, California Department of Conservation, Member

Amanda Hansen, California Natural Resources Agency, Member

Scott Couch, State Water Resources Control Board, CalEPA, Member

Michelle Buffington, PhD, California Air Resources Board, CalEPA, Member

Greg Norris, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services, Subject Matter Expert

Doug Parker, PhD, Subject Matter Expert

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AGENDA ITEM 1

AGENDA ITEM 2

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

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

July 15, 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, LandScan (Chair and Member)
Scott Couch, CalEPA, State Water Board, (Member)
Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch (Member)
Leonard Diggs, Pie Ranch (Member)
Keali'i Bright, DOC (Member)
Amanda Hansen, CNRA (Member)
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm (Member)
Doug Parker, PhD. UC ANR (Subject Matter Expert)

State Agency Staff and Presenters

Secretary Karen Ross, CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD, CDFA
Scott Weeks, CDFA
Carolyn Cook, M.Sc., CDFA
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA
Anthony Mint, Restore CA

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Chair and Member Introductions:

The public meeting of the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel was called to order at 9:03 am by Chair Dlott. The panel members introduced themselves. A quorum was established with the members listed above. Chair Dlott announced that he has retired from SureHarvest and joined a new company, LandScan.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Welcome Remarks:

The Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Karen Ross, welcomed the panel and gave opening comments to commemorate the fiftieth meeting of EFA SAP under her tenure. Secretary Ross acknowledged the many emergencies that are ongoing at this time in California, several that are climate related including drought and wildfire.

She reflected on the EFA SAP's early discussions and work on ecosystem services and she called upon the panel to work with the State Board of Food and Agriculture to consider topics for the next ten years of agriculture in California. She emphasized the need to focus on equity and recovery from pandemic and drought. She called for the panel to consider the actions and investments that are needed and requested that the panel continue quantifying ecosystem services and find ways for farmers to be compensated for those services. Specifically, she asked for the panel to consider a tool to quantify soil biodiversity to improve understanding of the relationship between soil biodiversity, soil carbon and water retention.

Panel Member Don Cameron recalled the early days of the SAP. Over the years, the group has done well, developing new programs and provided examples for other regions of the nation.

Secretary indicated that there is potential funding for SWEEP, HSP, Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants, and Pollinator Habitat with the current budget discussions.

Chair Dlott thanked Secretary for her remarks, her leadership and support of the EFA SAP and the update on the state budget.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Minutes:

The panel reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting, held in April 2021. Member Couch introduced a motion to approve the minutes. Member Cameron seconded the motion. The motion was approved without opposition.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Discussion on Developing a Below-ground Biodiversity Metric

Chair Dlott introduced the agenda item regarding the recommendation of the establishment of an EFA SAP Ad-Hoc Advisory Group co-chaired by the three guest speakers that presented at the April 2021 EFA SAP meeting to further evaluate below ground biodiversity metrics. The product of the Ad-Hoc Advisory Group would be a report on what several below ground metrics may be based on the current best available science and a tool. Chair Dlott suggested that this tool could be in parallel to Comet Planner.

Member Diggs commented that the term ecosystem services is broader than just applying to the work the grower does, but shifts to how we all manage the ecosystems and working landscapes. Member Hansen agreed with Member Digg's comment and indicated that as a representative of California Natural Resources Agency, she is open to this idea of the development of a tool for soil biodiversity. California has strong partners in Washington, so she suggested CDFA ensure that they know what the starting point for this work looks like, and to not work in a silo. Chair Dlott agreed to not reinvent the wheel and that CDFA should coordinate with federal partners.

Dr. Gunasekara responded to Member Digg's comment that CDFA has already defined the term of ecosystems services and he shared the CDFA OEFI webpage with the definition. Dr. Gunasekara elaborated by showing the additional language CDFA crafted on the webpage on ecosystems services. Member Diggs commented that centering the language on farmers and ranchers may be too focused and could be elaborated that the services come from nature - farmers enhance services through management. Chair Dlott indicated that the panel could update the definition or ask the CDFA staff to present some options for a refined definition at the next meeting. Member Cameron agreed. Member Cameron moved to request staff to provide options for a revised definition at the next meeting, Member Redmond seconded the motion. The motion to refine the definition to acknowledge the nature-based origin of ecosystem services was unanimously passed.

Member Hansen asked what the time frame is for forming the soil biodiversity ad-hoc group and the proposed number of members. Dr. Gunasekara recommended the panel identify the co-chairs and have them solicit further members from the academic institutions in California. The current goal is to have the report ready by the January 2022 meeting. Chair Dlott suggested that the panel would create ideas that would go through public comment. Chair Dlott added that CDFA should have alignment with federal partners. Dr. Gunasekara indicated that Margaret Smither-Kopperl (one of the potential co-chairs) could serve as that "federal bridge" since she works for USDA-NRCS. Dr. Gunasekara recommended that this topic be opened for public comment.

Public member Elizabeth Pearce, Founder of SymSoil in Solano County, commented on current efforts going on in this field. SymSoil farms soil microbes to create products for farmers to improve soil health. She indicated that the National Science Foundation already formed a soil dynamics technology committee with academics from universities in California, Washington, Iowa, and Oklahoma. Most of the members are engineers interested in sensor technologies. She offered to serve as a resource and indicated that she was also working with the head of the soil department at Stanford.

Public Member Marty Meisler commented on the “ecosystem services” definition on the CDFA OEFI website and indicated what’s missing is the larger picture benefits for healthy soils for climate resiliency. He suggested it would be good to highlight these benefits.

EFA SAP Decision on Action Item:

- 1) OEFI staff to create an updated definition of “ecosystems services” to focus on more nature-based source foundational aspects. OEFI staff to review and report back on during the next EFA SAP meeting. Chair Dlott proposed the motion, Member Cameron moved it and it was seconded by Member Redmond.
- 2) Dr. Gunasekara proposed to establish the ad-hoc group with the suggested 3 members as co-chairs. The group could then invite other academics to join the subcommittee. The subcommittee will look at tools to establish below ground biodiversity metrics. The subsequent report would be brought to the January 2022 meeting for review and recommendations and opened up for public comments. Member Diggs moved the motion. It was seconded by Member Couch. The motion unanimously passed.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Restore CA; Update on Current and Future Activities

Presentation by Anthony Myint from Restore CA on “Zero Footprint – Mobilizing the Food World around the Agricultural Climate Solutions.”

Mr. Myint described that the goal of the program is to create a circular economy that would help restaurants move to carbon neutrality while also helping growers. The program was initially interested in soil carbon credits but determined that this might not be the most effective path. The program has been getting guidance from Project Drawdown and aims to work with restaurants implementing a 1% sales carbon neutral tax, or table to farm funding.

