



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

MEETING AGENDA

Covid-19 social distancing measures will be observed at this location

July 16, 2020

9 AM to 3 PM

California Department of Food and Agriculture

Main Auditorium

1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

REMOTE ACCESS

Meeting participants are encouraged to attend remotely to limit the spread of Covid-19

Webinar information

Registration URL: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8085116483917580>

Webinar ID: 501-912-323

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. Meeting begins – Welcome remarks	Interim Chair Dlott	Informational Item
2. Introduction of New EFA SAP members	Interim Chair Dlott	Informational Item
3. Selection of Chair	Interim Chair Dlott	Action Item Requires EFA SAP Approval
4. Minutes from January 21, 2020 meeting	Interim Chair Dlott	Action Item Requires EFA SAP Approval
5. Stakeholder proposal to add an Organic Transition Plan to the Healthy Soils Program (HSP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by the HSP team • Opportunities for public comment 	HSP Team, CDFA	Action Item Requires EFA SAP Input
6. Stakeholder proposal to establish a SWEEP subcommittee	Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA	Action Item Requires EFA SAP Approval
7. State Water Efficiency and Enhancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Updates 	SWEEP Team, CDFA	Informational Item
8. Healthy Soils Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program updates • New Practices solicitation update 	HSP Team, CDFA	Informational Item
9. Technical Assistance Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Updates 	Carolyn Cook, MSc, CDFA	Informational Item

10. Public Comments	Interim Chair Dlott	Informational Item
11. Next Meeting and Location – Meeting ends	Interim Chair Dlott	Informational Item

EFA SAP MEMBERSHIP

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

Jeff Dlott, PhD, SureHarvest, Member and Interim Chair

Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch, Member

Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD, Member

Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm, Member

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

Keali'i Bright, PhD, Assistant Director, DOC, Natural Resources Agency, Member

Leonard Diggs, Pie Ranch, Member

Doug Parker, PhD, UCCE, Subject Matter Expert

Tom Hedt, USDA NRCS, Subject Matter Expert

Amanda Hansen, Deputy Secretary for Climate Change, Natural Resources Agency, Member

Scott Couch, Supervising Engineering Geologist, State Water Board, CalEPA, Member

CDFA Liaison to the Science Panel - Amrith (Ami) Gunasekara, PhD,

All meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you require reasonable accommodation as defined by the American with Disabilities Act, or if you have questions regarding this public meeting, please contact Amrith Gunasekara at (916) 654-0433.

More information at: <http://cdfa.ca.gov/Meetings.html> and

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

Agenda Item 2

Introduction of New EFA SAP members

Agenda Item 3

Selection of Chair

Bylaws;

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/efasap/docs/BylawsEFA-SAP2017.pdf>

PROCEDURES FOR THE
CANNELLA ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING ACT SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL
(Revised 3/16/2017)

The following will guide the activities of the Cannella Environmental Farming Act Scientific Advisory Panel (Science Panel), created under the Food and Agricultural Code, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8.5, Sections 560-568.

PANEL STRUCTURE

1.1 Membership

As provided by Section 568, the Panel shall: 1) Consist of nine members. 2) Five members shall be appointed by the Secretary of Food and Agriculture, with at least two members having a minimum of five years of training and experience in the field of agriculture and shall represent production agriculture, at least one member shall have training and field experience in on-farm management practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon, or both; at least one member shall be certified as a producer pursuant to the federal Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. Sec. 6501 et seq.); and at least one member shall have technical expertise in agricultural conservation planning and management. 3) Two members shall be appointed by the Secretary for Environmental Protection, with one member having a minimum of five years of training and experience in the field of human health or environmental science, and one shall have expertise in greenhouse gas emissions reductions practices related to agriculture. And 4) Two members who have a minimum of five years of training and experience in the field of resource management shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, with one member additionally having expertise in climate change adaptation and climate change impacts in the agricultural sector.

