

CONSOLIDATED THEMES/ACTIONS SUMMARY

Overview: With only three meetings, the Ad Hoc Group process timeline is extremely compressed and in order to help move the process of developing recommendations along, CDFA SWEEP staff have grouped the input received so far from both the pre-meeting survey and first meeting discussion. Input is grouped according to identified themes under each of the three key questions being asked of the Ad Hoc Group. Under each of the themes, the Ad Hoc Group's input is presented in recommendation-oriented language to help inform the development of specific recommendations relevant to the various themes.

Request: It is hoped that you will prepare for the second meeting on Feb. 25 by:

1. Reviewing the collected and sorted input presented below.
2. Thinking about which themes you have specific experience and knowledge on.
3. Writing concise, actionable recommendations related to as many of the themes you want and bringing these ready to share to the second meeting next week. You will be asked to share these recommendations in the breakout groups as we review the primary themes. Please feel free to use this document to write your proposed recommendations in the placeholders shown in red below each of the themes. Add as many as you want.

At the meeting next week, all Ad Hoc Group members will be provided time to review and discuss the proposed recommendations and to collaboratively refine, clarify and, if desired, add recommendations. Finally, at the end of the meeting, Ad Hoc Group members will prioritize the recommendations, which will then be further reviewed and voted upon at the final meeting in March.

QUESTION 1 MAJOR THEMES

"SWEEP's ability to help farmers improve water use efficiency. What is working well and what might SWEEP seek to improve? How might SWEEP evolve to help farmers address new resource management challenges?"

- **New technology installation and adoption pathway**
 - Recommend expanding the list of eligible practices
 - Provide a pathway for newer techniques and technology to be incorporated
 - Despite SWEEP improvements, high-value crops will need more groundwater *unless they can get water assured when they need it.*
 - For that reason, water storage above and belowground are important areas of expansion for SWEEP.

- Be open to non-standard conservation methods
- Require training for the use and set up of some systems and ongoing support
- Assure companies provide support services to the grower over the longer term
- Establish a list of irrigation sensor vendors/technology that is deemed to be reliable in the ongoing support. Alternatively, create a blacklist of technology that is not allowed to hold companies accountable. List could be reevaluated during each funding cycle.
- Incorporate more methods for water and GHG practices in both the water and GHG calculator tools. Currently, practices you can 'implement' through the calculators are very limited, which constrains what type of grower can use the funds.
- Provide an 'alternative' calculation method and allow growers to document the water / energy savings of their proposed project in application to encourage innovation

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Inclusion of Surface Water Users**

- Program is too groundwater-centric.
- GHG reduction strategies are an obstacle in the low desert region (because of the reliance on flood irrigation and non-pressurized surface water).
- Allow gravity-fed irrigation systems to apply.
- Make the program more geared towards whole-farm efficiency.
- Include on-farm vehicles' GHG emissions and other large equipment

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Quantification and Requirements**

- Allow for projects that save water or projects that save GHG but not requiring that a project do both.
- Establish baseline using real data and not online calculators
- Encourage Auditing Services
- Allow funding for follow-up assistance to ensure utilization of new technology
- Carry out "first season reviews" to ensure equipment is being utilized
- Collect 3 years of preliminary data for projects that are selected for an award (many will not have water data)

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Overall Accounting of Benefits**

- Consider what happens to water upstream, downstream, and in the aquifer.

- Total water use may fall at first with high-efficiency irrigation like that incentivized by SWEEP. But it is likely to rebound as more acreage is planted, if other areas of the world serve as examples (“rebound effect”). But then, mandatory water use reductions with SGMA may contain the rebound effect.
- Analyze whether SWEEP is causing more pumping.
- Analyze whether SWEEP is causing more energy use because of on-farm focus. Is energy use aligned with overall water efficiency goals?

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

QUESTION 2 MAJOR THEMES

“How might SWEEP improve participation by agricultural operations that have historically faced barriers in accessing or utilizing the program?”

