

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

California Department of Food and Agriculture Main Auditorium
1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
January 17, 2019

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Member in Attendance

Jocelyn Bridson, MSc, Rio Farms, (Chair and Member)
Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch (Member)
Julie Alvis, Natural Resources Agency (Member)
Emily Wimberger, CalEPA, ARB (Member)
Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD (Member)
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm (Member)
Doug Parker, PhD. UC ANR (Subject Matter Expert)
Jeff Onsted, PhD, Resources Agency, DOC, (Alternate for Member Bunn)
Scott Couch, CalEPA, State Water Board, (Member)

State Agency Staff and Presenters

Scott Weeks, CDFA
Guihua Chen, PhD, CDFA
Carolyn Cook, MSc, CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD, CDFA
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA
Karen Ross, Secretary, CDFA

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM by the Chair, Jocelyn Bridson. Introductions were made. Present at the meeting were all the members noted above under “Panel Members in Attendance.” Secretary Karen Ross also attended the meeting and was congratulated by Chair Bridson on her re-appointment as CDFA Secretary. Secretary Ross thanked the panel members for serving on the Science Advisory Panel and helping the California agriculture community.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Previous Meeting Minutes

Chair Bridson, introduced the October 18, 2018 meeting minutes. Alternate member Onsted suggested a revision on behalf of Member Bunn (not present), to not attribute mention of LGBTQ farmers to him in the discussion on Farmer Equity Act of 2017 at the October Meeting. Member Cameron introduced the motion to accept the minutes as revised. Member Wimberger seconded the motion. The motion was moved by all

members present and accepted with further changes.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) Update
Scott Weeks of CDFA provided program updates on State Water Efficiency Enhancement Program (SWEEP). He noted that the program began accepting applications on December 28, 2018 until March 8, 2019. The SWEEP staff performed three application workshops in the first half of January in Fresno, Sacramento, and Dorris California.

Secretary Ross gave the panel an update on additional funding from Strategic Growth Council, for technical assistance for SWEEP and HSP, to fund cooperative extension specialists at the University of California. Chair Bridson asked if the other Climate Smart Agriculture programs also held workshops in remote locations. Mr. Weeks responded that Healthy Soils Program also conducted workshops in Dorris California. Member Redmond requested an update on the likelihood of funding for SWEEP beyond 2019. Mr. Weeks and Secretary Ross responded that at this time, information on future funding for SWEEP is not available. Member Redmond suggested that a press day and strategic outreach field days for SWEEP and HSP funded projects should be conducted.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Healthy Soils Program (HSP) Update

Dr. Geetika Joshi provided an update on the ongoing solicitation period for the Healthy Soils Program. This application period combines funding from both Proposition 68 and California Climate Investments. Dr. Joshi reviewed the solicitation timeline; the application period opened on December 28, 2018 with grant applications due on March 8, 2019, and awards anticipated to be announced in June 2019. CDFA-led workshops were held in Dorris and Eureka and scheduled for Tulare and Modesto, California. Lastly, Dr. Joshi provided a live demonstration of the Healthy Soils Program webpage and solicitation documents.

Secretary Ross thanked CDFA staff for meeting the December 28 deadline to open the program application periods. Member Redmond mentioned that she would be traveling to conferences and requested Spanish and English fliers for distribution at the Small Farms Conference. Similarly, Dr. Doug Parker indicated that they are also making fliers for distribution at upcoming conferences. Chair Bridson encouraged CDFA to make more videos and blogs for outreach of the Healthy Soils Program and SWEEP.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP) Update

Dr. Joshi provided an overview of the AMMP program. This update was provided in response to a request from the Panel Members at the October 2018 meeting. AMMP will be included in the AB 2377 Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance program. The AMMP program's objective is to reduce methane emissions from California's dairy industry, specifically from manure storage. Methane's global warming potential is 80 times that of carbon dioxide over a 20-year timeframe. This high level of global warming potential and high contribution of methane production from the dairy industry has resulted in regulations that require dairies to reduce methane emissions by 40% below 2013 levels by 2030.