In accordance with Section 568 the secretary may also appoint, in consultation with the panel, ex officio nonvoting members to the panel and the panel may establish ad hoc committees, which may include professionals, scientists, or representatives of nongovernmental entities, to assist it in performing its functions.

1.2 Terms

Of the members first appointed to the Panel, two shall serve for a term of two years and three shall serve for a term of three years, as determined by lot. Thereafter, members shall be appointed for a term of three years. Any variances which occur shall be filled for the remaining unexpired term.

1.3 Vacancies

Any vacancy that occurs during an unexpired term shall be filled by the appointing agency for the remainder of the unexpired term, in accordance with the requirements set for in section 1.1.

1.4 Officers

The permanent officers of the Panel shall be: Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The Panel may from time to time create additional officers with such titles and duties as it may assign.

1.5 Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside over meetings of the Panel, and shall serve as the principal spokesperson for the Panel.

1.6 Vice Chairperson

The Vice Chairperson shall serve as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

1.7 Election of Panel Officers

Panel officers shall be elected for a term of two or three years as specified in section 1.2, commencing with the October 2011 meeting. An office may be held for two consecutive terms, but not more than two consecutive terms.

1.8 Ad Hoc Committees

As defined in Section 568 (c), the Panel may establish ad hoc committees, which may include professionals, scientists, or representatives of nongovernmental entities, to assist it in performing its functions.

II. AD HOC COMMITTEES

2.1 Membership

The Panel may establish ad hoc committees, which may include professionals or scientists, to assist it in performing its functions, and Panel members. The Chairperson and membership of these committees shall be determined by the Panel Chairperson or Panel.

2.2 Quorums

A quorum for the conduct of ad hoc committee business shall be a majority of the members, plus one. A majority of the quorum shall be entitled to adopt recommendations constituting committee action.

Once a quorum has been established and a meeting has commenced, a committee may continue to meet and take action even if, as a result of early retirement of some members, less than a quorum of the subcommittee are in attendance.

2.3 Minutes

Ad Hoc Committees shall keep meeting minutes and shall make approved minutes available to the public in a timely manner.

III. PANEL MEETINGS

3.1 Meetings

Meetings of the Panel shall be scheduled as needed and shall be noticed

according to the provisions of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Government Code Sections 11120 et seq.). A copy of the Bagley-Keene Act shall be provided to each Panel member.

3.2 Notice of Meetings

Written notice of all meetings shall be sent to all interested persons entitled to notice under the provisions of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

3.3 Public Meetings

All meetings of the Panel shall be open to the public and in other respects shall conform to requirements of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

3.4 Panel Action

A quorum for the conduct of Panel business shall be a majority of Panel Members plus one [six of the nine-member Panel].

3.5 Place of Meetings

Meetings shall be held as specified in the official meeting notice.

3.6 Minutes

The Panel shall keep meeting minutes and shall make approved minutes available to the public in a timely manner.

IV. PANEL COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Public Communications

The Science Advisor to the Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture shall be the Department's liaison to the panel and official spokesperson for the Panel in the Department.

4.2 Communications with the Department

While any Panel member may communicate with the Department, official communications from the Panel shall be sent by the Science Advisor.

4.3 Communication to Panel Members

In recognition of the Panel's broad responsibilities, each member of the Panel shall have the responsibility to maintain lines of communication with his/her appointing agency.

4.4 Reports to Committee from Department

The Department will furnish the Panel with information and reports reasonably necessary to allow the Panel to perform its advisory role.

4.5 Conflict of Interest Notice

Panel members are required to complete Form 700 documentation. Panel members will recuse themselves from voting on certain actions if they feel there is a conflict of interest.

V. FUNCTION OF THE PANEL

5.1 Enumeration of Functions

The Panel shall perform to the best of its ability the advisory functions on all matters pertaining to Chapter 3 of Division 1 including making recommendations regarding incentives for the private sector to undertake economic activities that benefit the environment.