- **Socioeconomic Barriers for small farmers**
 - Should have surveys to identify barriers to adoption across different regions of the state
 - Hard to get quotes for small installations
 - Timely promotion in advance would help
 - Because of lower knowledge of services market, more “lists of providers by expertise” could be very helpful. Farm Bureaus do already keep some such lists.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Language Barriers**
 - We need A LOT of language support for SWEEP program
 - Translation resources needed for applications and technical assistance
 - If website and materials are not available in Spanish and other languages those should be made available.
 - The program would likely gain more farmers that have initially faced barriers in utilizing the program by translating the documents into multiple languages.
 - The program could improve participation of historically underserved communities by providing application assistance in their native language.
 - Promote irrigation training and educational events for non-English speakers
 - Provide application materials and the ability to apply in Spanish

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Availability of Technical Assistance**

- Encourage follow-up and support services
- Smaller farmers might be at a competitive disadvantage in SWEEP applications since they lack resources (such as computers, internet, vendor relationships, etc.)
- Encourage growers to utilize companies to help them apply that will be doing some of the installation work and include it as part of their service charge.
- Hold more trainings and outreaching events in the different counties and rural areas where under-represented communities are located
- Hold more study/help meetings.
- Have staff available to review applications before they are submitted
- Consider effects of internet access or access to technology, and education
- Provide door-to-door service to educate growers on SWEEP projects and offer technical support.
- Pay for pump test assistance for small farmers. PG&E has subsidies available for pump tests and perhaps SCE does too.
- Agenda items in various organizations' public meetings, such as presentations by Climate Smart Agriculture TAPs might increase participation and interaction.
- Improve the coordination between agencies by having TAP meetings monthly.
- TAPs working in GSAs should do site visits to help plan or suggest SWEEP projects?
- For many farmers it might be helpful for someone to come in and evaluate their operation's equipment and efficiency, and provide a list of improvements and practices that would increase efficiency, reduce overall water and power use and create long term savings. I think irrigation districts could/should provide this service, which is in their interest.
- SWEEP training of TAPs within an organization increases its involvement as a rule.
- Allow engineering firms, like those that contract with irrigation districts, to be eligible to provide technical assistance and help to formulate plans.
- Window to provide Tech Assistance should be widened:
 - broadening it would deepen understanding and preparation
 - broadening would allow more "Targeted" project apps from TAP's point of view
 - Often people bail out of applying because of time constraints after hearing about that year's application round and after starting the paperwork.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Application Streamlining**

- If an application is not right for SWEEP, recommend it to other programs or agencies.

- Provide samples of applications that were approved and similar project applications that were not approved.
- Try to simplify the application materials as much as possible
- Application process is overly burdensome, particularly to small farmers
- Grant is too complex and the award might not be significant enough to apply for
- Make the application process, grant management, invoicing, etc. more feasible
- Instead of needing to seek quotes for the work, the application should offer cost projections that the farmer can use.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Grant management, Award Amount, Reimbursements**

- Increase the Advanced Payment
- Remove one-time APN award to allow for “Phasing” of projects
- CDFA should support irrigation education/training efforts
- Consider funding part of a project and requiring cost share
- Streamline grant management process including invoicing, signature gathering, and communication
- Cost sheets need to be flexible since quotes can change
- Increase the total funding amount available and allow for advanced payment instead of reimbursement
- Make the application process, grant management, invoicing, etc. more feasible
- Make reimbursement schedule faster, particularly for farmers that may not be able to front large amounts of money
- Include engineering costs that may be incurred over the course of the project term.
- Clarify allowable and unallowable costs

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

QUESTION 3 MAJOR THEMES

“How might promotion and coordination of SWEEP be improved with irrigation districts, groundwater sustainability agencies, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)?”

- **Level and Strategy**

- In the State there are thousands of separate water agencies, farms, and corporations that all operate their water systems separately. The fragmentation, and the separate operation, of these water systems leads to huge duplication of

effort and expense. Consolidation of regional community and municipal water systems would lead to greater insight into water quality and supply risks. It would also help in establishing collaboration through the state.