This funding could take many forms and could even look like an addition of \$1 on waste hauler bills. Since 2020, the program has awarded \$550,000 for removing 10,000 tons of carbon from the atmosphere. This program is largely inspired by the HSP but is focused on the private sector. The program uses the Comet Planner tool and works with RCDs for implementation. The program focuses on beginning a systematic approach at improving land stewardship. The current pilot is funded by RCDs and other funding sources. One of the goals of the program is to broaden access to meaningful solutions to local farms and ranches for the table to farm movement. Consumers are willing to pay extra for sustainable raised goods, so it seems reasonable that these slight taxes/charges would be palatable. It is also possible to link the program to SB1383. Zero Footprint does retain 5% of program funds and allocates the other 95% to farmers/ranchers. This is not a carbon credit program and growers are asked to not sell their carbon reductions. Farmers/ranchers get paid 50% of the awarded amount for initial implementation and get the remaining 50% at the end of implementation.

Member Hansen asked if the practices funded are only funded if they are in Comet Planner. Mr. Myint indicated that this was the case except for compost application on rangeland, in which they reference CDFA and Carbon Cycle Institute rates.

Member Cameron asked what the program does with growers that are already following these practices. Mr. Myint indicated that they are still eligible for grants, but that an attestation of need may be needed. Member Cameron also asked how much compost is currently being produced in California, and how much Mr. Myint anticipates after the implementation of SB1383. Mr. Myint estimates that 10% of organic matter is diverted, so maybe the current market could expand by threefold.

Member Bright asked how these grants are different from HSP grants. Mr. Myint indicated that the application process is more streamlined and that grantees get half of the money up front. The program is hoping for a closer collaboration with HSP, for example adding a checkbox on the HSP application indicating that “I would like to be contacted about more funding opportunities.” This could

also potentially pair well with EQIP grants or the new CDFA planning program.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Climate Smart Agriculture Conservation Agriculture Planning Program; Update on Current and Future Activities

Presentation by Dr. Gunasekara from CDFA providing an update on the status for the program. He indicated that public comments have been received, however due to the quick turnaround before the EFA SAP meeting, OEFI staff haven't been able to do an in-depth analysis. They received 16 comment letters from the public, and OEFI staff will incorporate the comments into another draft RFP. The comments focused on eligible entities, eligible plans, grant term lengths, payment structures, and application process. Regarding the previous concerns of what fundable plans are included, he emphasized that organic systems plans (OSPs) are included. Funding for this program is unclear.

Member Redmond had a question about the summary of comments, because in several of the letters there were discussions on streamlining the implementation of planning grants. She was curious on CDFA staff thoughts because the people who commented have experience in the process from planning to implementation. Dr. Gunasekara indicated that the panel did have a previous discussion on implementation and reminded that this program only focuses on planning efforts and not implementation. He elaborated that due to funding encumbrance and liquidation deadlines, CDFA won't have enough time to ensure implementation and monitoring of these projects and farmers may not want to start implementation work immediately after planning. Chair Dlott asked if there is a desire to incentivize implementation, for example adding an additional scoring criterion for implementation programs if planning grantees apply for funding.

Member Redmond indicated that she had been in correspondence with the USDA NRCS TSP director and acting state agronomist, and that at the national level the NRCS is reorganizing the payment structure caps. It is based on implementation and including some practical questions when the practices are being done. Chair Dlott asked about the timeline for the transition, and Member Redmond indicated that it would be implemented 2022. Member Redmond reemphasize how this planning program should support the transition to organic farming. She is concerned that the program as it now stands no longer follows this intent. According to NRCS, the practice of organics system planning is radically underutilized (CAP 138), so she recommended this program allow for its standalone development. She also recommended that the program should include state certified pest/crop managers as eligible applicants. She indicated that public comments also included concerns about the payment structure, and that NRCS is required to follow national guidelines, however CDFA has flexibility to make a payment structure that works at the state level.

Member Hansen seconded the comment to focus on organic systems planning, and that she was pleased to hear that the RFP was going through a second round of public comments. She also recommended holding focused workshops to get intel with TA providers and practitioners to determine "on-the-ground" rollout of the program. She indicated that CNRA programs focusing on natural resources meet regularly to coordinate with each other to build connections within their guidelines to support grantees for successful planning and suggested that this program could do something similar. Chair Dlott and Member Redmond agreed on the idea of having focused workshops with practitioners.

Chair Dlott discussed how there are several public comments that ask for the expansion of planning efforts, not just focusing on OSP. He expressed concern on determining which practices to include and if any should be prioritized. Member Redmond agreed with Chair Dlott's comments of having more than OSP practices but emphasized that this program shouldn't be irrelevant to organic transition progress. Chair Dlott agreed with Member Redmond's comment.

Chair Dlott indicated that he saw a comment about the burden of getting TSPs and wanted to know how more TSPs could be trained in organic transition since currently there are only 2. He asked on potential incentives for people to become TSPs and be trained. Dr. Gunasekara clarified that an

individual doesn't have to be a TSP to qualify to make OSPs. The RFP specifies that people can provide resumes showing that they are qualified to create these plans.

Dr. Gunasekara discussed that when CAPs are developed, there is a lot of information that is included, so OSPs can be broad. Chair Dlott indicated that the program may run into the dilemma of what other plans should be included as that might open the flood gates for many plans. Dr. Gunasekara explained that the CAPs are listed because it helps show that the plans are qualified. Carbon farm plans have been included in the RFP even though it doesn't have a CAP yet, which could leave CDFA staff in a difficult position since all other practices have associated USDA NRCS CAPs. Member Redmond asked if CDFA had done previous workshops and if they could do them for this program. Dr. Gunasekara indicated that they had and that they could hold 1 to 2 workshops once the draft RFP is released again. Member Couch agreed on the holding of workshops.

Chair Dlott wanted to discuss the NRCS payment structure revision timeline and what is the proposed source of funding for this program. Dr. Gunasekara indicated that funding might come from other programs and that Secretary Ross must decide if she would fund these activities with that funding, or this program may directly get funding through the budget. OEFI staff will study the public comments within the next 2 weeks and start the coordination for the public workshops. OEFI staff believes the program aligns with the initial ask.

Chair Dlott indicated that there are no action items at this time and that the next steps are for further public comments and the workshops. Chair Dlott indicated that the discussion regarding payment rates versus paying for actual costs incurred could be a topic at one of the workshops. Member Cameron commented that this budget serves as an opportunity for staff to move forward as quickly as possible so they can make decision in October.

Member Hansen and Member Redmond suggested to take public comment at this time. Chair Dlott opened up the meeting for public comments.

Public Member Adria Arko, from San Mateo RCD, wanted to express her excitement that CDFA is looking into supporting conservation planning. She also wanted to emphasize that RCDs are largely unfunded, funds mostly coming from grants, and that the proposed payment rates in the RFP would not cover their costs. Costs should be reimbursed for work conducted since activities like reporting and administrative activities are not covered in the proposed payment rates. Many RCDs are familiar with public grant reporting requirements, so it is more important to have costs cover versus having to submit additional documentation like timesheets. For context she explained that to write a carbon farm plan, which follows the 9 step RMS NRCS process, it takes on average 80 to 110 hours to prepare.

