



**REPORT TO THE NELL NEWMAN FOUNDATION FROM THE
CALIFORNIA CLIMATE AND AGRICULTURE NETWORK**

January 11, 2013

The following is a summary of the progress made by the California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN) in 2012 under the terms of the grant for general support received from the Nell Newman Foundation in February 2012. Also included is a financial report for fiscal year 2012.

Summary of Accomplishments

CalCAN advances policies that both ensure the long-term viability of California agriculture as it grapples with the impacts of climate change and that support farmers and ranchers in reducing their carbon footprint. The CalCAN coalition came together to be the voice for sustainable agricultural solutions to climate change. We believe it is imperative that agriculture play a constructive role in responding to climate change to ensure its own long-term viability and the country's food security, reduce agriculture's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and maximize one of the only available sinks for carbon.

Our coalition serves as a bridge between agriculture, the environment and the food movement, seeking climate solutions in agriculture that have multiple ecological and health benefits. We cultivate farmer spokespeople, provide information to farmers and policymakers on agriculture's climate solutions, and facilitate dialogue among farmers, researchers, advocates and policymakers — all with the aim of strengthening the voice of sustainable agriculture in the climate policy arena.

The following is a summary of CalCAN's accomplishments in the past year, organized by our three strategic program areas: (A) Cultivate Farmer Leadership; (B) Build Our Base; (C) Develop and Advance Policy Initiatives.

A. Cultivate Farmer Leadership

Telling Farmer Stories — We produced and printed three written case studies of innovative farmers using practices that reduce GHG emissions, sequester carbon, and make farms more climate-ready (see enclosed copies). They profile an organic pasture-based dairy family in the Central Valley, an organic walnut grower and processor near Sacramento, and an organic vineyard in Northern California. We produced two shorter web-based profiles of a pasture-based sheep rancher in Butte County and a pasture-based beef rancher in San Benito County. We also produced two video profiles of farmer climate leaders using practices that reduce GHG emissions, sequester carbon and make farms more climate-ready. One features an organic pasture-based dairy and organic almond producing family, and the other is a diversified vegetable and livestock operation, both in the Central Valley. All case studies are all available on our website (<http://calclimateag.org/climate-friendly-farmer-stories/>).

Field Days — In October, we organized a ranch field day near Hollister called "Ranch Management Tools for a Water-Scarce Region." It was attended by 55 ranchers, farm advisors, researchers and advocates. Presenters included rangeland ecologists from UC Davis, a livestock advisor from Cooperative Extension and the district conservationist from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as the ranch manager and the owner of

Paicines Ranch where the event was hosted. The field day was a huge success in terms of reaching our target constituents, creating networking opportunities for participants and exploring the challenges of ranching in arid climates while also attempting to sequester carbon, build soil and protect watershed health.

Farm Bill Leadership — As part of our efforts with a California Caucus of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (see Section C below), for the past two years we have coordinated farmers to support the conservation and organic programs of the federal farm bill, California's primary funding source for on-farm conservation practices. This year, we supported two farmers in traveling to Washington DC to educate legislators about the importance of the conservation and organic programs of the farm bill. We assisted several farmers in providing testimony at a hearing in California's Central Valley, placed an opinion piece co-authored by two farmers, and helped organize a farm tour with a key California Congressman Jim Costa on the House Agriculture Committee to showcase the importance of organic farming. As a direct outcome of those efforts, Congressman Costa has since gone on to champion Farm Bill language supporting organic agriculture.

Farmer Advisors — We consult individually and in formal roundtable sessions with our farmer advisors to guide our policy initiatives and strategies. We currently have 12 members of a Farmer Advisory Council (listed at <http://calclimateag.org/about/our-team/>), from diverse geographic and cropping sectors, and we also consult with others as needed. One of our most important and supportive advisors is Rich Rominger, a farmer and former Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and former Undersecretary of the USDA. We hosted our annual advisor roundtable in early November to update our farmer and science advisors on CalCAN's accomplishments in 2012 and to gather their input on our 2013 policy priorities and strategies.

B. Build Our Base

Communications — We produce monthly newsletters and regular blogs covering a range of climate and agriculture topics including science, policy issues, grant and job opportunities and events. We also issue action alerts as needed to gather support for key policy initiatives. There are approximately 1,300 individuals on the CalCAN list, and our coalition members also periodically circulate our action alerts for a reach of at least 20,000 Californians.

Media — We have successfully placed opinion pieces and had media coverage by CalCAN staff, farmer leaders and other allies. The following is a summary of several from the past few months (with links), and a full list of media pieces is available on our website (<http://calclimateag.org/media-on-calcan/>):

[Cap-and-spade: Will California's carbon market dollars go to organic farms?](#)

Coverage of the passage of AB 1532 which allocates public cap-and-trade funds to sustainable agriculture and other activities that reduce GHGs, quoting CalCAN's director Renata Brillinger. Grist, Oct. 4, 2012.