VI. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

6.1 Compensation and Reimbursements

The members of the Panel shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred attending meetings approved by the department.

Agenda Item 4

Minutes from January 21, 2020 meeting

Agenda Item 5

Stakeholder proposal to add an Organic Transition Plan to the Healthy Soils Program (HSP)

Presentation by the HSP team

Opportunities for public comment



CCOF

Advancing organic agriculture through certification, education, advocacy, and promotion.

The Value of Adding an Organic Transition Option to the Healthy Soils Program

Adding an Organic Transition Option in the Healthy Soils Program will meet the goals of CDFA and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund while also providing social and economic co-benefits.

The Organic Transition Option to CDFA's Healthy Soils Program (HSP) would offer a one-time payment of \$4,300¹ for a producer to hire an organic crop consultant to help them complete an Organic System Plan. An Organic System Plan is a detailed description of the practices and procedures used to produce organic crops and livestock. With an Organic System Plan in place, a producer is ready to be certified after the ground has undergone three years of transition during which no prohibited materials are applied.

An Organic Transition Option Facilitates GHG Emission Reductions

Organic farming should be included as a climate change mitigation practice in HSP because it is an investment that meets the goals of CDFA and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) to "achieve feasible and cost-effective GHG emission reductions."² Scientific studies, including those conducted by UC Davis researchers, consistently find that organic farming builds soil organic matter which stores carbon in the soil³ and has lower net GHG emissions.⁴ Certified organic producers are required by federal law to maintain or improve their soil organic matter and must use crop rotation, so assisting producers transition to organic certification will ensure they continue to use (and earn an organic premium to help offset the cost of) healthy soils practices.

An Organic Transition Option Benefits Disadvantaged Communities

An Organic Transition Option would help the HSP meet GGRF requirements to benefit disadvantaged communities by reducing exposure to synthetic herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides in communities already disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. The Organic Transition Option would also make organic certification more accessible to limited resource, beginning, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers by removing financial and technical barriers to transition.

¹ This is the amount that NRCS offers through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Organic Initiative, which provides funding for producers to hire a consultant to develop a conservation plan and an Organic System Plan for the farm.

² California Air Resources Board. (2019). Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds Third Investment Plan: Fiscal Years 2019-20 through 2021-22.

Retrieved from

https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/2019_thirdinvestmentplan_final_021519.pdf?_ga=2.44130916.1147759135.1574730304-744090955.1563814456

³ Greater carbon storage in organically managed plots has been found in numerous published studies including reports on UC Davis trials, USDA Agricultural Research Service studies in Salinas, a national soil survey, and an international meta-analysis of soil quality data. See Wolf, K., Herrera, I., Tomich, T.P., & Scow, K. (2017). Long-term agricultural experiments inform the development of climate-smart agricultural practices. *California Agriculture*, 71, 120-124; Brennan, E.B., & Acosta Martinez, V. (2017); Cover cropping frequency is the main driver of soil microbial changes during six years of organic vegetable production. *Soil Biology and Biochemistry*, 109, 188-204; Ghabbour, E.A., Davies, G., Misiewicz, T., Alami, R.A., Askounis, E.M., Cuozzo, N.P., . . . Shade, J. (2017). Chapter one - national comparison of the total and sequestered organic matter contents of conventional and organic farm soil. *Advances in Agronomy*, 146, 1-35; Sanders, J. & Hess, J. (Eds), 2019. *Leistungen des ökologischen Landbaus für Umwelt und Gesellschaft*. Braunschweig: Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institut, 364 p, Thünen Report 65. Accessed May 2, 2019 at: https://www.thuenen.de/media/publikationen/thuenen-report/Thuenen_Report_65.pdf.

⁴ De Gryze, S., Wolf, A., Kaffka, S. R., Mitchell, J., Rolston, D. E., Temple, . . . Six, J. (2010). Simulating greenhouse gas budgets of four California cropping systems under conventional and alternative management. *Ecological Applications*, 20(7), 1805-1819.

