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

California Farm Bureau Federation
2300 River Plaza Drive, Harvest Room
Sacramento, CA 95833

January 18, 2018
1 PM – 5 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Members in Attendance

Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch (Chair and Member)
Jocelyn Bridson, MSc, Rio Farms, (Co-Chair and Member)
Julie Alvis, Resources Agency (Member)
Kathryn Lyddan, Department of Conservation (Member)
Emily Wimberger, CalEPA, ARB (Member)
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm (Member)
Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD (Member)
Scott Couch, CalEPA, State Water Board (Member)
Doug Parker, PhD. (Subject Matter Expert)
Hudson Minshew (filling in for Tom Hedt, USDA NRCS, Subject Matter Expert)

State Agency Staff and Presenters

Secretary Karen Ross, CDFA
Cynthia Corey, California Farm Bureau Federation
Miriam Volat, UC Davis Facilitation Services
Steven Springhorn, DWR
Wyatt Arnold, DWR
Katie Riley, Environmental Incentives
Guihua Chen, PhD, CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD, CDFA
Ravneet Behla, PhD, CDFA
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 PM by the chair, Mr. Don Cameron. Introductions were made. Present at the meeting were all the members noted above under "Panel Members in Attendance." Secretary Ross introduced and thanked retiree Cynthia Corey for her years of service at the California Farm Bureau Federation. Ms. Corey acknowledged the Panel for their successes and thanked them for their work in promoting environmental farming.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Minutes from Previous Meeting

Chair Cameron introduced the minutes from the July 20 and October 26, 2017 meetings. A motion was made by Ms. Alvis to accept the minutes as presented by CDFA staff and the motion was seconded by Mr. Couch. The motion was moved by all members present and accepted without further changes.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Strategic Planning on Future Topics

Mr. Cameron introduced Ms. Volat to discuss strategic planning for the future topics that were discussed at the Science Advisory Panel meeting on October 26, 2017.

Ms. Volat explained the overarching focuses for 2018. Science Panel members concluded that they should focus on the following topics for 2018, in order of priority: ecosystem services, native plants and species, agriculture press tour/leverage demonstrations and funded/existing projects, mapping and inventory of groundwater recharge on working lands, new technology, bio products and bio-based industry. Questions from the public were entertained by Science Panel members and CDFA staff.

The Panel confirmed the topics and Ms. Volat stated she would compile all comments on a final written report. Chair Cameron thanked Ms. Volat for facilitating the discussion.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS)

Agenda item 4 was moved after Agenda items 5, 6, and 7, at the request of Dr. Gunasekara, to facilitate adequate time for the participants to travel to the meeting and allow for accommodating the presenter's schedules.

Chair Cameron introduced Ms. Riley to discuss the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS). She explained that the purpose of RCIS is to improve conservation planning and delivery, streamline mitigation for public infrastructure projects, provide a means to assign credits to new types of actions, and unlock advanced mitigation for the first time. She discussed the elements of the program and showed maps of current and past RCIS projects in California.

Questions from the public and Science Panel members were entertained by Ms. Riley. She noted that current RCIS projects are listed at cvhe.org; the Central Valley Habitat Exchange.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Healthy Soils Program (HSP) Update

Chair Cameron introduced Dr. Chen who provided an update to the Science Panel on the Healthy Soils Program. She discussed the projects selected for funding and distribution of awardees for the HSP Incentives Program and HSP Demonstration Projects. She explained the proposed management practices to be considered for

inclusion under the HSP. The proposed practices included those for croplands, grasslands/rangelands, cropland to herbaceous cover, and establishment of woody cover. Dr. Chen stated that CDFA will analyze the data and relay information at the next Science Advisory Panel meeting.

Several questions from the Panel were facilitated by CDFA staff. Topics included remaining fund allocation, the purpose of pre-project consultations, preventing incomplete applications, incorporating disadvantaged communities and the future of the HSP.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – SWEEP Update

Chair Cameron introduced Dr. Behla who provided an update on data analysis trends from 2014-2017 on SWEEP funding. He listed the SWEEP project categories, which include irrigation systems, irrigation monitoring, variable frequency drives, pump improvements and renewable energy. He presented several graphs that showed an increase in activities since the program's start, as well as figures showing GHG reductions and water savings compared to requested funds. He noted there are positive correlations in the two comparisons, which implies CDFA funds are reducing GHGs and saving water. Questions and comments from the Science Panel members were entertained by CDFA staff.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – DWR Land Use Viewer

Dr. Gunasekara introduced Mr. Springhorn and Mr. Arnold who discussed DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Program. Mr. Springhorn stated that the four steps of SGM are forming agencies, developing plans, implementing plans, and achieving sustainability. He explained stakeholders' roles, groundwater sustainability methods, and DWR's technical resources.

Mr. Arnold explained county land use surveys and showed an interactive map demonstration. He showed that one can view groundwater and soil changes over time in individual counties and statewide. He also demonstrated that a specific area can be viewed and filtered to show only one type of crop. Questions from the Science Panel members were entertained by Mr. Springhorn and Mr. Arnold.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Public Comments

Several questions and comments from the public were accommodated by Chair Cameron and CDFA staff. They included clarifying criteria for HSP project evaluation, addressing public and SAP feedback on the HSP, inquiring about HSP future funding, and ensuring that the HSP focuses on improving soil health, in addition to GHG reductions.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – Next Meeting and Location

Dr. Gunasekara stated that the next meeting will be March 15, 2018. A location was not confirmed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 PM by Chair Cameron.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.

3/16/18
Date