[Governor signs bill to ease small-scale renewable energy generation](#)

Coverage of the signing of SB 594 quoting CalCAN's Policy Director Jeanne Merrill and Russ Lester, CalCAN Farmer Advisor. Western Farm Press, Oct. 1, 2012.

[Planting the seeds for 'greener' farms](#)

Coverage of AB 1532, the cap-and-trade allowance revenue allocation bill supported by CalCAN, based on an interview with Executive Director Renata Brillinger. KQED News, Sept. 7, 2012.

[Climate change is another reason to protect farmland](#)

Opinion piece authored by CalCAN's Renata Brillinger and Rich Rominger, farmer and former CDFA Secretary and USDA Deputy Secretary. Sacramento Bee, Aug. 2, 2012.

[Work with state farmers, not against them](#)

Opinion piece authored by Johan Six at UC Davis and CalCAN's Executive Director Renata Brillinger. Makes the case for state resources to support agriculture's climate benefits. Fresno Bee, May 18, 2012.

[Agriculture's Climate Protection Solutions](#)

Describes the climate benefits to be gained from farmland protection and sustainable agriculture practices, research, technical assistance. Written by David Gates of Ridge Vineyards and Stephen E. Abbors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. The San Mateo Daily Journal, April 21, 2012.

[Becoming Sustainable in Policy and Practice](#)

Al and Becky Courchesne of Frog Hollow Farm describe their sustainable practices and call for support from California's cap-and-trade program for climate-friendly farming practices. thepress.net, April 20, 2012.

Events and Presentations — CalCAN staff regularly speak at conferences, hearings and other events. Examples from the past year include:

- Organizing and facilitating three workshops at the EcoFarm Conference
- Presentation at the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts conference
- Presentation at the Small Farm Conference on climate change, agriculture and energy
- Presentations at meetings of the San Mateo and Sonoma Food Systems Alliances
- Annual conference of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
- Sustainable Ag Expo of the Central Coast Vineyard Team
- National Heirloom Festival
- Farm field day on climate adaptation in vineyards organized by CAFF
- Plenary panel presentation at the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders conference

Science and Technical Advisors — We have an impressive Science & Technical Advisory Council comprised of nine experts in climate change and agriculture. The complete list is on our website (<http://calclimateag.org/about/our-team/>). Most of them attended our annual strategy meeting in November 2012, and we consult with them individually as needed.

Relationship-Building with Environmental Allies — We continue to collaborate with the Global Warming Action Coalition, a group of environmental organizations focused on implementation of cap-and-trade, and serve as the only representative of agriculture in the group. We are also active members of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment and have served on several subcommittees. We have organized and participated in numerous joint meetings with environmental representatives and agencies such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the Department of Conservation (DOC).

In terms of outreach to environmental justice allies, CalCAN's Executive Director was invited early in 2012 to participate in a committee of the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition charged with making recommendations for re-granting to local organizations working on issues of air quality, health and agriculture, which offered an opportunity to strengthen relationships with environmental justice allies in the Central Valley. Finally, we organized a farm tour at the organic farm of one of our farmer advisors to educate several environmental allies about the climate and other environmental and health benefits of sustainable agriculture.

C. Develop and Advance Policy Initiatives

Relationship Building with Policymakers — CalCAN greatly enhanced its credibility and visibility during the past year among key legislative offices, the Governor's office and agencies such as the CDFA, DOC and CARB. Some examples of the non-lobbying activities we engaged in to raise the profile of CalCAN and bring the voice of sustainable agriculture to bear on climate policy issues include:

- Meetings with CARB staff and Chairman to discuss agriculture's role in cap-and-trade implementation
- Meetings with DOC staff and Secretary to discuss the role of agriculture in climate protection
- Successful advocacy for two CalCAN allies to be appointed to the new CDFA Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel, and CalCAN participation in the public meetings of the panel
- Provided input into the solicitations for CARB-funded research on mitigation of nitrous oxide from agriculture, and successfully convinced them to include one organic research field in their study of GHG impacts from agriculture
- Presentation at the California State Board of Food and Agriculture meeting on "Climate Change and Extreme Events"

Cap-and-Trade — Since 2010, CalCAN and its allies have been making the case that sustainable agriculture can provide climate solutions and that resources such as research, technical assistance and financial incentives are needed. In 2010 and 2011, we sponsored bills authored by Senator Lois Wolk to make the case that some portion of revenue generated by the cap and trade program should go to provide resources for agriculture to provide climate benefits while also improving air and water quality and wildlife habitat. In April 2012 we submitted a letter to the Governor and the legislature signed by 75 farms, businesses and organizations supporting cap-and-trade revenue investments in agricultural solutions to climate change. We also organized and submitted an open letter to the Governor, CARB Chairman Mary Nichols and leaders of the legislature from 27 researchers and academics making the case for agriculture's potential climate benefits (copies of both letters are available at <http://calclimateag.org/cap-and-trade-revenue-for-ag/>).