Public Member Brian Shobe, from the California Climate Action Network, had comments on this item. He suggested that the program should include the option for farmers to choose a qualified TA provider to meet their unique needs, and clarify that farmers not develop the plans themselves. He also indicated that to ensure equitable participation, pay TA providers for full costs of developing plans. The proposed payment rate doesn't account for diversity in helping all types of farmers including those with lower capacity. He also suggested eliminating the first come first serve process as it can disadvantage first time applicants. He also supported the continued conversation of linking these planning efforts to implementation and connecting grantees to other sources of funding. He additionally supported the inclusion of OSPs and recommended clarifying in the RFP to fund OSPs or CAPs OSPs. They are similar, but not the same. Lastly, he emphasized that certified crop and pest advisors should be allowed to be funded to do this work.

Public Member David Runsten urged that the process for developing this RFP should be slowed down. He emphasized paying people adequately, and not repeating mistakes from the HSP, like the complicated application process.

Public Member Noah Lakritz, from CCOF, agrees with a lot of the previous comments by public members. He wanted to share his perspective working at CCOF and indicated that when farmers want to transition to develop an OSP, CCOF is not allowed to consult on farms that they certify, but they do have list of referrals like certified crop advisors that they share with the farmer. That farmer would then hire one of those people to develop the plan. He thinks it is important for the farmer to get the money so there is flexibility to hire an advisor. This program could give them flexibility to hire someone local they trust. Additionally, he wanted to comment that becoming a TSP for NRCS is a long process, which may be why there are not as many of them. Lastly, he wanted to support having OSPs as a standalone option since that's how it works for most farmers already.

Public Member Taylor Roschen, from the California Farm Bureau Federation, wanted to flag that the program currently allows for up to 25% advance payment based on an assumed number of growers that the applicant would be helping. However, she expressed concern that there is a possibility that the advance payment might not be totally expended, if the number of growers helped is less than anticipated. She suggested applicants with advance payment provide a list of confirmed growers that they will assist. She also suggested flexibility of the program to prioritize vetted plans. Ms. Roschen also expressed concerns on confidentiality for the growers meeting other requirements of the program. She emphasized to the panel that farmers and ranchers should be the ultimate beneficiaries to the program.

Public Member Torri Estrada, from Carbon Cycle Institute, wanted to express appreciation for the program, and indicate that the HSP, AMMP, and SWEEP are helpful programs. He let the members know that it is an ongoing process with producers to identify syngenetic opportunities because so many operations are diverse. Mr. Estrada provided a detailed comment letter and wanted to express support for the proposed workshops. Mr. Estrada also expressed concerns on issues of scaling up on TA providers since not as many are available and suggested including Chico State Center for Regenerative Agriculture and Resilient Systems as well as other agriculture schools to expand the network.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP); Update on Ad-Hoc Sub-Advisory Group and Public Comments

Presentation by Mr. Scott Weeks from CDFA's SWEEP on the timeline of the upcoming program cycle and the adoption of recommendations from the Ad-Hoc Advisory Group. The SWEEP received 10 public comments regarding the recommendations from the Group. These were summarized and analyzed by SWEEP staff into scientific considerations and administrative concerns. Recommendations were determined to be adopted, partially adopted, or would be considered in the future. Out of the 48 recommendations, most of them fell into the adopted, or partially adopted categories. Mr. Weeks presented on examples from each category. He also indicated that the SWEEP is now releasing public quarterly updates on projects through the SWEEP webpage. Chair Dlott commented that he appreciated the adopt, partially adopt, and consider for future categories model for the Group's recommendations. There were no questions or comments from the Panel.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Healthy Soils Program (HSP); Program Updates:

Dr. Geetika Joshi presented a Healthy Soils Program update in two parts. The first half of the presentation covered the staff proposed updates to HSP Incentives and Demonstration program. These updates are geared toward streamlining the application process.

Dr. Joshi paused for comments and questions and Member Diggs thanked staff for the updates to RePlan and other streamlining of the application. He asked a question regarding enhancements of practices, similar to the USDA NRCS options for management practices. Dr. Joshi indicated that Comet Planner does not account for enhancement scenarios. Member Hansen reflected on the inflection point and acknowledged the success of HSP. Suggested a lesson learned discussion venue. Chair Dlott agreed that the lessons learned is a good idea.

Dr. Joshi continued with presentation and reported on new management practice updates. Nine proposals were received during the last solicitation for proposals. Proposals were submitted by stakeholders, posted by CDFA and evaluated by the technical advisory committee (TAC). Staff recommendations were presented, and public comment will be received.

1. Desaturation of delta peat through rice cultivation or managed wetland: TAC would like to include this practice through the HSP incentive program with the NRCS practice of wetland restoration. This practice is not in Comet Planner so a modeling effort will be needed. Staff recommends including in incentive program and Type B demonstration. Since some modeling and preparation is needed, HSP would not be able to include in the next round of funding but would hope to include in the next funding cycle.
2. Biochar application: The TAC suggested inclusion in demonstration projects Type A. At this time there is still not an established user application rate so for the inclusion in HSP Demonstration Type A, the team recommends that awardees would need to significant data collection, and an experimental design.
3. Application of Food Waste Hydrolysate: This practice was recommended by the TAC for Demo Type A.
4. Application of Humates: The TAC recommended not to include this practice due to lack of submitted information.
5. Application of biomineral fertilizer: The TAC recommended not to include this practice due to lack of submitted information.
6. Organic Residential Compost Sharing: This practice was not recommended as it is out of scope of the HSP program.
7. No-till pasture seeding and manure application: This practice was not recommended for inclusion in the HSP program because it was a grant proposal (not a practice proposal). It lacked in submission requirements.

Dr. Joshi outlined next steps which include holding a public comment period and update of the HSP RGA, making awards for technical assistance providers, training technical assistance providers, and then accepting applications for HSP in fall of 2021.

Dr. Joshi facilitated questions from the panel. Member Diggs asked about residential compost sharing practice proposal. He felt it was a provocative concept and thought it might be way to connect urban and rural communities. An urban compost practice which might have modest gains in terms quantified benefits could develop social capital and knowledge. Member Diggs wanted to express that he felt this proposal had merit.

Subject Matter Expert Dr. Parker asked if a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) would be completed or considered in the Demonstration Program projects for biochar and food waste hydrolysate. Dr. Joshi indicated that to date a LCA has not been used in the Comet Planner practices but depending on panel comments and public comment this is something that CDFA can consider for the inclusion of those new practices in the HSP program.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – Technical Assistance Program; Program Updates

Ms. Carolyn Cook from CDFA presented on the Technical Assistance Program at OEFI. She indicated that a proactive solicitation was held for TA providers in February 2021, however with the previous uncertainty of funding, awards were not announced. Now that the state budget funding has been clarified for the SWEEP and HSP, the TA providers awarded can be announced. Moving forward, if the AMMP receives funding then CDFA will have a TA solicitation for that program as well.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – Public Comments

Public Member Marianna Castiaux, who works with UCANR, had comments on the HSP. She works with Hmong vegetable growers in the Central Valley and had some critiques of the HSP. She first emphasized that the compost payment rates for the program do not account for equipment rentals for compost application. The program may have a greater financial benefit to larger farms because

they already have equipment versus smaller farmers that don't have equipment and must rent. This demonstrates a lack of flexibility for growers, especially ones that are trying these practices for the first time. The program is also not designed for farms with rotating crops. These challenges may come from the program itself or from the larger agencies that have regulations that control the program. She strongly advocated for CDFA staff to coordinate a meeting between stakeholders, CDFA, CARB, and the state finance office to help address the issues identified.

