

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

CDFA Auditorium
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA

March 16, 2017
9:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Members

Don Cameron (Chair and Member)
Jocelyn Bridson, MSc. (Member and Co-Chair)
Vicky Dawley (Member)
Jeff Dlott, PhD. (Member)
Judith Redmond (Member)
Julie Alvis, Natural Resources Agency (Member)
David Bunn, PhD., Natural Resources Agency (Member)
Scott Couch, State Water Resources Control Board (Member)
Emily Wimberger, PhD., Air Resources Board (Member)
Luana Kiger, USDA NRCS (Subject Matter Expert)

State Agency Staff and Presenters

Bonnie Soriano, MSc. Air Resources Board
Benjamin Nicholson, Air Resources Board
Matthew Harrison, Air Resources Board
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD. CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD. CDFA
Carolyn Cook, MSc. CDFA
Scott Weeks, CDFA
Ravneet Behla, PhD. CDFA
Adam Chambers, PhD. USDA NRCS
Olivier Jerphagnon, PhD. PowWow Energy

AGENDA ITEM 1 - Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 AM by the Chair, Mr. Don Cameron. Introductions were made. Present at the meeting were all the members noted above under "Panel Members". A quorum was established. This was the second meeting with the new and existing members following the expansion of the Science Panel as memorialized in SB 859 (2016) from five to nine members.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Minutes from Previous Meeting and Bylaws

Chair Cameron introduced the minutes from the January 19, 2017 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Bridson to accept the minutes as presented by CDFA staff and the motion was seconded by Dr. Bunn. The motion was moved by all members present and accepted without further changes.

Dr. Gunasekara noted to Chair Cameron that given the recent changes to panel in membership as required by SB 859, the Bylaws had to be updated. He noted that CDFA Legal Office had been consulted in updating and reviewing the bylaws. They were presented to the panel members for consideration. The minimum number of members required to establish quorum, according to the Bylaws, was a majority plus one member (six of the nine members).

The Bylaws called for the election of a "Vice Chairperson". Dr. Dlott nominated Ms. Bridson as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Dr. Wimberger and moved forward by all panel members.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Healthy Soils Program

Given the importance of implementing the Healthy Soils Program, it was recommended by the Panel to move agenda items 5, 6 and 7 before Agenda items 3 and 4 to facilitate public comment in a timely manner.

Dr. Joshi updated the panel on the Healthy Soils Program (HSP), including noting the objectives and funding sources. The Healthy Soils Program will be designed to provide incentives to farms and ranchers to build carbon and reduce greenhouse gases on agricultural lands. The program will include a list of USDA NRCS practices that have quantified greenhouse gas reductions so growers could choose which practice to implement and obtain financial incentives for its implementation through the CDFA Healthy Soils Program. Dr. Joshi proposed that HSP awardees for the incentive program of the HSP must maintain the project for a minimum of three years. Technical CDFA staff recommended incentivizing the first two growing seasons while the third season of the management practice to be funded through cost-share funds by the applicant. Each incentive program applicant was allowed up to \$50,000. Each demonstration project was proposed to be allowed a maximum applicant amount of \$ 200,000. Dr. Joshi also discussed tentative timelines and milestones achieved.

Questions were entertained by CDFA staff from Panel members. Panel members Bridson, Dawley and Redmond noted that the non-competitive, first come first serve process, may lead to funded projects with less effective/efficient efforts. Ms. Dawley further noted that applicants may rush to file an application before scrutinizing all aspects of the application and requirements. Dr. Gunasekara noted that the review process will ensure the required minimum quality of an application will be met through an administrative and technical review component. Mr. Cameron asked about the ranking process of the applications once received. Dr. Gunasekara noted that there is no mandate for ranking per the legislative language for the HSP. Mr. Cameron asked if a farmer can apply in partnership with universities or resource conservation districts. Dr. Joshi noted that such partnerships are eligible to apply. Dr. Gunasekara noted that Panel member comments will be taken into consideration prior to updating the HSP for the May 18, 2017 meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – ARB Quantification Methodologies for the CDFA HSP

Mr. Harrison from the Air Resources Board presented information and facilitated questions on the Quantification Methodology. He updated the Panel members that ARB staff is working to draft a more finalized list of eligible conservation management practices for HSP. He provided a comparison of USDA-DNDC and Comet Planner management practice results by evaluating several scenarios and conducting technical and functional assessments. In the assessments, ARB staff found that both tools (USDA-DNDC and Comet Planner) are equally effective. Comet Planner is more conservative, in terms of

greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions, on cropland to herbaceous systems whereas DNDC is more conservative at estimating cropland to woody systems. USDA-DNDC is more suitable for compost applications and GHG estimation whereas Comet Planner is user friendly. ARB recommended using both quantification tools depending upon the practices.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – USDA NRCS Comet-Planner Update 2.0

Dr. Chambers provided an update to Comet-Planner. Dr. Chambers noted the importance of soil conservation and history of Comet-Planner. He updated the Panel members on the development of the web-based Comet Planner 2.0 and that it is designed to align GHG reduction estimates with Comet-Farm tool. Dr. Chambers noted that USDA staff is working on documentation and a technical report to support Comet-Planner.

A public comment period on any of the presented HSP information was facilitated by CDFA staff and extended through March 1, 2017.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - SWEEP (State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program)

Mr. Weeks from CDFA provided updates on the SWEEP program. Mr. Weeks noted that Assembly Bill 1613 allocated \$7.5 million for SWEEP program for FY 2017-18. CDFA released request of applications on February 1, 2017. CDFA is currently accepting grant applications for 2017. The maximum award per project is \$100,000. He also noted the tentative timeline for SWEEP. Mr. Weeks further provided information on workshops that were conducted by CDFA and technical assistance workshops provided by third party entities.

Mr. Weeks noted that the three year auditing is in progress for 2015 and 2016 funding cycles. Mr. Cameron requested information about how many applications were submitted for the most recent solicitation. Dr. Gunasekara noted that approximately 300 applications were submitted. Other questions by Panel members were solicited.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Post-project SWEEP Quantification of GHGs and Water Savings – PowWow Energy

Dr. Jerphagnon of PowWow Energy presented on a web-based program with a mobile application for energy monitoring of water pumps. He provided the background on the concept and technology and noted a recent grant award from CDFA to assist in the required validation and quantification of GHG reductions and water savings for SWEEP funded projects in 2016. Questions and comments were facilitated.

AGENDA ITEM 8 and 9 – Public Comment and future meetings

Public comment was facilitated followed by discussion. The date and location of the next meeting is May 18, 2017, and will be in Sacramento, California. The meeting was adjourned at 1:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:


Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.

5/19/17
Date