Healthy Soils Program

CDFA OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING & INNOVATION
Outline

- OEFI Overview
- Program Development Process
- Program Implementation (Incentive Projects)
- Research Component of Program (Demonstration Projects)
- Q&A and Discussion
The mission of the Office of Environmental Farming & Innovation is to serve California by supporting agricultural production and incentivizing practices resulting in a net benefit for the environment through innovation, efficient management and science.

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https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/
Healthy Soils Program

- The Healthy Soils Program (HSP) stems from the California Healthy Soils Initiative, a collaboration of State agencies and departments to promote the development of healthy soils on California's farmlands and ranchlands.

- The HSP has two components:
  - The **HSP Incentives Program** provides financial assistance of up to $100,000 for implementation of conservation management practices that improve soil health, sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
  - The **HSP Demonstration Projects** showcase California farmers and rancher's implementation of HSP practices. Type A projects are required to collect GHG data in addition to outreach (up to $250,000 award), Type B Projects only have outreach requirement (up to $100,000 award).
Program Development

Initial Program Framework Draft

Feedback from:
- State and federal agencies
- Policy documents and research literature
- Public comments
- Stakeholder and partner input
- Academia
- Non-profits
Program Development

Feedback from:
- State and federal agencies
- Policy documents and research literature
- Public comments
- Stakeholder and partner input
- Academia
- Non-profits

Draft RGA for public comments

Initial Program Framework Draft

Finalize Grant Solicitation
Methods to reduce GHGs and enhance soil health

• Direct addition of carbon-rich amendments

• Reducing disturbance of the soil surface

• Adding temporary or permanent plant biomass to the land

• Reduction of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer use
Program Development

• Quantification methodology developed in collaboration with USDA-NRCS and California Air Resources Board (CARB).
  
  • [https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/auction-proceeds/cdfa_hsp_finalqm_2021may20.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/auction-proceeds/cdfa_hsp_finalqm_2021may20.pdf)

• Co-Benefits Quantification: CARB HSP Co-Benefits Calculator Tool
  

• Comet-Planner Tool

• RePlan
Step 1: Begin by naming your project and selecting your state and county

Project Name: [Enter Project Name]
Select State: [Select State]
Select County: [Select County]

Step 2: Select your agricultural system

- Cropland
- Orchard or Vineyard
- Grazing Land

Step 3: Select a NRCS Conservation Program Standard, Conservation Practice Implementation, and Payment Scenario associated with conservation planning objectives that best describe your project. You may add multiple practices, including from different agricultural systems, by returning to Step 1.

Conservation Practice Standard (CPS):
- Alley Cropping (CPS 311)
- Compost Application (CPS 308)
- Conservation Cover (CPS 327)
- Conservation Cover Adoption (CPS 323)
- Contour Buffers (CPS 332)
- Cover Crop (CPS 341)
- Field Border (CPS 386)
- Other (CPS 390)

Practice Implementation:

Payment Scenario:
- Payment Scenario may differ (payment criteria based on state and scenario)

Step 4: Enter the enrollment amount associated with each conservation practice you selected.

Comet Planner
GHG emission reduction and budget
http://comet-planner-cdfahsp.com/

RePlan
Project Design
https://replan-tool.org/cdfa/
Most of the practices incentivized through the HSP are Conservation Practices under the USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives program (EQIP).

Payment rates are doubled from EQIP payment rates to cover the full cost of practice implementation (EQIP has a cost-share expectation).

The HSP Incentives Program provides financial incentives through standard payment rates established for each practice on a unit (per acre) basis.

Two practices, Compost Application and Whole Orchard Recycling, were initially only supported by HSP but are currently in development as Conservation Practices under NRCS.

For Compost and Whole Orchard Recycling, rates were developed based on surveys, subject matter expert consultations and revised based on Program data submitted in earlier years.