An Organic Transition Option Maximizes Economic, Environmental, and Public Health Co-Benefits

An Organic Transition Option would meet the goal of CDFA and the GGRF to provide co-benefits because organic agriculture benefits the economy, environment, and public health. Organic agriculture sequesters carbon, creates jobs, improves soil water holding capacity, improves soil structure, reduces pollution from soil erosion and nutrient leaching, and improves environmental health. (Refer to CCOF's *Roadmap to an Organic California: Benefits Report* for detailed citations.)

Increasingly, organic farming is receiving recognition as an important strategy in preparing agriculture for climate change. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) recently published a report calling for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to *"Promote organic agriculture to make agriculture more resilient in the face of climate change while reducing GHG emissions from the agriculture production sector."*⁵

An Organic Transition Option Ensures the Continued Use of Healthy Soils Practices

Supporting farmers and ranchers with an Organic Transition Option will make the organic transition economically feasible, provide them with experience in using healthy soils practices, and position them to become certified organic, which will incentivize the ongoing use of healthy soils practices beyond the three years of the HSP grant.

High consumer demand for organic products makes organic farming attractive to many producers, but the three-year transition is the most challenging part of the certification process. Transitional growers incur higher production costs when substituting organic management for chemical inputs but are not able to access the organic premium to offset these costs until the land has been managed organically for three years. Including an Organic Transition Option will support producers who choose to transition to organic.

An Organic Transition Option Supports CDFA in Expending Additional Funding

As the HSP budget almost doubles in the coming year, CDFA will need to find ways to increase grower participation in the program. Offering an organic option will be popular with farmers and ranchers and attract more applicants to the HSP.

An Organic Transition Option is Needed Beyond the NRCS Program

The federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers conservation payments and funding to hire a consultant to develop an Organic System Plan through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Some drawbacks of the EQIP Organic Initiative include a contract cap of \$140,000, which is much lower than the cap on general EQIP contracts of \$450,000. Also, payments for specific practices offered by NRCS are significantly lower than payments offered by HSP. Finally, EQIP Organic Initiative funding levels in California are insufficient to meet demand: in FY 2018, California NRCS bolstered the initial \$100,000 that was allocated for the Organic Initiative by an additional \$90,673, and in FY 2019 they allocated \$200,000 due to high grower demand.⁶

⁵ National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. 2019. Agriculture and Climate Change: Policy Imperatives and Opportunities to Help Producers Meet the Challenge. Washington D.C.

⁶ NRCS California Farm Bill Programs Summary for FY 2018 EQIP, prepared for the State Technical Advisory Committee; and personal communication with RaeAnn Dubay, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist—Programs, personal communication Nov. 19, 2019.

LETTER TO CDFA BY CCOF:
ADDITION OF AN ORGANIC TRANSITION
OPTION TO THE HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY
CDFA HSP TEAM

JULY 16, 2020
EFA SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL MEETING
SACRAMENTO, CA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- January 16, 2020 - CCOF presents proposal to the EFA SAP at its public meeting held in Sacramento, CA
 - Panel style presentation
 - Information included a proposal for an Organic Transition Option in the CDFA Healthy Soils Program (HSP)
- January 16, 2020 - EFA SAP members make and move motion to have CDFA HSP evaluate proposal prior to next EFA SAP meeting in April, 2020
- April, 2020 - CDFA HSP team completed analysis
- April, 2020 – EFA SAP public meeting postponed indefinitely due to Covid-19 impacts
- July 16, 2020 – This meeting! Presenting analysis and recommendations

ASK

- Add an “Organic Transition Option to CDFA’s Healthy Soils Program”
- One time payment of \$4,300 for:
 - Hiring Organic Crop Consultant
 - Develop an Organic System Plan
 - Proposal letter is part of EFA SAP binder posted here;

