

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

Stanislaus County
Agricultural Commissioner Office
3800 Cornucopia Way, Room A
Modesto, CA 95358

November 18, 2016
1 PM to 5 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Members

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

State Agency Staff

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

AGENDA ITEM 1 - Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 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

Dr. Gunasekara noted that minutes from the last meeting in August will be presented at the January Science Panel meeting given several recent edits. Dr. Gunasekara noted that recent legislation had increased the membership on the panel from five members to

nine members. All new members will join the panel for the first time at the January, 2017 Science Panel meeting in Sacramento.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - Healthy Soils Incentive Program

Dr. Joshi provided an overview of a framework for a Healthy Soils Incentive Program. She noted that in September, 2016, CDFA received \$7.5 million from the Climate Investments Programs in the recent 2015-2016 state budget. 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. Questions by Ms. Redmond on compost use and rates as part of a CDFA Healthy Soils Program were facilitated. Comments from the public were also facilitated.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP)

Mr. Scott Weeks, provided an update on the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP). Application numbers for the most recent round of SWEEP were provided for informational purposes. He noted that CDFA had received an additional \$7.5 million as part of the state budget which was moved in September, 2016. CDFA suggested to the Science Panel that reducing the total grand award size from \$200,000 to \$100,000 would suit the next solicitation better, given the smaller amount of funds allocated to SWEEP compared to previous awards (e.g., \$7.5 million in 2016 compared to \$40 million in 2015). CDFA had also received comments from several stakeholders and these comments were summarized and discussed at the Science Panel meeting. Mr. Weeks noted that CDFA SWEEP staff is engaging on a media project to highlight the benefits of SWEEP and improve the programs visibility. CDFA was encouraged to highlight a diversity of farmers including women and growers in disadvantaged communities. Mr. Weeks and Dr. Gunasekara facilitated questions from the members and the public. Mr. Cameron suggested surveying the applicants and recipients of SWEEP to understand the barriers, ease of use for water and greenhouse gas calculations and technical assistance needs.

Ms. Smith provided an update on the Quantification Methodology (QM) for the next solicitation of SWEEP. She noted recent updates and changes to the QM tool that supports the program's application requirements. The QM public comment period was November 18, 2016 to December 2, 2016 and stakeholders and the public were open to comments on numerous aspects of the tool.

A motion was requested by Dr. Gunasekara on the total award amount per application. The suggestion by CDFA was to reduce the total award amount from \$200,000 to \$100,000. A motion was made by Mr. Gwynne and seconded by Mr. Mallory. Public comment was facilitated. The motion was passed by all members present.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – DWR-CDFA Joint Pilot Project

Mr. Berbach and Ms. Cook provided an update on the DWR-CDFA joint pilot project involving funding for both agricultural water suppliers and agricultural operations. The pilot grant program will combine \$3 million in funding from DWR's Proposition 1 fund for agricultural water suppliers to pressurize the delivery of water directly to growers. This will modernize water deliveries to match technological upgrades by growers to create more efficient irrigation systems. CDFA's State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program will provide an additional \$3 million for growers to receive that water and utilize it through technologies such as drip, subsurface drip, and micro-sprinkler irrigation systems. Water suppliers will be responsible for submitting the applications and this pilot project requires a 50% cost share unless Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) or Economically Distressed Areas (EDA) status is claimed and documented. Ms. Smith provided information on the ARB Quantification Methodology developed for the program. A timeline of activities was also provided for this program.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Habitat Exchange Program

Dr. Gunasekara noted that he was unable to secure staff from the Environmental Defense Fund to speak on this program due to previous engagements and will work to include the topic in future meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Public Comment and future meetings

Public comment was facilitated and followed by discussion. The date and location of the next meeting is January 19, 2017, and will be in Sacramento, California. Chair Cameron adjourned the meeting at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.

1/19/17
Date