Public Member Brian Shobe, who works with the California Climate Agricultural Network, had comments on the SWEEP and HSP. For the SWEEP, he first wanted to thank CDFA staff for going through the ad-hoc panel review process and the adoption of some of the recommendations. He was disappointed that the recommendation to divide the money into two categories was not adopted. He understands staff concerns though that this wouldn't have met GGRF requirements but pointed out that SWEEP hasn't been funded by GGRF for several years. He emphasized that he would be happy to serve as an advocate for the program on behalf of CalCAN to support any legislative efforts particularly regarding funding encumbrance and liquidation. Regarding HSP, he emphasized that farmer demand for this program has increased sixfold over the past few years. While this merits celebration, it also provides an opportunity to analyze what is and is not working for the program. CalCAN published report last December on HSP identifying opportunities to improve, and recommended the panel read it. Some recommendations today include organizing a convening with key agencies to talk about lessons learned on the program and how other state-funded programs can learn from it and convening a one-day workshop with practitioners to discuss practice implementation and economics. This may help people trying to scale this work up and help inform state agencies trying to implement state plans.

Public Member Stephanie Courtman, who works with the California State University, Monterey Bay, had comments on the HSP. She currently helps manage HSP demonstration projects and identified key challenges in the work. It was unclear what the GHG data goals are for CDFA and what will be the comparison over the projects. To achieve reasonable GHG estimates, monitoring must be more frequent, but the HSP does not have funds sufficient to cover this type of sampling. Also, timelines should much longer to determine better reductions – on the scale of a decade. She agrees with previous commenters that there is value in scheduling a meeting between stakeholders, HSP grantees, and the finance office.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – Next Meeting

Dr. Gunasekara indicated that the next meeting would be October 14, 2021. The meeting will most likely be in person at the CDFA Headquarters conference room in Sacramento, as well as remotely. In-person option to change dependent on the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chair Dlott introduced the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Member Cameron and seconded by Member Couch. Panel members unanimously voted to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 1:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

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

AGENDA ITEM 3

AGENDA ITEM 4



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program (CAPGP)



Environmental Farming Act
Science Advisory Panel

October 14, 2021

Program Update

Timeframe	Activity
April 29, 2021	CAPGP Draft RFP presented to EFA SAP
May 13 - June 16, 2021	Public Comment Period (Round 1)
July 15, 2021	CAPGP update presented to EFA SAP
September 16 - October 19, 2021	Public Comment Period (Round 2)

Background

- ▶ This program will fund the development of various types of agricultural conservation activity plans (CAPs) related to CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) programs. CSA addresses risks that climate change poses to agriculture.
- ▶ The funded plans will promote CSA efforts which will help to mitigate GHG emissions, adapt to climate change impacts and promote environmental and agricultural sustainability.

Funding and Duration

- ▶ The maximum award amount is \$250,000 per applicant.
- ▶ The maximum cost reimbursed is \$20,000 per agricultural operation.
- ▶ Multiple plans may be used to account for the maximum award amount per agricultural operation.
- ▶ Matching funds are not required but encouraged.
- ▶ Grant funds may not be expended prior to execution of the grant agreements for awarded projects, or after the completion of the grant agreement term.
- ▶ The duration of the grant agreement is 24 months from the date of execution.

Eligibility

- ▶ This program is designed to provide funding to eligible entities in California to assist California farmers and ranchers in developing plans for on-farm use. The following entities in collaboration with farmers or ranchers on private or recognized Native American Indian Tribal lands are eligible to apply:

Eligibility

- ▶ Technical Service Providers (TSPs) registered by [USDA NRCS](#)
- ▶ Not-for-profit entities including agricultural industry not-for-profit entities
- ▶ Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)
- ▶ Federal and University Experiment Stations
- ▶ University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension
- ▶ Public universities such as University of California, California State University and community colleges
- ▶ Agricultural cooperatives
- ▶ Federal and California Recognized Native American Indian Tribes
- ▶ Farmers and Ranchers (must provide qualified experts that meet eligibility criteria)
- ▶ Certified professionals (including, but not limited to: Certified Crop Advisor, Pest Control Advisor, Certified Rangeland Manager)

Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) Eligible for CAPGP Funding

Name of CAP	Corresponding USDA NRCS CAP #
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan	102
Nutrient Management Plan	104
Grazing Management Plan	110
Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan	114
Soil Health Management Plan	116
Irrigation Water Management Plan	118
Agricultural Energy Management Plan	128
Agricultural Energy Design Plan	136
Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition	138
Pollinator Habitat Plan	146
IPM Herbicide Resistance Weed Conservation Plan	154
Carbon Farm Plan	N/A

Summary of Public Comments

Round 1

- ▶ CDFA accepted public comments on Conservation Agriculture Planning Grant Program Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) from May 13, 2021 through June 15, 2021.
- ▶ Received public comments from **16** entities
- ▶ CDFA staff identified **84 total** comments from within the 16 comment letters
- ▶ Of the 84 total comments, **42** are unique (several comments were repeated)
- ▶ Of the 42 unique comments:
 - ▶ **10** comments: CDFA **accepted** the comment and made changes to the RFP
 - ▶ **13** comments: CDFA is **already doing** or considering what was proposed in the comment
 - ▶ **19** comments: CDFA was **unable** to accept the comment

Key Changes Made

- ▶ Farmers and ranchers are eligible applicants (must provide qualified experts)
- ▶ Added Federal and California Recognized Native American Indian Tribes as eligible applicants
- ▶ Added Certified professionals (including, but not limited to: Certified Crop Advisor, Pest Control Advisor, Certified Rangeland Manager) as eligible applicants
- ▶ Grant agreement length will be 24 months
- ▶ Applications will be received on a competitive (not rolling) basis
- ▶ Dairy operations added to definition of “agricultural operation”

Thank you!

Questions?