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

STEPS TAKEN BY CDFA HSP TEAM

1. CDFA team evaluated the request for the following:
 - Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of costs (i.e, standard payment rates)? **No**
 - Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of quantifiable GHG reductions? **No**
 - What are the concerns (if any) with adding it to the HSP?
 - Is there a way to accommodate this request (and similar future requests) in the HSP without compromising GHGs and available funds to farmers and ranchers? **YES...3 options**
 - What reporting metrics would be needed to ensure government accountability for the use of these funds?
2. Drafted recommendation for EFA SAP consideration

STEPS TAKEN BY CDFA HSP TEAM

1. CDFA team evaluated the request for the following:

- Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of costs (i.e, standard payment rates)? **No**
- Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of quantifiable GHG reductions?
- What are the concerns (if any) with adding it to the HSP?
- Is there a way to accommodate this request (and similar future requests) in the HSP without compromising GHGs and available funds to farmers and ranchers?
- What reporting metrics would be needed to ensure government accountability for the use of these funds?

2. Drafted recommendation for EFA SAP consideration

Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of costs?

- All costs covered by HSP are Program Requirements. These include:
 - Standard payment rate (as opposed to itemized budget) for a management practice standards consistent with 2020 USDA NRCS EQIP payment rates
 - Payment for soil testing
 - An Organic System Plan is not a requirement for funding
 - Paying for consultants is not allowed under the HSP Incentives Program.
 - Standard Payments Rates are designed to cover material and labor costs for each practice implementation and to achieve GHG reduction benefits.
 - The HSP Incentives Program does not cover the cost of development of “plans” to date
 - Difficult for accountability purposes if grower decides not to pursue organic – cost paid out for plan and consultant can not be recovered.

STEPS TAKEN BY CDFA HSP TEAM

1. CDFA team evaluated the request for the following:

- Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of costs (i.e, standard payment rates)?
- Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of quantifiable GHG reductions? **No**
- What are the concerns (if any) with adding it to the HSP?
- Is there a way to accommodate this request (and similar future requests) in the HSP without compromising GHGs and available funds to farmers and ranchers?
- What reporting metrics would be needed to ensure government accountability for the use of these funds?

2. Drafted recommendation for EFA SAP consideration

Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of quantifiable GHG reductions?

- HSP Incentives Program practices must achieve quantifiable GHG reductions:
 - All incentivized practices must have an GHG emission factor in the quantification methodology (COMET-Planner)
 - No quantification of GHG in Comet-planner for a organic transition plan
 - Scientific data to support developing an emission factor for an Organic System Plan to include in COMET-Planner is not available
 - CDFA HSP verifies implementation of practices that reduce GHGs. CDFA HSP does not verify any plans were completed to date
 - Practices typically implemented through organic transition plans are covered under the HSP with standard payment rates

STEPS TAKEN BY CDFA HSP TEAM

1. CDFA team evaluated the request for the following:
 - Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of costs (i.e, standard payment rates)?
 - Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of quantifiable GHG reductions?
 - **What are the concerns (if any) with adding it to the HSP?**
 - Is there a way to accommodate this request (and similar future requests) in the HSP without compromising GHGs and available funds to farmers and ranchers?
 - What reporting metrics would be needed to ensure government accountability for the use of these funds?
2. Drafted recommendation for EFA SAP consideration

What are the concerns (if any) with adding it to the HSP?

