

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

University Cooperative Extension Office
1432 Abbott Street
Salinas, CA 93901

August 26, 2016
1 PM to 4 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Members

Don Cameron, Member and Chair
Jocelyn Bridson, MSc., Member
David Mallory (ARB), Member
Jeff Dlott, PhD. Member
David Bunn (Bruce Gwynne) (Natural Resources Agency), Member
Doug Parker, PhD., Subject Matter Expert

State Agency Staff

Bailey Smith (ARB)
Bonnie Soriano (ARB)
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD., CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD., CDFA
Carolyn Cook, MSc. CDFA
Scott Weeks, CDFA
Katie Filippini, MSc. CDFA

AGENDA ITEM 1 - Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM 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.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - Updates

Minutes

Chairman Cameron introduced the minutes from the May 18, 2016 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Bridson to accept the minutes as presented by CDFA staff and the motion was seconded by Mr. Gwynne representing Mr. Bunn. The motion was moved by all members present and accepted without further changes.

SWEEP - State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program

Ms. Katie Filippini and Mr. Scott Weeks, new hires to the SWEEP, provided an update on the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) including the most recent status of the ongoing drought, which is now in its fifth year. They noted recent developments with the latest June 2016 solicitation for applications. Application information was provided to the panel members; 268 completed grant applications totaling \$34 million with an average amount of \$128,000 per project requested. The funding cap was established at \$200,000 for this round. CDFA has \$17 million to allocate for projects. CDFA also provided an update on past SWEEP awards verification activities. Staff and Dr. Gunasekara facilitated questions from the members.

CDFA noted to the members that the California Climate Action Network had provided a report critically evaluating SWEEP including providing several recommendations on how to improve the program. CDFA staff noted that the report will be reviewed and recommendations taken into consideration for the next SWEEP solicitation.

Healthy Soils Incentive Program

Dr. Joshi provided an overview of a framework for a Healthy Soils Incentive Program if funding is allocated. 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. Discussion ensued including comments from the Science Panel members. Members noted that a one-page summary on each practice might be helpful to describe each practice, its benefits and also co-benefits. Comments from the public included discussion on grant award size and recognize benefits already being done by growers.

Compost Application Rates to Support the CDFA Healthy Soils Incentive Program

Dr. Gunasekara provided information through a presentation on the application of compost on agricultural lands to support a CDFA Healthy Soils Incentive Program. This work is a continuation of work completed through previous Science Panel meetings where a literature review, white paper report and public comment was facilitated to establish compost use application rates to support a CDFA Incentive Program that is designed to build soil organic matter in California agricultural operations. CDFA has made several changes to the white paper report since the May 2016 Science Panel meeting. Those changes were presented to the members and were based on public comment letters. A comparison of the initially proposed application rates for compost on cropland and rangeland were presented along with another table showing the changes. Members noted that the conventional and organic rates were the same and therefore suggested combining those categories together might be helpful and lead to less confusion. Mr. Gwynne, representing Dr. Bunn, noted the importance of maintaining native plant communities as compost is added to working lands. These application rates

are not regulatory requirements; rather they are the rates that will be incentivized through financial support as part of the CDFA Healthy Soils Incentive Program. Dr. Gunasekara noted that additional compost can be applied beyond what will be incentivized by CDFA. Public comment was facilitated. Members moved to accept the final report. A motion was made by Mr. Gwynne representing Dr. Bunn from the Natural Resources Agency. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jeff Dlott. The motion was moved by all members present and accepted without further changes.

AGENDA ITEM 3
Informational Presentations

Two informational presentations were included in this agenda. They included a presentation by Dr. Parameswaran on work that is being completed through Trace Genomics to evaluate the health of soil through microbial genomics.

Mr. Adar and Dr. Shoub provided an informational presentation on AutoAgronom which focuses on the development of plant root systems which improve overall plant growth.

AGENDA ITEM 4 and 5 – Public Comment and future meetings

Public comment was facilitated followed by discussion. The date and location of the next meeting is November 18, 2016 and will be in Modesto, California. Chair Cameron adjourned the meeting at 4:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.

11/19/17
Date