Contact us:

cdfa.oefi@cdfa.ca.gov



AGENDA ITEM 5



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program

Public Comment and Solicitation Update

**Science Advisory Panel Update
10/14/2021**

Funding Update and Anticipated Timeline

RGA Public Comment
August 26 –
September 23

Set up Technical
Assistance Provider
Agreements
October

Release Solicitation
October 2021 –
December 2021

Announce Awards
Summer 2022

- \$40 million funding was received for SWEEP in the 2021-22 Budget
- Draft Request for Grant Applications was released August 26th for public comment
- Anticipating releasing the solicitation in October



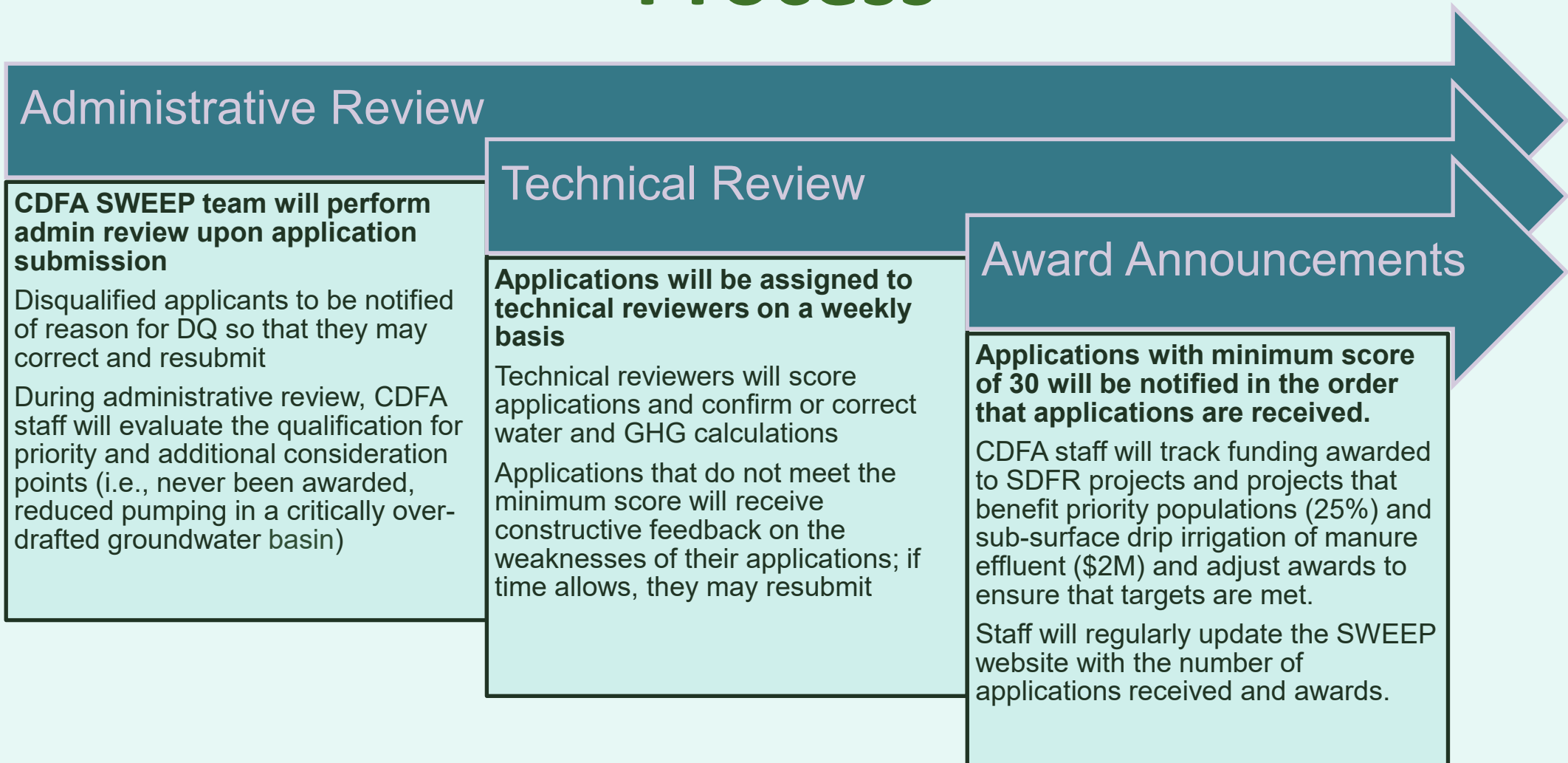
Draft Request for Grant Applications (RGA)

Summary of major changes to the Draft RGA

- First-Come, First-Serve Review
- Added Priority Populations for priority funding
- Added sub-surface drip for dairy effluent as project type (\$2M)
- Increased the funding cap to \$200,000
- Updated Additional Considerations
 - First time SWEEP recipient (3 points)
 - Committing to irrigation training (1 Point)
 - Conducting soil management practices (1 Point)
 - Project located in a critically over drafted groundwater basin (1 Point)



Plan for First-Come, First-Serve Review Process



Administrative and Technical Review

Administrative review

- Projects are reviewed for completeness
- Ensure that all required files are attached and readable
- Verify APN has not been funded before
- Ensure that applicant has not gone above SWEEP cumulative award cap of \$600,000



