

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

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office
10950 Tyler Road Red Bluff, CA

May 24, 2018
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Members in Attendance

Jocelyn Bridson, MSc, Rio Farms, (Chair and Member)
Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch (Member)
Jeff Dlott, PhD. SureHarvest (Member)
Julie Alvis, Natural Resources Agency (Member)
Scott Couch, State Water Resources Control Board (Member)
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm (Member)
Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD (Member)
Kathryn Lyddan, Department of Conservation (Member)
Doug Parker, PhD. UC ANR (Subject Matter Expert)
Tom Hedt, USDA NRCS (Subject Matter Expert)

State Agency Staff and Presenters

Jaydeep Bhatia, CDFA
Scott Weeks, CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD, CDFA
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:08 PM by the Chair, Jocelyn Bridson. Introductions were made. Present at the meeting were all the members noted above under “Panel Members in Attendance.”

AGENDA ITEM 2 –Administrative Housekeeping

Chair Bridson introduced the minutes from the March 15, 2018 meeting. A motion was presented by Member Redmond to accept the minutes as presented by CDFA staff and the motion was seconded by Member Cameron. The motion was moved by all members present and accepted without further changes.

The motion to fill co-chair vacancy was introduced by Member Cameron and proposed Jeff Dlott for the position. Member Dawley seconded the motion and Jeff Dlott accepted

the position. All panel members favored the motion. Jeff Dlott was elected as co-chair unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Healthy Soils Program Update

Dr. Joshi of CDFA provided updates on two rounds of solicitation of Healthy Soils Program (HSP). She noted that 51 projects were awarded \$1.4 million in first round from incentive category of the program. This category was initially undersubscribed. These projects are located in 22 counties and are projected to reduce 9,000 MT CO₂e per year. Second solicitation was offered to encumber remaining funds and a total of 33 projects were awarded in 16 counties. The demonstration project category awarded 22 and 6 projects during two solicitations respectively. These projects are projected to reduce 1,642 and 447 tons of CO₂e per year respectively. Dr. Joshi provided program analysis results on average farm size and concluded that 79 percent of the awarded projects have farm size less than 250 acres. She further noted that compost application was the most popular practice proposed by the applicant. She also provided update on new management practices under consideration for HSP and overview of the submitted proposals. She noted that the proposals submitted fall into four practice categories, 1) Nitrogen Management, which includes reduced fertilizer application, slow release fertilizer and nitrification inhibitors. 2) Non-nitrogen practices such as strip cropping, biomass planting, conservation cover, range planting, grassed waterway, alley cropping, prescribed grazing, conservation cover crop rotation, windbreaker and shelterbelt renovation and tree shrub establishment. 3) Practices that are already included in the program or have significant overlap and 4) Practices which are not considered for funding either these are covered under other programs or don't have sufficient peer reviewed research to quantify GHG benefit. Chair Bridson asked if there is a list of crops which can be planted for biomass crops practice. Presenter noted that this information is being looked into. Another question asked was that why the second-round solicitation was first come first serve basis. Presenter responded that it was an attempt to increase the flow in order to meet the legislative encumbrance deadline for utilization of available funds; but applicant still had to meet certain minimum criteria to be eligible for award. Another question asked was that if there will be a proposal to review slow release fertilizers. Dr. Gunasekara responded that Secretary will review the proposal with the team and make recommendation.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – SWEEP Update

Scott Weeks of CDFA provided update on the SWEEP. He noted that program future funding allocations are coded in Proposition 68 and it would need voter approval in June 5, 2018 primary elections. He further updated the panel on 2017 fund reallocation and noted that some 2017 regular SWEEP projects and CDFA/DWR joint project got cancelled resulting in 1.8 million unencumbered funds. CDFA awarded 27 additional projects utilizing 1.8 million dollars. These projects will impact a total of 4927 acres and are projected to save 5041-acre feet of water and 1228 MT CO₂e per year. Mr. Weeks also updated panel on media outreach efforts carried out by CDFA.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Strategic Planning Summary document

Chair Bridson introduced the summary document and provided overview of the document. She noted that the document is posted on CDFA website for public comments. The public comment period ends on June 21, 2018. She further noted that Strategic Planning document will provide timeline and work plan for the panel.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – CDFA Climate Smart Agriculture efforts

Jaydeep Bhatia of CDFA provided informational presentation on the CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) efforts. He noted that CSA is an integrated approach to achieve GHG reductions while ensuring food security in the face of climate change. He further noted that CDFA is providing a number of incentive programs and provided overview of OEFI's incentive programs, and CSA is building international collaborations and resources. He mentioned that CDFA is fostering international collaborations through CDFA delegation visits. Mr. Bhatia noted that CDFA hosted 10 climate-smart webinars, which were attended by 75 panelists and more than 1500 people worldwide. Member Lyddan asked if CSA also include agriculture land conservation in addition to the technologies. Member Cameron noted this topic came up during Israel visit as well. Dr. Gunkasekara noted that greenhouses are popular in Europe but that may change the land use from agriculture to commercial even though it is used for food production. Member Dlott suggested that CSA work should be tied to certain United Nations goals for example changing dietary patterns and food demands. Dr. Gunasekara responded that main mandate of CSA is focused on adoption technologies and practices, and climate change adaption. Member Cameron acknowledged California's leadership in global agriculture and the necessity to be aware of global agriculture situation.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Public Comments

Several questions and comments from the public were accommodated by Chair Bridson and CDFA staff. They included feedback on HSP application process being complex and the lack of substantial assistance. Another public comment on HSP was to clarify if the panel would approve the list of practices in July and when stakeholders can submit their comments. Dr. Gunasekara responded that the panel may decide in July if the public comment period is required. It was decided that CDFA will post meeting materials for July 19th meeting online on July 9th to allow time for Panel Members, stakeholders and public to review ahead of the meeting. Member Redmond asked if public comments can be submitted and Dr. Gunasekara responded that comments can be submitted until June 19th. However, CDFA staff would not officially respond to comments at the next meeting due to insufficient time to review them by July 9th.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Next Meeting and Location

Dr. Gunasekara stated that the next meeting will be on July 19, 2018, at CDFA headquarters in Sacramento, CA to cover HSP and SWEEP new funding updates, and the Strategic Plan. The meeting was adjourned at 3.52 PM by Chair Bridson.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.

October 18, 2018
Date