

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

103 Mulford Hall
University of California Berkeley
Berkeley, CA 94720

July 20, 2017
1 PM – 5 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Members in Attendance

Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch (Chair and Member)
Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD (Member)
Scott Couch, CalEPA, State Water Board (Member)
Bruce Gwynne (filling in for David Bunn, PhD., Natural Resources Agency (Member))
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm (Member)
Doug Parker, PhD. (Subject Matter Expert)
Tom Hedt, USDA NRCS (Subject Matter Expert)

State Agency Staff and Presenters

Claire Kremen, PhD. Berkeley Food Institute
Nina Ichikawa, Berkeley Food Institute
Whendee Silver, PhD. UC Berkeley
Ravneet Behla, PhD. CDFA
Guihua Chen, PhD. CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD. CDFA
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD. CDFA

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:12 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”. A quorum was established. Retiree Luana Kiger was thanked for her commitment and years of service as a Subject Matter Expert to the Science Panel. New Subject Matter Expert, Tom Hedt, was introduced and welcomed.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Minutes from Previous Meeting

Chair Cameron introduced the minutes from the May 18, 2017 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Gwynne 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 – Berkeley Food Institute (BFI) Informational Presentation

Ms. Ichikawa introduced the Berkeley Food Institute. She gave an overview of their vision and mission, explaining their goals and three themes: good food access, fair and healthy jobs and agroecology. BFI is divided into research, policy, and education and

community engagement. Ms. Ichikawa introduced Dr. Kremen, faculty member at the University and co-director of BFI.

Dr. Kremen explained the increased demand for pollinators and the effects of decreased native pollinator populations on sunflowers. She discussed the costs, benefits, barriers and opportunities of diverse farming. Questions to Dr. Kremen and Ms. Ichikawa were facilitated by the Science Panel members and members of the public. Dr. Kremen encouraged the panel and public to provide feedback into the existing and future research she and BFI are engaged with.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Compost Application on Rangelands Informational Presentation

Dr. Silver introduced the Compost Application on Rangelands research. She gave a short background presentation on her work in reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to mitigate climate change. She discussed how CO₂ emissions are still increasing, which is contributing to climate change. Her research uses grasslands to pull CO₂ out of the atmosphere and increase soil carbon levels. Experiments on composted fields showed an increase in carbon sequestration and crop yield, as well as low methane emissions. She noted that ongoing projects of interest to CDFA include nitrate consumption by compost piles, causing low soil nitrate production, and the long-term impacts of compost application to rangelands. Dr. Silver and her team are currently processing compost samples and will be providing data on the sequestration of carbon when it becomes available. The present research phase ends in December and all of the sites (San Diego, Santa Barbara, Sacramento and Mendocino) show a net carbon sink when compost is applied. She explained the next steps in compost application research and acknowledged the people, agencies, and organizations involved in the research. Questions and comments from Science Panel members and the public were facilitated by Chair Cameron.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – OEFI Incentive Programs Updates

State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) Update

Dr. Gunasekara introduced Dr. Behla from the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation SWEEP who provided an update and preliminary data analysis trends since 2014. Dr. Behla gave a brief introduction on SWEEP and funds allocated since 2014. He discussed the types of projects that are accepted for SWEEP grants and showed mathematical tables describing applications received and projects awarded. He briefly explained the DWR–CDFA Joint Pilot Project objective, goals and funding. Finally, Dr. Behla presented several graphs showing funding, applications, water savings and environmental impact statistics from 2014-2017. Questions and comments were facilitated by Science Panel members and the public.

Healthy Soils Program (HSP) Update

Dr. Gunasekara introduced Dr. Chen and Dr. Joshi who provided an update to the Panel on the Healthy Soils Program. Dr. Chen stated the Healthy Soils Incentives Program did not have any significant changes since the last Science Panel meeting. She explained the eight categories that public comments were placed into. All public comments were summarized and noted.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Public Comments

Several questions and comments from the public were heard. They included establishing a standardization of measuring for project outcomes, making expectations for collaboration between farmers and researchers clearer, adding funding for on-farm compost facilities, inquiring about when the next HSP phase will be, collaborating with national or international partners on HSP and SWEEP, and plans for socially disadvantaged farmers, language barriers, and projects on Tribal Lands.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Next Meeting and Location

Dr. Gunasekara stated that the next meeting will be October 26, 2017, in Monterey, CA. The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 pm by Chair Cameron.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.

1/19/2018
Date