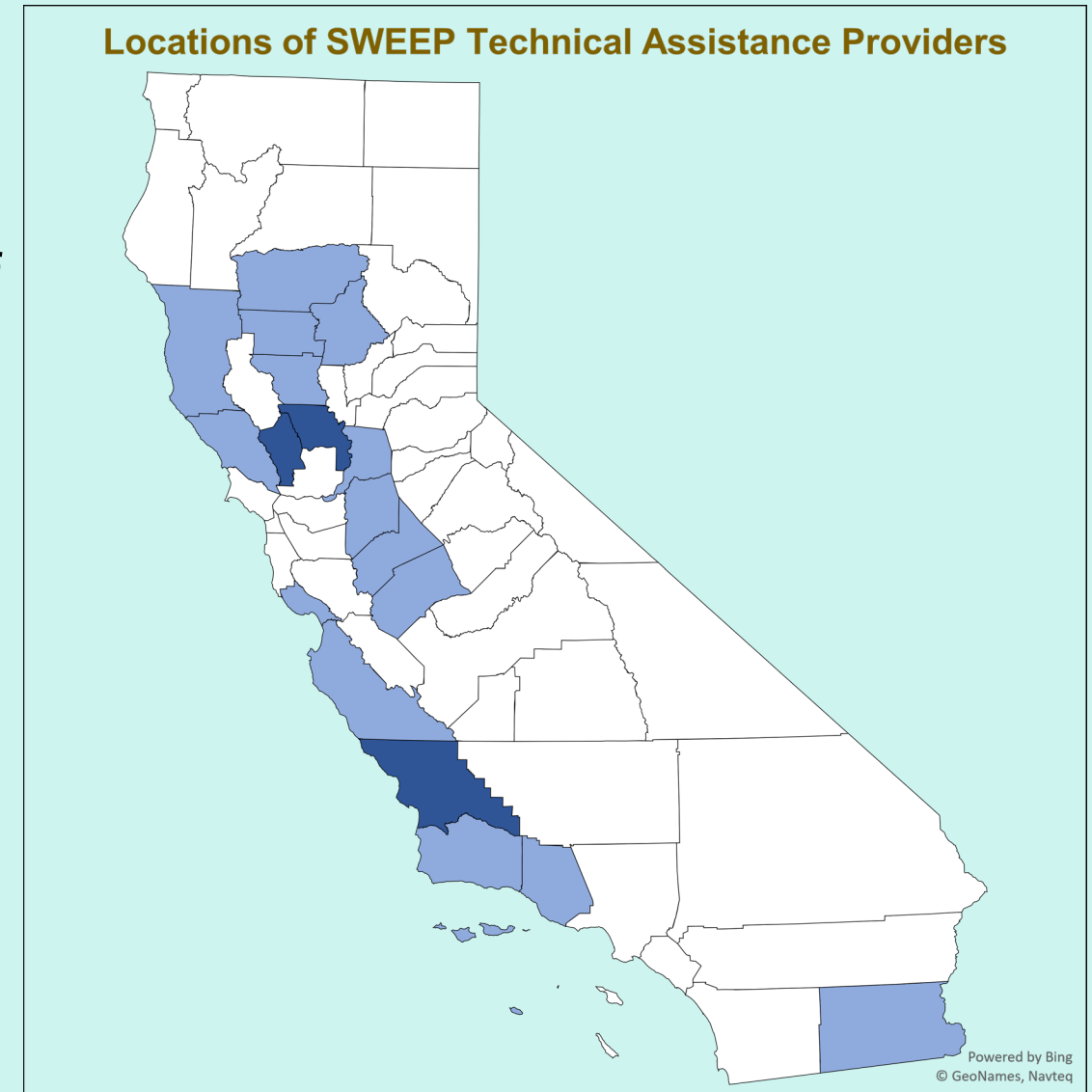
Technical review

- Projects reviewed by third party technical experts
- Calculators are validated or corrected
- Score and feedback provided

Criteria	Maximum Points
Merit and Feasibility	12
Water Savings & Calculations	12
Greenhouse Gas Reductions & Calculations	12
Budget	8
Additional Considerations	6
Total	50

Technical Assistance Providers for 2021

- 21 different technical assistance providers throughout the state
 - Some regions have multiple providers
 - Many providers offer assistance outside of their county
 - Each provide one-on-one application assistance
 - Many will provide project implementation support
 - Some providers will hold workshops
-
- CDFA website provides location and contact information
 - <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/>



UC ANR Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance

- 11 different UC ANR Community Education Specialists
- Each provided one-on-one assistance
- Some providers will hold workshops
- CDFA website provides location and contact information

<http://ciwr.ucanr.edu/Programs/ClimateSmartAg/TechnicalAssistanceProviders/>



CDFA Technical Workshops



Workshop

- CDFA will host three informational webinars
- Workshops will provide an overview of program guidelines and technical resources
- All workshops will be a webinar
- The final workshop will be recorded and posted to the SWEEP Webpage as a resource

Question and Answer Document

- CDFA will conduct two rounds of Questions and Answer
- Questions will be generalized and posted to the SWEEP webpage in a Frequently Asked Question document

Summary of Public Comments

- CDFA received 20 public comments on the SWEEP Draft RGA
- A summary of these comments will be provided at the EFA SAP





Thank you!



SWEEP TEAM

Carolyn Cook

Scott Weeks

Steph Jamis

Ana Chan

AGENDA ITEM 6

CDFA HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM

Geetika Joshi, Ph.D.

Senior Environmental Scientist, Office of Environmental Farming & Innovation

Environmental Farming Act – Science Advisory Panel Meeting

October 14, 2021

Sacramento, CA



Outline

- Proposed Updates to the HSP
- Public Comments Received
 - Overall
 - Incentives Program
 - Demonstration Projects
- Next Steps

Proposed Updates to the HSP

- Eligibility and Exclusions
- Program Requirements
- Project Verification Requirements
- CDFA HSP RePlan Tool
- CDFA HSP COMET-Planner Tool
- CDFA HSP Electronic Application Platform (Wizehive)
- Incentives Program payment rates
- Demonstration project types, outreach requirements, past performance

Public Comments

- Proposed changes presented at EFA-SAP meeting in July 2021.
- Draft Request for Grant Applications (RGAs) released for public comments between September 9 – September 23, 2021.
- 23 comment letters received.

Public Comments Received (overall)

Eligibility

- Allow cannabis farmers to apply for HSP funding.
- CDFA's Compost White Paper lists "conservation lands" are ineligible for rangeland compost application. Since the program requires evaluation for this practice, conservation lands should be eligible for the Healthy Soils Program.
- Do tree crops include non-timber forest products such as acorns that are on Tribal land?
- Allow new producers to apply for HSP, where they may not have three years' baseline data.
- Request clarification on time-frame for "previously implemented practice".
- Include wildlife grazing land (such as wild deer and elk) under "Grazing Lands" for Tribes.
- Is a ranch being converted to orchard or vegetable farm eligible, or vice versa?

Public Comments Received (overall)

Funding

- Propose a 15% set-aside for Tribes.
- Clarify if NRCS EQIP funds can be used as match.
- Prioritize funding for small and mid-sized farms, BIPOC farmers and women farmers by dedicating 50% funds to serve disadvantaged farming populations.

HSP Practices

- Regarding the practice of “Upland Wildlife Habitat Management for Pollinators” to “incentivize producers to maintain existing high-quality habitat and to adopt and maintain management practices that decrease negative impacts to pollinators and other wildlife (e.g. pesticide risk reduction).” In many areas it is likely hard to find “existing high-quality habitat”. Whether existing or enhanced habitat is to be proposed for special management, the highest value is for beneficial predators and parasitoids because they may be the organism that best prevents a pest problem.
- "HSP should allow for expanded range of products beyond compost, as long as the product is CDFA-registered or licensed bulk fertilizer not produced from chemical or synthetic based feedstocks. "
- Include prescribed/cultural burns among eligible practices.

Public Comments Received (overall)

Indirect Costs

- Add that indirect costs rates that exceed what is allowed can be cost-share.

Program Requirements

- Allow materials used for mulching to be produced on-site.
- Make an explicit suggestion to have native species as a default for cover and hedgerow practices.
- Follow compost application recommendations in the Compost Application White Paper that only application on priority, i.e., degraded sites be allowed until a clear evaluation process for other areas is delineated.
- Prioritize disadvantaged farmers.
- "HSP should disallow toxic inputs: pesticides and excess artificial nitrogen fertilizer; and award extra points for applicants who are or transitioning to certified organic, biodynamic or regenerative agriculture. "
- Make it a requirement to plant native species under woody cover practices.
- Clarify that planting invasive species is not allowable.
- Are compost application rates outlined in the HSP guidelines of compost per acre for funding or are they a limit? Will additional application quantities be ineligible for funding?

Public Comments Received (overall)

Program Requirements (Contd.)

- In the Compost White Paper, the section titled “Comparing nitrogen (N) from compost to recommended plant nitrogen requirements” describes how compost application at the rates used in the HSP will represent less than 15% of crop N needs. Is the additional N expected to come from additional compost use which is not funded or another source of N other than compost such as synthetic fertilizer? If so, we recommend utilization of the biosolids regulatory model to allow for application of compost, biosolids, and other organic sources of N up to the needs of the crop to be grown, taking all sources of nitrogen and mineralization into account. What was the reasoning for limiting application rates to less than 15% of the crop nitrogen?
- It appears that anaerobic digestate, including biosolids, is not eligible in the Demonstration Projects document when applied to rangeland. If an anaerobic digestate product was made which had a C/N >11, would this be considered for Demonstration Projects. What information would CDFA request in order to consider this? A recent study (<https://doi.org/10.1002/jeq2.20270>) demonstrating the carbon sequestration benefits of anaerobic digestate on rangeland soils highlights the opportunities in this area.
- Clarify if requirements to maintain temperature in compost piles are for consecutive days.