- Addition of payments to incentives program will likely take away from funds provided directly to farmers and ranchers for practice implementation
 - Program aims to maximize projects on farms and ranches that directly reduce GHG and sequester carbon
- Other concerns:
 - Sets a precedent for paying for “planning” costs, and future requests may be made to cover costs for other planning activities
 - Planning costs can become expensive and utilize funds that would otherwise go to farmers and ranchers to implement practices

STEPS TAKEN BY CDFA HSP TEAM

1. CDFA team evaluated the request for the following:
 - Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of costs (i.e, standard payment rates)?
 - Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of quantifiable GHG reductions?
 - What are the concerns (if any) with adding it to the HSP?
 - Is there a way to accommodate this request (and similar future requests) in the HSP without compromising GHGs and available funds to farmers and ranchers? **Yes...3 options**
 - What reporting metrics would be needed to ensure government accountability for the use of these funds?
2. Drafted recommendation for EFA SAP consideration

OPTIONS TO ACCOMMODATE – OPTION I

Option 1. Encourage organic transition applicants additional points in scoring criteria: Include Organic Transition Plans as allowable plan under the Conservation Plan category which gets 10 points out of 60 total

- **Pros**

- Farmers achieving environmental benefits through organic farming practices may be more competitive in the grants process
- Funds continue to be dedicated for direct payments to farmers implementing practices
- Funded practices achieve quantifiable GHG reductions

- **Cons**

- Applicants would need to use cost-share/own funds to prepare an Organic Transition Plan prior to submitting their application (currently business-as-usual case)
- Challenge for CDFA to track or monitor who is certified to create the organic plan

OPTIONS TO ACCOMMODATE – OPTION 2

Option 2. Encourage organic transition applicants dedicated additional points in scoring criteria: Include Organic Transition Plans as dedicated plan which will be eligible for 10 points out of 70 total.

- **Pros**

- Farmers achieving environmental benefits through organic farming practices may be more competitive in the grants process
- Funds continue to be dedicated for direct payments to farmers implementing practices
- Funded practices achieve quantifiable GHG reductions
- Organic Transition Plans and Conservation Plans have different outcomes and not the same thing therefore dedicated points are supported

- **Cons**

- Applicants would need to use cost-share/own funds to prepare an Organic Transition Plan prior to submitting their application (currently business-as-usual case)
- Challenge for CDFA to track or monitor who is certified to create the organic plan

OPTIONS TO ACCOMMODATE – OPTION 3

Option 3. Add planning costs to the Technical Assistance (TA) Grants

- **Pros**

- Will allow for grantees to subcontract these costs further to appropriate professionals
- Itemized Budget worksheets for TA grants can accommodate these costs
- TAP budgets would reflect how many “plans” are going to be undertaken and cost, providing accountability for CDFA and verification options
- TA providers, with their engagement and interface with farmers and ranchers, would serve as a resource for CDFA to learn about existing interest in organic transition plans

- **Cons**

- May need to consider increasing TA grants to accommodate additional work.
 - Currently at \$20,000 per climate smart agriculture program
- Funds diverted from direct grants to farmers and ranchers to implement GHG practices
 - At the suggested cost of \$4,300, as few as 5 Organic Transition Plans exceed the total TA grant amount.
 - CDFA able to track the plan but not its implementation given grant timeframes

STEPS TAKEN BY CDFA HSP TEAM

1. CDFA team evaluated the request for the following:
 - Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of costs (i.e, standard payment rates)?
 - Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of quantifiable GHG reductions?
 - What are the concerns (if any) with adding it to the HSP?
 - Is there a way to accommodate this request (and similar future requests) in the HSP without compromising GHGs and available funds to farmers and ranchers?
 - What reporting metrics would be needed to ensure government accountability for the use of these funds? TBD based on option selected
2. Drafted recommendation for EFA SAP consideration

STEPS TAKEN BY CDFA HSP TEAM

1. CDFA team evaluated the request for the following:

- Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of costs (i.e, standard payment rates)?
- Does the ask fall within the requirements of the program in terms of quantifiable GHG reductions?
- What are the concerns (if any) with adding it to the HSP?
- Is there a way to accommodate this request (and similar future requests) in the HSP without compromising GHGs and available funds to farmers and ranchers?
- What reporting metrics would be needed to ensure government accountability for the use of these funds?