Dr. Joshi reviewed the past AMMP appropriations from 2016-2017. She discussed the amount of funding that has been available to date, the program requirements and the eligible practices. She explained how funding from the same appropriations are split between the Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP) and AMMP. The funding proportions are decided based upon what level of reductions are necessary to meet the 2030 methane reductions mandate.

The current funding solicitation includes a new demonstration component which will partner existing AMMP recipients with an organization that will provide outreach and host field days at the project sites.

Following the presentation, Dr. Joshi received questions from the Panel Members. Several members had clarifying questions on how the funding is split between DDRDP and AMMP. Secretary Ross commented that in the previous round of AMMP, all AMMP applications that scored well had been funded. Dr. Joshi also commented that although small dairies often can't afford a digester project, all dairies are included in the methane reduction incentive program.

A panel member asked if non-bovine livestock operations have applied in the past. Dr. Joshi indicated that poultry, equine and swine applications had been received but were not competitive to receive funding.

Dr. Parker suggested that it would be helpful to see a pie chart showing the AMMP project types in relation their GHG emissions reductions at a future meeting.

Chair Bridson asked about the ways that the compost created through AMMP could go to croplands. Dr. Joshi explained that depending on the size of the livestock operation and how much compost they create they may be permitted to sell compost. More often, if they are a small operation, they may use all the compost that they create on their own farms. The synergy between the Healthy Soils Program and the generation of compost through AMMP was noted by Dr. Joshi.

Member Wimberger asked about the average award for AMMP. Dr. Joshi noted that projects ranged from \$200,000 to the full \$750,000 award cap.

The panel then discussed how the demonstration component for AMMP was designed. Dr. Parker asked how are new and innovative manure management practices being determined for demonstration. Dr. Joshi indicated that the practice can't already be in the list of eligible practices, but that GHG reductions are mandatory and must be estimated by the applicant using a combination of tools. The applicant can combine multiple strategies already being practiced alone or propose a novel approach that can be quantified using the Quantification Methodology. A GHG data collection plan with experimental design is required, especially for projects that do not fit with the Quantification Methodology.

Member Dawley asked if the request for AMMP funding are expected to go up in this

round, since in previous rounds the highly scored projects were all funded. Dr Joshi indicated that in the first year of AMMP 18 projects were funded. In the second year 42 projects were funded. The program had already seen significant increase in requests in just one year.

AGENDA ITEM 6 and 7 – AB 2377 Update and Requirements

Dr. Gunasekara provided an update on the AB 2377 Technical Assistance program that CDFA will develop in 2019. He presented the process for implementation and the anticipated next steps on draft solicitation and timeline of public comments. He reviewed for the Panel the legislative requirements of AB 2377. Dr. Gunasekara indicated that CDFA intends to have a full draft request for grant applications prepared for the next science panel meeting and that following the meeting, CDFA would accept public comments on the document for 30 days.

The panel discussed the scope of the technical assistance. Dr. Parker noted that this is beyond just preparation of grants, but also implementation. He also asked if the technical assistance would include functions only associated with incentives programs or whether it goes beyond just assistance for CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture programs. Dr. Gunasekara indicated that the funding was for assistance associated with CDFA's CSA programs.

The panel discussed the objectives of the legislation. Members noted that a benefit of the bill is to provide some coordination among technical assistance providers and to broaden the assistance beyond application assistance to include design and project implementation assistance. CDFA was asked to work with NRCS to understand workload involved with design and implementation of projects to inform budgets for those grants. Dr. Parker suggested that CDFA facilitate a one-day workshop for providers to learn from each other. The panel also discussed possible metrics for performance and success of technical assistance. Member Wimberger asked if the GHG reductions tied to individual projects that received technical assistance can be collected. This can also help inform whether this is funding well spent.

