

Integrating Agriculture and Climate Mitigation

Santa Clara County Agricultural Community Outreach and Engagement Plan March 2020

Introduction

This Agricultural Community Outreach and Engagement Plan (Plan) summarizes the strategies that will be used by the County's project partners to engage the agricultural community in the development of countywide climate action policies and implementation scenarios that can effectively integrate agriculture and climate mitigation. This Plan has been developed and will be implemented by the Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRCD) and the Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District (LPRCD), in consultation with the Carbon Cycle Institute (CCI).

Goals

The goals of the Plan are to: 1) raise awareness of the County's working lands climate action project; 2) provide opportunities for input at various stages of report and recommendations development; 3) provide a forum for members of the agricultural community to voice their thoughts on the potential for integrating agriculture and working lands into the climate action plan; and 4) gather specific information on the scalability of, opportunities for, and barriers to carbon farming to inform the development of countywide policies and implementation strategies.

Target Populations for Engagement

Producers: According to the local Farm Bureau, "farmers and ranchers in Santa Clara County grow 100 different crops and contribute \$250 million to the local economy each year." In addition to product diversity, there also are differences in agribusiness size, geographic location, ethnic background, production systems, distribution systems and current conservation practices. GCRCD and LPRCD, in collaboration with CCI, will develop a master engagement list of potential producer participants that reflects this diversity.¹

Organizations: There are a number of trade associations, membership organizations and cooperatives representing producers operating in Santa Clara County. GCRCD and LPRCD will work with other agricultural stakeholders, such as the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), to develop an engagement list for electronic outreach to these organizations.

Stakeholders: The RCDs and CCI will develop an engagement list of non-producer stakeholders, which may include federal, state and local agencies (such as the USDA-NRCS and the Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner); NGOs (such as Point Blue and Sustainable Agricultural Education); open space districts and land trusts (such as the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and the Land Trust of Santa Clara Valley); educational programs (such as UCCE and Sobrato High School's Agriculture Program); and agricultural technical service providers.

¹ According to the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Small Farms Program, ethnic Chinese growers operate a large number of the County's small farms. UCCE will be developing a separate outreach plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach to this specific population.

Engagement Opportunities

Electronic Outreach: The RCDs will reach out via email to organizations and stakeholders on the respective engagement lists to provide introductory information on the County's project. After the focus groups have refined and ground-truthed the draft report and implementation scenarios, it will be circulated back to interested organizations and stakeholders for feedback.

For those who are not able to participate in outreach efforts, GCRCD will create a location on its website's Resources page where introductory information, meeting materials, and project progress can be posted. GCRCD will promote the webpage via its social media outlets.

Focus Group Meetings: The RCDs will convene two separate producer focus groups: one in northern Santa Clara County and one in southern Santa Clara County. Invitations will be sent out to individuals on the engagement list, with a focus on ensuring representation that reflects the diversity of the County's agricultural community.

An initial meeting will be held with each focus group in which the RCDs and CCI will introduce the project and explain the importance of data collection and producer feedback to ensure appropriate policy and scenario development. At these meetings, with facilitation from RCDs and CCI, the focus groups will:

- Identify carbon farming practices with high likelihood of implementation in Santa Clara County.
- Evaluate opportunities, barriers and policies required for Santa Clara County producers, and partners to implement carbon farming/conservation practices.

A second meeting will be held with each focus group after the draft project report has been completed by the County and its project partners. At these meetings, with facilitation from the RCDs and CCI, the focus groups will be asked to:

- Review the draft report and other materials produced after the first focus group meeting.
- Ground-truth the draft report on feasibility, scalability barriers and opportunities for carbon farming in Santa Clara county.
- Refine the three identified scenarios for practice implementation.
- Provide any available feedback on their potential interest in participating in future incentive programs to implement scenarios.

Organization and Stakeholder Presentations: The RCDs will offer to make presentations at meetings of agricultural membership and stakeholder organizations.

Outreach Materials

The following outreach materials will be produced and/or made available by the RCDs, in coordination with CCI, to facilitate presentations:

- A one-page summary of the project to distribute to producers, organizations, and stakeholders. The summary will be translated into Spanish; documents in other languages may be produced on an as-needed basis.
- Brochures on carbon farming.
- A visual presentation that will be used in focus group meetings and uploaded to the GCRCD website.

Engagement Task Timeline

<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Task</i>
Month 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Complete engagement lists.● Develop one-page project summaries.● Schedule initial producer focus group meetings and send out invitations.
Month 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Initiate electronic outreach to organizations and stakeholders.● Hold the initial producer focus group meetings.
Month 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Finalize meeting summary and takeaways for project partners to use in development of draft project report and implementation scenarios.
Month 4 - 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Continue individual consultation with focus group members on an as-needed basis.● Make presentations to agricultural membership and stakeholder organizations.
Month 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hold second producer focus group meetings.● Solicit organization and stakeholder feedback.
Month 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Finalize summary of feedback from producers, organizations and stakeholders.