2. Drafted recommendation for EFA SAP consideration

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFA-SAP

HSP Team recommends Options 1 or 2:

Option 1. Include Organic Transition Plans as allowable plan under the Conservation Plan category which gets up to 10 points out of 60 total

Option 2. Include Organic Transition Plans as dedicated plan which will be eligible for up to 10 points out of 70 total

Reasons:

1. No conflict with existing programmatic structure
2. Program continues to be driven by implementation of eligible practices in terms of GHG reductions and payments
3. Recipients can utilize existing 25% eligible advance toward the plan

NEXT STEPS FOR EFA SAP

1. CDFA HSP team will facilitate questions from any of the EFA SAP members
2. EFA SAP members must hear public comment today before making motions or moving on a recommendation to the Secretary of CDFA
3. EFA SAP should allow written public comment following this remote July meeting to accommodate Covid-19 challenges
 - Suggested public comment period from July 20 to August 17, 2020
 - Will be posted here;
https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/efasap/meetings_presentations.html
4. EFA SAP should make final motions and recommendations after consideration written public comments at next meeting on October 15, 2020

Agenda Item 6

Stakeholder proposal to establish a SWEEP
subcommittee



May 26, 2020

TO: Secretary Karen Ross and the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel

Re: **Request for the EFA SAP to Convene a SWEEP Stakeholder Advisory Group**

Dear Secretary Ross and the Science Advisory Panel Members:

Thank you for the important role you have played in guiding the development of the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) over the past six years. Your expert input to the program has contributed greatly to its success. Many farmers in our respective networks have benefitted from the program and are eager to see the program continue and expanded.

In light of new regulatory, technological, and policy developments, as well as stakeholder feedback, we, the undersigned, are requesting the Science Advisory Panel (SAP) convene a stakeholder advisory group to review and, if necessary, make recommendations for updates to the program. We are making this request now to give stakeholders and the SAP adequate time outside of SWEEP's typical quick-turnaround funding cycles to consider these developments and address the next phase of the program.

Farmers are facing a complex new regulatory environment, from implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) to new requirements from the Bay-Delta Plan and the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) Plan. These changes have made resource management more challenging and complicated, and require the need for both efficient and flexible on-farm water management systems. Concurrently, irrigation technologies are evolving rapidly, creating both exciting new opportunities and the need for more resources for some growers.¹

For the first few years, SWEEP predominately received funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), which required every project to demonstrate quantifiable on-farm greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions. This requirement led to the incentivization of micro and drip irrigation systems, and also had the consequence of complicating the implementation of on-farm water efficiency projects that use surface water, portable irrigation pumps, and pressurized water. The current funding source for the program (Proposition 68) and potential future funding sources for the program (e.g. potential bond funds or the General Fund) may not have the same GHG

¹ Management of Agricultural Energy and Water Use with Access to Improved Data. Fresno State Center for Irrigation Technology and Ag H2O. 2017.

requirements as GGRF. As such, this may allow for a greater diversity of projects to help farmers address on-farm water management challenges.

In light of these changes and new opportunities for SWEEP, we are requesting the SAP use its authority under Section 568(c) of the Food and Agriculture Code² to convene stakeholders to make recommendations to address the following:

1. The program’s ability to help farmers improve water use efficiency – what’s working well and what might the program seek to improve? How might the program evolve to help farmers address new resource management challenges?
2. How might the program improve participation by operations that have historically faced barriers in accessing or utilizing the program?
3. How might promotion and coordination of SWEEP be improved with irrigation districts, groundwater sustainability agencies, and USDA-NRCS?