Member Dawley commented that CDFA provides good training to technical assistance providers, but that it will be a challenge for providers to implement projects and perform consistently across the State. The work required can be very farm-specific. Project design, for example, may require some cost by the technical assistance provider. The panel discussed whether this cost should be reimbursable to the technical assistance providers. Technical assistance budgets and workplans should allow for variability. Dr. Gunasekara responded that CDFA will likely propose a traditional budget with maximum caps to allow for the variability in costs across providers.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Panel Discussion on Technical Assistance

Chair Bridson opened the panel with statement of purpose. Panel members introduced themselves. Mr. Kevin Greer, Project Manager at Tehama RCD, explained his work with the SWEEP program from 2014. Initially he was involved as a project verifier of funded projects, but also works with growers from Sacramento to Shasta counties on

application preparation and recommendations.

During her opening presentation, Dr. Ruth Dahlquist-Willard of UC ANR in Fresno talked about the history of her connection with SWEEP, and shared information of types of projects that UCCE Fresno have assisted with over the years. She discussed in detail the additional benefits of installing SWEEP-funded improvements on-farm, such as better weed management and preparing growers to meet future SGMA requirements. She talked about Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged Communities (DACs and SDACs), and, Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and shared examples of projects among these communities, stressing that the different definitions don't overlap.

Chair Bridson asked if these funding mandates presented any problems; have projects been rejected due to specifically to not meeting the definitions. Dr. Dahlquist-Willard clarified that this is more important in the context of meeting program requirements and that they can present a challenge.

Member Wimberger asked if the overlap of Proposition 68 DACs and SDACs was analyzed with AB 1550 Priority Populations. Member Alvis clarified that Proposition 68 DACs and SDACs do not follow the same definitions as AB 1550 and CalEnviroScreen. Clarification was also provided by Dr. Gunasekara that each program has to meet their investment minimum targets for Proposition 68 SDACs, rather than chapter-wide targets. Dr. Dahlquist-Willard posed a question on what counts as benefits to SDACs. Member Alvis mentioned that each program and project has to present benefits individually and have them extend beyond single families and be true to the intent of bond funds.

Dr. Dahlquist-Willard made several suggestions for the AB 2377 Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance program such as a tiered approach for costs related to number of applicants assisted, and inclusion of cost of pump tests in the technical assistance grant.

Panel member Mr. Paul Sousa of Western United Dairymen introduced himself and discussed his engagement with AMMP applicants, including the extent of assistance provided. He shared his perspective on discussions regarding AMMP technical assistance at the SB 1383 Dairy and Livestock Working Group.

Member Redmond asked if Mr. Sousa provides permitting assistance. He clarified that depending on project, he can help inform dairy producers about permitting since project readiness is a part of the scoring criteria.

Mr. Paul Robbins, Executive Director for the RCD of Monterey County, introduced himself and provided his background on providing technical assistance for SWEEP. He shared his experience with providing assistance to Spanish speaking farmers.

Chair Bridson asked for the panel's perspective on project implementation. Mr. Greer talked about how ensuring that certain new technologies continue to be used into the future, and the necessary follow up training, may be challenging. Mr. Robbins agreed that

this would be a challenge for growers with less available resource and technical capacity. Dr. Dahlquist-Willard indicated that outreach independent of a grant cycle, but year-long would be more helpful in bringing more growers to the programs. She also expressed that the invoicing and reimbursement process for grantees is tough and being able to provide assistance in that phase of grant management would be very helpful for smaller operations. Mr. Sousa also indicated that annual reporting for AMMP is an important task that the technical assistance program can cover.

Member Alvis asked the panel for feedback on the amount of grant funding necessary to offer the technical assistance required by AB 2377. The panel members generally agreed with each other that the funding necessary for each component of technical assistance can vary significantly with the individual projects. They suggested that funding of staff dedicated to this program allowed for the most flexibly.