Reporting/Grant Management

- Convene with interagency staff to reduce reporting requirements and make program requirements more flexible.

Public Comments Received (overall)

Resources

- Translate program materials into other languages.
- Fit regional variation in costs.
- Invest in state technical support to farmers and ranchers.

Scoring Criteria

- Give additional consideration for climates/conditions needed to produce culturally appropriate and indigenous foods.

Other

- CARB should recognize bioenergy conversion technologies such as production of biogenic green fertilizer from biogas, biochar from gasification, and others, with LCFS carbon credit certification.
- Conduct a comprehensive program evaluation in 2021, collaborating with skilled and qualified researchers and institutions in California, to assess the impact of HSP incentives and demonstration projects on attitudes and knowledge about healthy soils practices, barriers to practice adoption, and long-term implementation of healthy soils practices.
- Do not support HSP investments as wildfires are the largest source of GHG emissions.

Public Comments Received (Incentives Program)

Application Submission

- Allow fixed application period instead of first-come-first-served to avoid rushed applications with fewer practices, potential disadvantage to smaller/underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers, and to maintain the value of a Conservation Plan. Suggested duration of 12 weeks for application period.
- Allow TAPs 6 weeks before application submission period opens after training workshop.
- Since first-come-first-served process will be followed, allow an early opportunity to apply to 2020 applicants whose applications were not funded since program ran out of funding.
- There should be an initial deadline for applications after which a rolling deadline could be maintained if the initial round selections don't expend available grant funds. This could result in more workload for CDFA, but it would be more equitable for grant applicants, and consistent with state goals for supporting disadvantaged producers.

Eligibility

- CDFA should allow farmers with one-year leases to participate in the program and apply for practices that are implemented annually without having to document landowner approval. CDFA can then add guidelines to the program that allow CDFA or the farmer to terminate a grant agreement if the farmer loses control of the land.

Public Comments Received (Incentives Program)

GHG Calculations

- Use 20-year Global Warming Potential (GWP) of methane to estimate GHG benefits from the application of manure compost and enteric methane associated with making the compost.

Grant Management

- Remove the requirement to document project changes and allow farmers the flexibility they need to change the details of their practice implementation so long as they are following the CPS for it and then allow them to report on those changes after the fact.

HSP Practices

- Add NRCS CPS 595 Standard Pest Management Conservation System to HSP.

Public Comments Received (Incentives Program)

Payments

- Allow adequate funding for recipients to obtain quality compost as nearer locations may provide contaminated compost.
- Microbial diversity in soil is positively impacted by slight speeding up of carbon sequestration with eight or more plant species in the mix. Payments should be increased for such projects.
- Early adopters of HSP practices should be paid retroactively.
- Continue to use NRCS EQIP rates as the foundation for the program and incorporate an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on existing payment rates and practice standards whenever CDFA solicits proposals for new practices. For payment rates that stakeholders flag as too low, CDFA could repeat the process it has used to update compost payment rates by collecting cost data from a subset of funded HSP projects to re-evaluate specific payment rates.
- Payment rates are too low. Include a payment of \$800 per day for rental equipment. Also increase other payment rates for regional cost differences. Allow non-certified compost providers to supply compost and provide funding for C:N ratio testing.

Public Comments Received (Incentives Program)

Program Requirements

- Require farmers to consult with a technical assistance provider to determine the best species to plant in the case of milkweed requirements for Conservation Cover projects. Xerces Society does not recommend planting native milkweed within 5-10 miles of overwintering sites on the coast in Central and Northern California and there are other beneficial pollinator and monarch species that can be planted.
- Allow practices to be moved to different parts of the farm as this is consistent with farming practices of small diversified farms.

Reporting

- Clarify the purpose of soil sampling in HSP Incentives Program

Resources

- We would like to work with the HSP to identify California seed companies who have current HSP appropriate seed stock inventories and to work on ways to develop and sustain a California-grown supply of native, pollinator-friendly and California state-wide and regionally appropriate seed stocks focused on catalyzing HSP applications and broader adoption of the HSP planting practices like conservation cover, contour buffer strips, cover crops, field border, filter strip, range planting and vegetative barrier.

Scoring Criteria

- Award extra points to "systems-based" proposals and projects proposing to implement more than one practice.

Public Comments Received (Demonstration Projects)

Application Submission

- Simplify application as some sections are more applicable to universities than non-profits.
- Allow Tribes to renew applications in future without re-entering the competitive process if their first grant was completed successfully.

Data Collection

- A total budget for estimating GHG balance for methane, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide should be included in requirements; rather than requiring only GHG field emissions and SOM storage measurements, C and N from fertilizer/soil amendments, measurements of soil N, plant removal of C and N should be included.
- Clarify if each year is a replicate or if each treatment needs a separate control each year.

Eligibility

- Clarify that limit of two grant awards is for same lead applicant.

Public Comments Received (Demonstration Projects)

Grant Management

- Longer term for grants (3-4 years with HSP Funding and one year with matching funds) would allow soil related changes and outreach outcomes to be achieved.

HSP Practices

- Allow biochar application in orchards and vineyards.
- Allow cover crop projects under Type A due to the potential for cover cropping to achieve co-benefits as detailed in the RGA.

Indirect Costs

- CDFA should pay entities what it costs them to do the project. In the case of agencies with a NICRA, they have already negotiated for a rate that reflects what it costs to do the work, so CDFA should pay that rate. We see that universities can claim an established indirect rate that is above the 20%, so fairness would dictate that all entities have access to a rate that more closely reflects actual costs.
- 20% is insufficient indirect rate for Tribes. CDFA should allow federally negotiated indirect rates.

Public Comments Received (Demonstration Projects)

Outreach Requirements

- Requirements for outreach are not clear, including minimum number of field days and if remote attending farmer/rancher participants can fulfil these requirements.
- Attendees who have influence over farmers and ranchers, such as NRCS, RCDs, CCAs, UCCE Researchers, BLM, park management and landowners should be included toward outreach requirements. "

Past Performance

- CDFA must clearly inform current grantees when they have failed to meet the requirements in any of the areas listed under Past Performance (7.1-7.6) to help ensure points subtracted are not based misunderstanding or misinterpretation and also to make sure there are no surprises for the grant applicant.
- COVID has caused interruptions to field work and data collection. Points should not be subtracted from the evaluation for past projects that could not complete requirements due to COVID.
- Clarify whether these points will be deducted only for projects that have been completed, after the end of the grant period. Some projects may be able to make up for poor past performance in some of these categories by accomplishing more the last year of the project.
- Suggest as CDFA is subtracting points for poor performance, adding points for positive performance, such as exceeding the number of outreach events and attendees would provide positive incentive.
- Some of the past performance evaluation criteria are out of the control of the lead applicant /grant management organization e.g. Criteria 7.2 & 7.3 on page 31 on the draft RGA. It is unfair to judge a new HSP Demo Grant Application based on previous grants that could have had different staff managing the project and/or different partners implementing data collection and practice implementation components. If organizations are ineligible for HSP Demo Project Grants based on past performance they should be notified in a timely manner, prior to taking time to submit an application.