The state’s record-breaking drought that spurred the creation of SWEEP in 2014 has thankfully subsided, but as temperatures continue to rise, the risk of severe droughts is predicted to increase in California by 50 percent by 2100.³ Climate scientists also predict the state will increasingly experience precipitation whiplash, going from severe droughts to greater flooding.⁴ We have a wealth of expertise in the state that can be tapped to participate in discussions on SWEEP, including farmers, technical assistance providers, irrigation experts, and irrigation industry representatives familiar with the grant program. We believe a diverse stakeholder advisory group can provide valuable expertise and time to assist the SAP in updating SWEEP to better serve our state’s farmers in these challenging times, and we believe the best time to convene such a group is now.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Brian Shobe
Associate Policy Director
CalCAN



Taylor Roschen
Policy Advocate
California Farm Bureau Federation

² FAC 568(c) states: “The panel may establish ad hoc committees, which may include professionals, scientists, or representatives of nongovernmental entities, to assist it in performing its functions.”

³ Pathak, T., et. al. 2018. Climate change trends and impacts on California agriculture: A detailed review. *Agronomy*, (3)25.

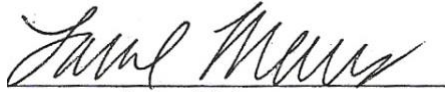
⁴ Defined as “two consecutive years when wet season precipitation falls under the 20th percentile the first year and above the 80th percentile the second year.” Source: Swain, D., Langenbrunner, B., Neelin, J., and Hall, A. 2018. Increasing precipitation volatility in twenty-first century California. *Nature Climate Change*, 427-433.



Kris Beal
Executive Director
Vineyard Team



Nathan Harkleroad
Program Director
Agriculture & Land Based Training
Association



Laurel Marcus
Executive Director
California Land Stewardship Institute



Rex Dufour
Western Regional Office Director
National Center for Appropriate
Technology (NCAT)



Andy Fisher
Executive Director
Ecological Farming Association



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

June 22, 2020

Dear Mr. Shobe, Ms. Roschen, Ms. Beal, Mr. Harkleroad, Ms. Marcus, Mr. Dufour, and Mr. Fisher:

Thank you for your letter regarding the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET) and your ongoing partnership in our efforts to advance climate smart agriculture. We are proud of the accomplishments of the SWEET program.

As you know, California was in the depths of a severe drought when SWEET was developed and the program offered financial assistance to help farmers cope and adapt. Since 2014 SWEET has provided 848 awards, and over \$80 million, to California farmers seeking to save water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The program has been effective at improving understanding of the relationship between irrigation and greenhouse gas emissions while providing a flexible set of options for participation in climate mitigation that also benefit farmers measurably. We could not have executed SWEET, the first Climate Smart Agriculture incentive program offered at CDFA, without the valuable partnerships and contributions from stakeholders, irrigation experts, and technical assistance providers.

Whether in the midst of a severe drought or not, water availability will indefinitely be at the top of the list of farmers' worries. Your letter makes important points about the increasing complexity of water management in California. The impacts of climate change and regulations such as SGMA continue to challenge the agricultural community in decisions of water management. At CDFA we want SWEET to be a tool to help meet and surmount these challenges.

At the upcoming meeting of the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel (Science Panel) on July 16, 2020, the panel will be evaluating your letter under a public forum and recommending to me on the establishment of a sub-committee of the panel to discuss the three topics identified in your letter.

I look forward to the recommendations of the Science Panel and any sub-committee that is established. I am hopeful that practical and achievable recommendations will



Mr. Shobe, Ms. Roschen, Ms. Beal, Mr. Harkleroad, Ms. Marcus, Mr. Dufour, and Mr. Fisher

June 22, 2020

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take SWEEP into the future as a program that can be utilized by farmers statewide to meet regional concerns and adapt to a changing climate.

Thank you again for your partnership and advocacy in helping advance our Climate Smart Agriculture Programs for farmers and ranchers in California.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Ross
Secretary

Agenda Item 7

State Water Efficiency and Enhancement

Program Updates

Agenda Item 8

Healthy Soils Program

Program updates
New Practices solicitation update

Agenda Item 9

Technical Assistance Program

Program Updates

Agenda Item 10

Public Comments

Agenda Item 11

Next Meeting and Location

Date: October 15, 2020

Locations: CDFA and Remote Attendance