Our work had an effect: at the end of September 2012, Governor Brown signed a bill (AB 1532) that included sustainable agriculture as an eligible funding category in the state's cap-and-trade investment plan. There is no question that the inclusion of sustainable agriculture in AB 1532 is the result of CalCAN leadership, the strategies we implemented and the collaborative relationships that we have developed over the past three years.

We are now one step closer to putting in place a state-level source of funding — perhaps eventually several millions of dollars — for on-farm conservation, farmland protection, climate and agriculture research and technical assistance. But there is still plenty of work to be done. The bills require that the Department of Finance put together a three-year investment plan for cap and trade funds. We will argue strongly for including organic and sustainable agriculture activities in the plan, and we have begun work on a set of recommendations for criteria to guide funding decisions that favor the most innovative and whole-systems solutions.

Farmland Protection — We have launched a new policy initiative to make the climate case for farmland protection and to advocate for several policy and funding tools to protect farmland at greatest risk of urban sprawl and the associated GHG emissions increases. We are producing a policy paper for release early in 2013. In October, we hosted a roundtable attended by 20 land conservation experts and advocates to discuss a draft of the paper and identify the high priority policies for potential collaboration in the coming months. We will continue to convene strategy meetings and develop a campaign plan for 2013 focused on one or two of the most strategic and feasible initiatives.

On-Farm Renewable Energy — Since the 2011 passage of a CalCAN-sponsored bill (SB 489) that removes barriers to on-farm small-scale bioenergy generation, we have continued to collaborate with conventional agriculture and the clean tech industry to tackle other barriers to on-farm renewable energy. We supported a 2012 bill (SB 594) that allows for the aggregation of electric meters on farms and other properties and makes it more practical and economical for farmers to tie into the grid if they are producing renewable energy. We also submitted comments to the state Public Utilities Commission to make recommendations on outreach by the major utilities to small and medium scale farmers about energy efficiency programs. There is considerably more CalCAN could do in the arena of on-farm renewable energy policy to increase the amount of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects implemented by California farmers, and in 2013 we plan to hire a policy associate to make the most of our accomplishments and the opportunities we have identified in the past two years.

Carbon Market Policy Brief — Early in 2012 we released a policy brief entitled “[A Sustainable Agriculture Perspective on the Carbon Market](#)” that makes a series of recommendations to improve the design of carbon market protocols to support sustainable agriculture practices with climate and other environmental benefits.

Select Committees on Food and Agriculture — In 2011, we successfully advocated for the creation of the state’s first legislative Assembly Select Committee on Sustainable and Organic Agriculture. Since then we have helped shaped the agendas, identify speakers and testified at its first two hearings. We were also invited to provide testimony at the first hearing of the new Senate Select Committee on California Food: Local, Organic, and Sustainable Systems chaired by Senator Noreen Evans.

Farm Bill — CalCAN was the founder and continues to be a key leader in a Caucus of eleven California-based members of National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), and we are one of the most active groups in terms of developing strategy and implementing joint tactics. Our focus has been on strengthening relationships with key California members of Congress influential in agriculture policy and on highlighting farmer voices in support of the conservation, organic and beginning farmer/rancher programs of the Farm Bill. Collectively, we have strengthened relationships with approximately ten key Congressional members and offices, educated them about our priorities, and will continue to make strategic advantage of the efforts we have put into cultivation. CalCAN has raised and managed almost \$50,000 in funds on behalf of the California NSAC Caucus, facilitates regular strategy meetings and works closely with the Caucus policy consultant. We will continue to play a core leadership role in this Caucus in 2013 as the highly irregular and protracted Farm Bill process continues.

In addition to advances on the specific policy initiatives outlined above, we have had other indications of our impact. We receive numerous invitations to speak at conferences and legislative hearings, and to attend meetings hosted by various agencies on climate change mitigation and adaptation. For example, our Policy Director Jeanne Merrill was solicited to join the Invasive Species Advisory Council, and our Executive Director Renata Brillinger recently joined the board of the Center for Sustainability at CalPoly University in San Luis Obispo. Jeanne was selected as a member of a new CDFA-led Climate Change Consortium charged with producing a report in 2013 to identify adaptation resources for California producers. Additionally, CalCAN has been invited to join a lobbying coalition to advance policies that protect California farmland, and took part in the founding meeting of a nationwide Rural Climate Network convened by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

Compared to when CalCAN first formed in 2009, there is a much higher degree of awareness among farmers, government agencies and legislative offices about the positive role agriculture can play in providing climate solutions, due in no small part to the role CalCAN has played in raising awareness and advancing policies. Importantly, CalCAN is blazing the trail for a coalition-style approach to state-level policy engagement on behalf of California’s organic and sustainable agriculture community, an entity that has not been fully realized to date.