Grantees may receive one-time advance payment not exceeding 25% of the total award.
Program Staffing

- 1 Environmental Scientist (supervisor) & 4 Environmental Scientists
  - Responsible for solicitation preparation and working with grantees on verification
- 1 Administrative Analyst
  - Responsible for invoicing and financial forms
Technical Assistance

- CDFA’s Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance (TA) Grants
- University of California Climate Smart Agriculture Community Education Specialists
- Provide assistance with preparing and submission of HSP Incentives Program grant applications, planning and implementation of projects, outreach related to the HSP, multi-lingual support.
Program Implementation

Initial Program Framework Draft

- Draft RGA for public comments
- Finalize Grant Solicitation
- Review of Submitted Applications
- Awards Announced
- Project Implementation

Feedback from:
- State and federal agencies
- Policy documents and research literature
- Public comments
- Stakeholder and partner input
- Academia
- Non-profits
Program Implementation Incentives

- California farmers, ranchers and Federal and California Recognized Native American Indian Tribes.

- University and research farms, and city community gardens are not eligible; these entities may apply for the HSP Demonstration Projects.

- Projects must be located on a California agricultural operation

- Awards are limited to one per agricultural operation using a unique tax identification number per round of funding.

- 3-year Grant Term, Practice implementation years can vary

- Soil organic matter test required for all three years of the grant term.
Practice Implementation & Verification
Practice Breakdown for HSP Incentives Grants 2017-2020

- Compost (Interim CPS 808), 420
- Conservation Cover (CPS 327), 26
- Cover Crop (CPS 340), 187
- Hedgerow Planting (CPS 422), 99
- Mulching (CPS 484), 79
- Nutrient Management (CPS 590), 14
- Pasture and Hay Planting (CPS 512), 8
- Range Planting (CPS 550), 25
- Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (CPS 329), 29
- Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced-Till (CPS 345), 29
- Riparian Forest Buffer (CPS 391), 26
- Silvopasture (CPS 381), 10
- Windbreak/Shelterbreak Establishment (CPS 380), 8
- Other, 32
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (CPS 612), 5
- Strip Cropping (CPS 585), 1
- Whole Orchard Recycling (Interim CPS 808), 2
- Conservation Crop Rotation (CPS 328), 2
- Contour Buffer Strips (CPS 332), 1
- Field Border (CPS 386), 2
- Herbaceous Wind Barriers (CPS 603), 2
- Grassed Waterways (CPS 412), 2
- Prescribed Grazing (CPS 528), 5
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover (CPS 390), 7
- Multi-story Cropping (CPS 379), 2

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Grant numbers as of November 1, 2021:
- 481 Active (79.6%)
- 73 Completed (12.1%)
- 50 Cancelled (8.3%)
  - Selling farm
  - Cannot complete work
  - Covid-19 Pandemic

Incentives Program 2017-2020 Summary by the Numbers
- Total Number of Funded Projects: 604
- Total Greenhouse Gas Reductions: 109,089 MTCO₂e
- Total Practice Implementation Acres: 51,300
Available Funding per Solicitation Year

2017: $1,853,012
2018: $7,118,761
2020: $21,256,724
Program Framework: Demonstration Projects

• Research & Outreach Grants
  • Type A: GHG reductions for proposed practices & outreach
  • Type B: Showcase existing practices (outreach only)

• Eligible Entities
  • Not-for-profit entities
  • University Cooperative Extensions
  • Federal and University Experiment Stations
  • Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)
  • Federal and California Recognized Native American Indian Tribes
  • farmers and/or ranchers in partnership with one of the aforementioned entities

• Higher grant maximum ($250,000) for Type A

• Itemized budgets with direct and indirect costs
Demonstration Field Days

- Demonstration projects must have an outreach component in their project.
- On-farm/online field days mandatory for grant recipients for each of the three years of the grant term.
- Project outreach must be to at least 120 different farmers and rancher attendees.
- Grant recipients must showcase information including but not limited practice implementation techniques, project benefits and successes and lessons learned.
- Recipients provide outreach and education in multiple languages when possible.
Grant numbers as of November 1, 2021:

- 54 Active (76.1%)
- 5 Closed Out – Complete (7%)
- 7 Closed Out – Incomplete (9.9%)
- 5 Cancelled (7%)

Demonstration Projects 2017-2020 Summary by the Numbers

- Total Number of Funded Projects: 71
- Total Greenhouse Gas Reductions: 3,900 MTCO$_2$e
- Total Practice Implementation Acres: 3,036
- Outreach from Closed-out Projects: 1,226 Farmers / Ranchers
Thank you! Questions?

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