Public Comments Received (Demonstration Projects)

Payments

- Allow field work costs to be reimbursed.

Program Requirements

- Support change to Type A Demonstration Projects. Require data collection on agronomic benefits, economics and operational requirements of HSP practices.
- Expand outreach audience to other people than farmers or ranchers especially for urban agriculture projects.

Reporting

- Reduce reporting requirements to no more than once per year and work with extension professionals to streamline reporting.
- Make the process to request and approve changes easier and faster with less paperwork.
- Allow exemption to outreach requirements due to COVID-19.

Other

- Make a separate category of funding to support collection of baseline data.

Next Steps

- Responses to public comments will be posted on HSP website.
- HSP Technical Assistance Providers and UCCE Community Education specialists training in October.
- Anticipated solicitation release in October 2021.
- Applications accepted until February 2022.
- Projects begin implementation January 2022 onward.

Thank you!

Questions?

Contact us:

CDFA.HSP_Tech@cdfa.ca.gov



AGENDA ITEM 7

WATER EFFICIENCY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

PROPOSED PROGRAM FRAMEWORK



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Funding

Budget Act of 2021 Water and Drought Resilience Package

One-time funding of \$5 million allocated for water efficiency and nutrient management technical assistance

Proposed maximum award of \$500,000

Three-year grant term



Eligible Entities

- Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)
- University of California Cooperative Extension
- Non-profit organizations
- Federally- and California-recognized Native American Indian Tribes

Entities applying for Water Efficiency Technical Assistance (WETA) Grants, must have demonstrated technical expertise in on-farm water and energy use efficiency standards, evaluation and implementation of efficient practices and/or on-farm nutrient management.

Partnerships with groundwater sustainability agencies, irrigation districts and/or water quality coalitions are encouraged.



Three Objectives

1. On-farm, one-on-one technical assistance to evaluate irrigation system efficiency (aka mobile irrigation lab) and provide diagnostics, report and recommendations to growers
 - Distribution uniformity testing
 - Irrigation water management system audits
 - Nutrient management
2. Coordinate or Support Pump Efficiency Testing
3. Provide Training regarding Water and Nutrient Management Practices and Technology
 - In-person trainings or webinars in English and other languages
 - Recorded (on-demand) training programs in non-English languages
 - Provision of certificate of completion

Review Criteria

Criteria	Maximum Points
Workplan Need: Does the organization provide a supportive argument for why the water efficiency TA is needed in their service area? Which objectives intend to address the need? What activities?	40
Budget Are the costs associated with the activities reasonable?	20
Statement of Qualifications Does the organization have the relevant expertise to provide TA? Does the organization have the necessary administrative experience?	30
At Least 25% to Assist SDFRs Must breakout expenditures on budget and workplan in application phase and in quarterly reports to demonstrate this 25% is met.	10
Total	50

Reporting

Quarterly Progress Reports must include, at a minimum:

- Total number of individuals assisted
- Information of farmers assisted
- Number of individuals assisted who identify as SDFRs and/or farms 500 acres or less
- Costs associated with assisting SDFRs
- Number of irrigation assessments conducted
- Total number of irrigation water management (IWM) assessments conducted
- Total number of pump efficiency tests conducted
- Total attendance at in-person and online water efficiency and/or nutrient management workshops and trainings
- Links and or files for digital training materials that have been created
- Links to translated files or digital training materials that have been created



Questions?

A Draft Request for Applications is currently posted on the Technical Assistance website:

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/>

Send public comments to
cdfa.oefi@cdfa.ca.gov

AGENDA ITEM 8

Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance

Update to the Environmental Farming Act
Science Advisory Panel

October 14, 2021



Awards Announced

Held proactive solicitation for
Healthy Soils Program (HSP) & State
Water Efficiency and Enhancement
Program (SWEET) in February 2021

39 applications received

Early action funding did not
arrive

Awards announced July 29, 2021

\$2.7 M

36 awarded organizations

News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Media Contacts: Steve Lyle (CDFA), 916-654-0462 , officeofpublicaffairs@cdfa.ca.gov



Release #21-087

Print This Release

CDFA AWARDS \$2.7 MILLION IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM AND THE STATE WATER EFFICIENCY AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

[Español](#)

SACRAMENTO, July 29, 2021 – The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) today announced it has selected thirty-six organizations for Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Technical Assistance (TA) awards, totaling \$2.7 million. With these funds, thirty-one organizations will provide technical assistance to the applicants and awardees of CDFA's [Healthy Soils Program \(HSP\)](#) and twenty-one will provide assistance to applicants and awardees of the [State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program \(SWEET\)](#).

Resource Conservation Districts, University of California Cooperative Extension and non-profits are eligible for Climate Smart Agriculture technical assistance funds. For every appropriation to Climate Smart Agriculture Programs, CDFA makes available at least five percent of the funds to technical assistance grants

HSP and SWEEP Assistance

36 awarded organizations

21 RCDs

10 non-profits

5 university partners

21 for SWEEP

32 for HSP



Case Studies and CSA Resources

Farmers Team Up with State, Nonprofits to Protect Pollinators

1:49 / 1:49

Play



California farmers are starting to use native plants as hedgerows to attract more bees and other beneficial insects. (Michael Serrano)

LEADERS IN HEALTHY SOIL PRACTICES



"It's all about what little drop in the bucket we can make towards climate action," Dolores explains, "For us, it's why we do farming."



Organic Matter

2% Increase in soil organic matter over a three-year grant period



Water

Increased soil moisture and reduced need to irrigate



Tree Resiliency

Increased resiliency and reduced mortality in fruit orchard

Le Fort's Organics
San Luis Obispo County
Award Amount: \$7,960

Roberto and Dolores of Le-fort's Organic Crops produce apples, free-range eggs, carrots, eggplant, squash, and herbs. In 2017, they received a grant to apply compost to their orchards and annual crop fields, to expand their cover cropping, and to plant a riparian forest buffer between croplands and the Huer Huero Creek.

Roberto and Dolores have noticed a decrease in their water usage, a decrease in tree mortality, and a reduction in weeds on their property. Aside from carbon sequestration, the grant funding allowed them to increase soil organic matter content, promote biological nitrogen fixation, increase biodiversity and increase soil water retention.

For more information on the Healthy Soils Program, visit cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysouls/. For technical assistance with the grant application, contact Andrew Johnson at andrew@us-itrco.org



For More
Information

- CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Grant Program

www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/index.html



AGENDA ITEM 9

AGENDA ITEM 10