- Involve more high-level agencies for above-farm focus
- Allocate more funds to SWEEP
- Work with SGMA requirements to modify SWEEP incentives and dovetail with local GSA-dependent needs

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Program Buckets and Levels of Funding**

- Due to oversubscription, incentives should be given out more strategically to serve as investments for particular goals.
- A bucket approach, not used at this time, would divide Program into categories to accommodate different types of growers and projects, not competing between Categories:
 - Water-focused
 - GHG-focused
 - Covering both water and GHGs (as presently done)
 - Geographical Distribution/Region
 - Regional issues, like saltwater intrusion
 - Crop type
 - High cost/low cost
 - Small/Large farm size
 - Consider allocation percentage for newer technologies
- Tie in award amount to amount of GHG and Water Savings
- Simplify the application process in order to fund smaller projects. From a review of previous programs too much funding went to too few large projects.
- Reduced total grant awards might not be enough to fund larger-scale irrigation upgrades and large projects, new and modern irrigation systems, as opposed to irrigation modifications.
- Assign a percentage of the overall grant to each category
- Consider Cost Effectiveness during evaluation process of applications
- Small community water systems are dwarfed by some industrial pumpers. But voices should be heard in proportion to need.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Coordination**

- Expand coordination with the following entities:
 - Irrigation Districts, as mentioned by EFA SAP
 - Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) , as mentioned by EFA SAP
 - USDA-NRCS, as mentioned by EFA SAP

- Dept. of Water Resources (handling surface water movements, which will be affected by SGMA outcomes)
- State water resources Control Board
- Bureau of Reclamation (which allocates water rights)
- Regional Water Quality Coalitions
- Retail Water Districts
- Show how participating can show compliance with the regs.
- Adapt especially to SGMA and emerging GSAs:
 - GSAs will be stepping in to limit water use in specific ways and SWEEP should complement those coming efforts.
 - Avoid interference with land-fallowing under SGMA – which does not align with 10-year project life expectation.
 - Make awards to irrigation districts or GSAs which then engage with their members to achieve the desired changes, we might reach a broader range of recipients and spread the benefits to more farmers.
 - Look for synergy in issues like flow meter payments which are also being provided by GSAs.
 - Polling GSAs on potential projects to short-list as water-saving projects SWEEP encourages could also be useful
- It would be a good idea to invite someone from these agencies to our meetings (one for each meeting) and walk through how SWEEP can work and be improved with these programs. To my knowledge, there are many ways a grower can integrate these programs when receiving supports for irrigation improvement.
- Agency partners could counsel on strategy of SWEEP investments in the changing landscape
 - For example, a GSA insider could serve on EFA SAP.
- Renew 2017 efforts to establish infrastructure projects with water districts to increase the reach of high-efficiency irrigation
- Allocate financial incentives to target the interface between district water delivery systems and on-farm irrigation. Join effort with state and federal agencies such as DWR and the US Bureau of Reclamation for joint financial assistance programs.
- Consider importance of working with water districts on carry-over water

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.

- **Promotion / Outreach**

- Avenues for program promotion to small farmers and community members:
 - organic certifiers
 - commodity groups, boards, commissions and associations; more widely, western growers association
 - farmers' markets?
 - Local Farm Bureaus exist to do things like this and have a lot of overlapping participants with other organizations, and high trust.
 - GSAs
 - Utilities (PGE and SoCal Edison but also smaller CCAs) can help target appeals to the right people and combine initiatives for energy efficiency.
 - Retail Water Districts
 - Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Water Quality Coalitions
 - Community organizations
 - community advocacy groups
 - solar installers and water efficiency distributors, informing them of their potential role in SWEEP
 - informal informationals meeting by UC Extension Small Farm staff
 - Find out where growers are selling their crops and go to that place to recruit applicants.
 - Go to State Water Resources Control meetings where growers are taking exams and promote the program. Give CE units for participating.
 - some non-profits
 - Go where the regulatory programs are administered and show how participating can show compliance with the regs.
- Cross marketing with other agricultural associations, utilities, vendors, etc. Highlight the availability of Technical Assistance.
- There is plenty of opportunity to generate awareness of SWEEP since many farmers are board members of IDs and GSAs
- TAPs already working in GSAs would have people's ears and without "distracting" them.
- Program overlap and program fatigue are issues for farmers with limited hours in the day.
- Ensure that all potential applicants are aware of the availability of assistance in creating applications
- Who has the ears of farmers? GSAs and Farm Bureaus especially, on water issues.

- Look at how the South San Joaquin irrigation District promoted their monitoring incentive program as a model for grower outreach and promotion for water use efficiency.
- Highlight successes as a key to getting buy-in by others.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S): Enter text here.