Member Onsted asked about the awareness of CDFA's CSA programs. Mr. Sousa and Mr. Greer both expressed the awareness and interest of the programs has been growing. There was some discussion from the panel about how to increase participation in the Healthy Soils Program, which was undersubscribed in previous rounds. The technical assistance panelists indicated that the difference likely is that the many farmers may not find or appreciate a direct link between the HSP program and cost-savings. Chari Bridson also agreed that the economic benefits of the HSP program may take longer to show. Mr. Sousa indicated that more dairy producers are taking note of HSP due to the connection to compost production and application.

Chair Bridson asked the panel what metrics CDFA should look at collecting from the awarded technical assistance providers to show a high level of accountability and credibility. Dr. Dahlquist-Willard suggest that the number of applications submitted by the technical assistance providers should be reported. Mr. Robbins suggested that the deliverables should be estimated up front by the AB 2377 grant program. Reporting would then provide metrics to compare against the estimated deliverables. Confidentiality of farmers and ranchers would need to be protected. Mr. Sousa suggested that the qualifications to participate as a technical assistance provider should be rigorous enough to allow for streamlined reporting. Mr. Greer suggested that record-keeping related to hours and activities related to project implementation and monitoring would be important to gather and submit (e.g. flow meter data can be saved and matching up those to see if project is working; continuing to work with grower on maintenance). Chair Bridson agreed; technical assistance providers could report the number of contacts, farm visits, and time spent on each project. Member Dawley suggested that the metrics should be expanded beyond what is already collected in CDFA's technical assistance. The technical assistance panelists agreed. Dr. Dahlquist-Willard suggested number of times assisted, visits to farm, whether or not a project was funded, whether or not the project reached successful verification, and monitoring results. Mr. Greer suggested that technical assistance providers should also be able to report the time they spend with growers who do not end up qualifying for the grant or applying. Mr. Sousa suggested that CDFA could get candid feedback from the growers on the quality and time of assistance provided by technical assistance providers. Chair Bridson suggested that the GHG reductions of the

projects associated with an individual technical assistance provider might be an effective measure.

Mr. Robbins indicated that with funding from this program technical assistance providers can be helpful in further follow up on completed projects. They can perform surveys and see if projects are being carried forward. Member Couch cautioned about over estimating what could be accomplished as well since the funding will come with time limitations and some project data collection could be longer than funding allows.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – Public Comments

Chair Bridson opened the public comment period, taking comments from the room first and then opening the phone line for remote participants.

Mr. Brian Shobe of CalCAN thanked CDFA for making remote comments available. He offered support for the AB 2377 technical assistance program release and increasing technical assistance amounts.

He expressed that CalCAN sponsored AB 2377 and expressed belief in expanding program reach to growers. He suggested holding conference calls with focus groups or having a dedicated workshop on this program to discuss nuances such as budget and workplan.

Ms. Kristen Murphy of the California Association of RCDs (CARCD) expressed support for an increased grant amount for technical assistance. She indicated that the indirect and overhead rates for the RCDs range from range 10-30%. She indicated that the Strategic Growth Council has a 20% cap for indirect in their grant program. Ms. Murphy informed the panel that CARCD helps to coordinate communication between RCDs and that CA RCD, through a grant from DWR, has prepared materials in Hmong and short films to assist with program outreach. Ms. Murphy also requested that CDFA consider adding cannabis producers to the eligible agricultural operations for SWEEP and HSP.

Mr. Brian Kolodji of Black Swan LLC spoke about agricultural biosequestration of carbon dioxide through technology produced by his company. He asked that the technical assistance program be used to broaden the techniques for water savings and GHG reductions to new methods and technologies

Katie Patterson of American Farmland Trust expressed appreciation of the panel discussion. She commented that further discussion on long-term implementation is important.

Panel voted on Item 6

Member Wimberger moved to approve the CDFA proposed timeline for AB 2377 technical assistance program development, alternative members Onsted and Member Dawley seconded. The motion was approved.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – Next Meeting and Location

Dr. Gunasekara stated that the next meeting will be on April 18, 2019. The location was not yet determined. The meeting was adjourned at 2:26 PM by Chair Bridson.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.
Liaison to Science Advisory Panel

April 18, 2019
Date