

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

**California Department of Food and Agriculture
Room 133
1220 N St.
Sacramento, CA 95814**

July 2, 2014

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Members

Don Cameron, Member and Chair
Mark Nechodom, PhD, Member
Mike Tollstrup, Member
Jocelyn Gretz, MSc, Member
Jeff Dlott, PhD, Member

Subject Matter Experts

Luana Kiger, MSc, Subject Matter Expert
Doug Parker, PhD, Subject Matter Expert

CDFA Staff

Amrith Gunasekara, PhD
Carolyn Cook, MSc

AGENDA ITEM 1 – APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS' MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by the Chair, Mr. Don Cameron. Introductions were made and a quorum was established. CDFA Staff presented minutes from three previous EFA SAP meetings and the panel requested the following changes to those minutes:

- Ms. Kiger requested a change to the April 2014 minutes to reflect her suggestion of using the NRCS “useful life of practices” for implementation in CDFA’s State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP). It was noted that this document can be found at the following website:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1076947.pdf
- Ms. Gretz suggested adding to the April minutes that Paul Robbins of the RCD of Monterey County was in attendance at the meeting and provided valuable feedback on the implementation of SWEEP.
- Dr. Parker indicated that the year on the minutes from October 23 meeting needed to be corrected.

Ms. Gretz moved to approve all three sets of minutes providing that the requested changes were made. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tollstrup and the minutes were approved without any objections.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Bylaws

At a previous meeting there was a suggestion by Dr. Nechodom to add more specifics to the bylaws regarding the chairperson appointment for the Science Advisory Panel. Dr. Gunasekara provided draft language which read; “The Chairperson will be appointed by the

Secretary from the Committee's voting members every three years." Dr. Nechodom moved to approve the additional language, Mr. Tollstrup seconded and the motion was approved without any objections.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – STATE WATER EFFICIENCY AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (SWEEP)

CDFA Staff provided an update on the implementation of SWEEP including a PowerPoint presentation outlining the applicant eligibility, requirements, and criteria for ranking the applications. The CDFA News Release and Planting Seeds blog entry regarding SWEEP was shared with the Panel.

Science Advisory Panel members asked questions regarding the application process and turnout at public application workshops. It was noted that a requirement for matching funds was not integrated into the final grant guidelines. Dr. Gunasekara indicated that the matching funds was not required (optional) so smaller agricultural operations were not excluded from applying and also avoided a time consuming process of tracking matching funds by growers and CDFA's grants office.

A comment was made that some growers might have the expertise to self-certify or verify the project installation for water savings and greenhouse gas reductions. It was noted that this is not allowed by the SWEEP program; a third party verifier is required.

The panel members expressed an interest in the emergency drought funding that is available from the Employment Training Panel for training related to drought and recommended that CDFA send out the informational slide to the SAP for the members to disperse.

Dr. Gunasekara thanked the Science Advisory Panel members, especially Ms. Kiger, her colleagues at USDA NRCS, and the Department of Conservation for their roles in designing the SWEEP program. CDFA will draft a letter of appreciation to send to the NRCS State Conservationist. The letter was completed and sent to Mr. Carlos Suarez on July 21, 2014. Mr. Cameron signed the letter on behalf of the panel with Secretary Ross.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – GEELA

CDFA Staff reported on the new GEELA agriculture award category for 2014. The applications are due for the award by July 11, 2014. Dr. Dlott suggested sending out the award application information to pilot projects; although ideally a farmer or rancher would be the award recipient. Dr. Gunasekara agreed to forward the blog posting to an email distribution list in order to provide some additional outreach.

AGENDA ITEM 5. ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND POLICY REPORT

An update was provided to SAP on recent developments regarding this report which was available in draft form for public comment.

AGENDA ITEM 6. FUTURE DIRECTION

- **Permitting** - The panel members discussed what role the SAP might have in helping to streamline beneficial projects with lengthy or cumbersome permitting processes. It was pointed out that Cal EPA does have a group whose purpose is to help with exactly that, so if the SAP can identify problematic permitting projects then it can be brought to the

attention of Cal EPA. Ms. Gretz pointed out some specific examples of dairy digesters and walnut shell biogas.

- **Ecosystem Services Guidebook for Growers** - Ms. Gretz suggested that CDFA add tools to CDFA's website in order to supplement the Ecosystem Services Qualitative Assessment model. This could be a valuable in promoting the idea of ecosystem service markets. Ecosystem service markets were discussed during the last State Board of Food and Agriculture meeting. Ms. Kiger suggested that if the idea of ecosystem services markets takes shape then it could provide practical solutions to people that need to meet a regulation. (e.g., stream restoration instead of cooling water that was being discharged). The panel members and CDFA staff noted that the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE) may already have some examples that CDFA can reference, analyze or make available on the website.
- **Emerging Technologies** - Dr. Dlott suggested that the SAP promote or make the connection between emerging technologies, such as drones and remote sensing, and environmental farming. He recommended that CDFA provide some examples of how these technologies can be applied to environmental farming practices and help to connect growers with technology. There was some supporting discussion revolving around this issue and Ms. Kiger suggested that at a future SAP meeting the group could hear from some experts on these technologies in order to make a decision on any possible role for the SAP. She suggested Forrest Melton of CSU Monterey Bay as one such expert to provide insight to the SAP.
- **Scoping Plan Activities** - Mr. Tollstrup suggested that the SAP may have a role in the AB 32 Scoping Plan activities related to agriculture. Dr. Gunasekara will send the Scoping Plan Ag Chapter out to the SAP and then revisit this idea at the next SAP meeting to see where SAP can contribute to implementing the Scoping Plan recommendations.
- **Incentive Program for Ecosystem Services** – Mr. Cameron suggested that the SAP may have a role in future programs similar to SWEEP that would provide incentives to growers for ecosystem services. Currently growers are not rewarded for being early adopters and are also not able to receive carbon credits for many beneficial practices. Some suggestions for ecosystem services that would be incentivized included solar power, hedgerows, and nitrous oxide reductions. There was agreement all around that this would be a good direction and that the SAP would like to submit a proposal for Cap and Trade funds on these topics during the next year.

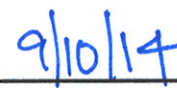
AGENDA ITEM 8. NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will take place in two months in Modesto.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.



Date