

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

Cooperative Extension Monterey County  
1432 Abbott Street  
Salinas, CA 93901

October 26, 2017  
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)  
Jeff Dlott, PhD, SureHarvest (Member)  
Julie Alvis, Resources Agency (Member)  
Kathryn Lyddan, Department of Conservation (Member)  
Doug Parker, PhD. (Subject Matter Expert)  
Tom Hedt, USDA NRCS (Subject Matter Expert)

**State Agency Staff and Presenters**

Robert Roach, Assistant Agricultural commissioner  
Miriam Volat, UC Davis  
Ravneet Behla, PhD, CDFA  
Scott Weeks, CDFA  
Geetika Joshi, PhD, CDFA  
Carolyn Cook, MSc, CDFA  
Guihua Chen, PhD, CDFA  
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA

**AGENDA ITEM 1 – Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 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.” Chair Cameron stated that there is a lack of a quorum (majority plus one) and one will be established at the next Science Advisory Panel meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 2 – Welcome Address**

Mr. Roach welcomed the panel on behalf of the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office. He noted the important relationship between the citizens of

California and agriculture, emphasizing agriculture's health and economic benefits. Questions to Mr. Roach were facilitated by Chair Cameron.

### AGENDA ITEM 3 – Minutes from Previous Meeting

In the absence of a quorum, Chair Cameron stated that the minutes from the previous Science Advisory Panel meeting will be introduced and approved at the next meeting.

### AGENDA ITEM 4 – SWEEP Update

Dr. Gunasekara introduced Mr. Weeks from the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation SWEEP who explained the program's background and provided a brief update. He discussed the types of projects that are accepted for SWEEP grants and noted that CDFA has started developing several videos to highlight unique projects. He explained that SWEEP audited 18% of the funded projects in 2015 and both greenhouse gas and water savings were higher than initially estimated.

Mr. Weeks introduced Dr. Behla who presented preliminary data analysis trends since SWEEP was introduced in 2014. He showed analytical data describing distribution of projects by crop category and farm size, as well as average greenhouse gas reduction and water savings per SWEEP allocation. Questions from the Science Panel were entertained by CDFA staff.

Dr. Behla introduced Ms. Cook who provided an update on the DWR-CDFA Joint Pilot Project. She discussed funding allocation, program goals and project selections. She informed the Science Panel that DWR and CDFA had awarded the Water Use Efficiency Grant to the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District. The funds will be used to install a pressurized water delivery system, turnouts, Integrated Water Management systems and drip irrigation at 19 agricultural operations in the San Joaquin Valley.

### AGENDA ITEM 5 – Healthy Soils Program Update

Chair Cameron introduced Dr. Chen who provided an update to the Science Panel on the Healthy Soils Program. She explained the tentative timeline and application distribution for the HSP Incentives Program and HSP Demonstration Projects. She announced there will be a solicitation for proposals on new HSP management practices in November 2017 that will be listed on the website in March 2018. She noted that a potential revision might be needed for current HSP program requirements. Finally, Dr. Chen explained the potential of additional funding through a Parks Bond and how it will be used to improve agricultural and open-space soil health, carbon soil sequestration, erosion control, water quality and water retention. Questions from Science Panel members were facilitated by CDFA staff.

## AGENDA ITEM 6 – Strategic Planning on Future Topics

Dr. Gunasekara introduced Ms. Volat to discuss strategic planning for future topics to be adopted by the Science Panel. A presentation on several potential topics were presented by Dr. Gunasekara to inform the Science Panel on current topics of interest by the Department and the agricultural sector.

Science Panel members concluded that they should focus on the following topics for 2018 followed by additional discussion and public input at the next meeting: native plant and species conservation on working lands, ecosystem services and co-benefits of agricultural lands, state-wide inventory of working lands that can contribute to groundwater recharge, demonstration projects, new technologies and food waste.

Ms. Volat recommended the Science Panel revisit and confirm the topics at the next meeting and solicit additional public comments on a written document that she would compile. Dr. Gunasekara thanked Ms. Volat and the Panel for participating in the discussion.

## AGENDA ITEM 7 – Public Comments

Several questions and comments from the public were accommodated by Chair Cameron. They included plans for implementing innovative practices while dealing with agricultural regulations, incorporating social science into decision making, funding for future rounds of SWEEP and increasing resiliency through effective agricultural adaptation strategies.

## AGENDA ITEM 8 – Next Meeting and Location

Dr. Gunasekara stated that the next meeting will be January 18, 2018. A location was not confirmed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 PM by Chair Cameron.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.

1/19/2018  
Date

