



2020 Report to the California Legislature on the Farmer Equity Act

EQUITY



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Statement of the Secretary

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is committed to addressing the challenges facing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers through improved programs, policies and communication. This report outlines the main challenges facing these farmers and ranchers in California and recommendations for how CDFA can address these challenges.

This report is culmination of the first year of enactment of the Farmer Equity Act (AB 1348), which has brought forth many positive changes at CDFA. We recognize the historical legacy of racial inequity in agriculture, and this report is one way to acknowledge this past while simultaneously committing to address equity at the Department.

This is an opportunity for CDFA to be a champion for Governor Newsom's "California For All" and to strengthen the resiliency of California's agriculture industry.

Through this report and the work of CDFA's farmer equity advisor, this agency will continue to improve and enhance our services and support for all of California's farmers and ranchers. We want to see all who are engaged in the agriculture industry thrive and be part of a sustainable future. In order to do this, all farmers need access to the best resources and technology, have equal voices and representation in decision-making processes, and be afforded equal access to information about regulations that affect their businesses.

As we reflect on the work already accomplished in the previous year, I am proud of all that has been done to address these important equity issues and am looking forward to exciting possibilities and new initiatives moving forward.



Karen Ross, Secretary
California Department
of Food and Agriculture

Acknowledgements

CDFA extends its gratitude to the various stakeholder groups, CDFA employees, farmers and ranchers for their time to conduct interviews and complete surveys for the purpose of

this report. CDFA very much appreciates their time, expertise and commitment to farmer equity and looks forward to continued collaboration to address this important issue.

Executive Summary

The Farmer Equity Act (AB 1348) by Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry was signed into law in October 2017. This legislation recognized that California’s farmers and ranchers are made up of a diverse group of people, and not all have historically had access to resources and information in order to successfully run their businesses. This group of farmers and ranchers is considered socially disadvantaged and has faced historical discrimination, some of which still exists today. In order to keep California agriculture thriving, there is a need to invest in the long-term prosperity of all of California’s farmers and ranchers.

AB 1348 states that a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A “socially disadvantaged group” means a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender discrimination. These groups include the following:

- African Americans
- American Indians
- Alaskan Natives
- Hispanics
- Asian Americans
- Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders
- Female farmers and ranchers of color

As recognized in the AB 1348 intent language, female farmers represent less than a quarter of all farmers in the state, and according to the

California’s farmers and ranchers are made up of a diverse group of people, and not all have historically had access to resources and information in order to successfully run their agricultural businesses.

United States Department of Agriculture’s Census of Agriculture, only two percent of California farmers are women of color.

Beyond the specific programmatic recommendations for addressing equity, there is a need to recognize and examine the historical legacy of racial inequity in agriculture and make a concerted effort to begin a healing process for those who have been affected by historical injustices. Recognizing and acknowledging that agriculture is practiced in many ways, at different sizes, for different purposes and by a myriad of different people is the first step.

AB 1348 required that the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature to outline CDFA’s efforts to serve socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in California. The legislation also established a position within the Executive Office to support this work. The Farm Equity Advisor was hired in September 2018 to begin the important work of ensuring

CDFA is committed to addressing the challenges facing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and contributing to Governor Newsom's work to build a California for All.

inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in CDFA's vision and its relevant policies, programs, outreach and communication. CDFA is committed to addressing the challenges facing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and contributing to Governor Newsom's commitment to a California for All.

This report identifies four key challenges facing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and a set of recommendations for CDFA to address each of these challenges.

Land Tenure: Many socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers do not have a stable, long-term arrangement for land. This affects the long-term sustainability of their businesses as well as the ability to incorporate conservation practices.

Language: Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers do not always speak English as a first language. This can be prohibitive when seeking information about regulations, programs, marketing products, pest management, business management, and public engagement.

Engagement with Agricultural Industry and Boards/Commissions: Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers do not often belong to industry groups, and therefore do not always receive information through industry meetings or via the internet. Historically, very few are members of CDFA boards and commissions.

Access to Available Resources and Programs: Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are not familiar with resources such as grants, technical assistance, and other helpful programs because they do not know these resources exist or have been unable to seek out the information.

There are several ways in which CDFA can be a leader in addressing equity:

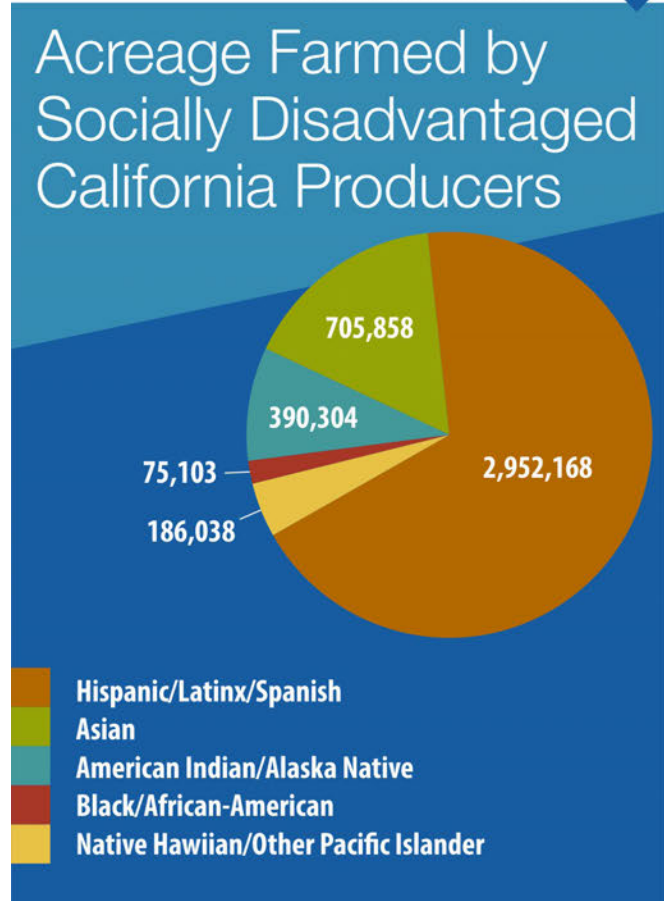
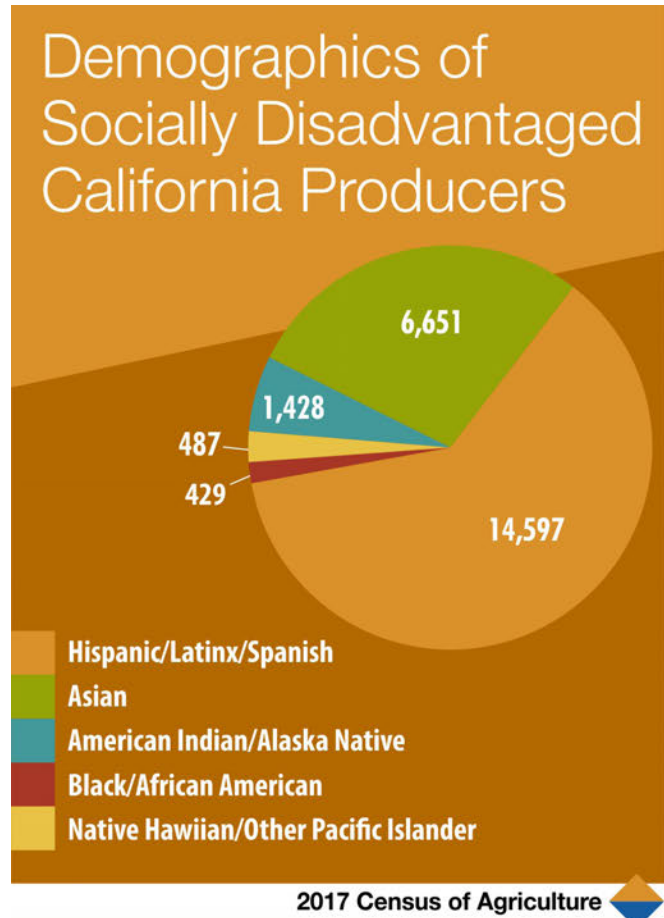
- Outreach, engagement and communication
- Resources and programs
- Policies
- Collaboration with external stakeholder groups
- Interagency collaboration

Introduction

CDFA's mission is to serve the citizens of California by promoting and protecting a safe and healthy food supply, and enhancing local and global agricultural trade through efficient management, innovation and sound science, with a commitment to environmental stewardship. In order to achieve this goal, it is imperative that all farmers and ranchers have access to the best resources and knowledge of important regulations to help run their businesses, and that they have a voice in the future of farming in California.

According to the 2017 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) survey, California's 124,405 farmers include 23,592 socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in California, farming 4,309,471 acres. These farmers were located in almost all 58 counties of the state, but most heavily concentrated in San Diego, Fresno, Tulare, Stanislaus and Riverside counties. Note: In a separate question on the Ag Census, 1,382 socially disadvantaged farmers reported "more than one race."

The USDA NASS survey is completed every five years and provides important data about California's farms and farmers. Currently, this is the only consistent data collection method available nationwide to understand demographics in the agricultural industry. It is important to note that this survey has its limitations, especially with regards to accurately capturing the data from socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. It is a voluntary survey that is mailed out to registered farms and ranchers. The survey asks in-depth questions about demographics, farm income and commodities produced on the farm. Many farmers and ranchers did not respond



Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers represent 19 percent – nearly 1 in 5 – of California’s total agricultural producers.

| USDA-NASS, 2017 Ag Census |

to the survey. The NASS data is a baseline for better understanding of the landscape of California’s agricultural producers. However, this data set is not a complete picture of California agriculture.

Urban agriculture is another area where there is a lack of statewide data, both for numbers and demographics of operators. There have been regional studies and reports, but not a statewide project focused on compiling the data to better understand the landscape of urban agriculture. However, there are growing numbers of urban and peri-urban agricultural operations, and in rural areas, backyard operations are providing food for multiple households. In places where city ordinances are favorable, there are opportunities for backyard operations to sell their products.

Additionally, there are many types of urban agriculture operations that work to address food insecurity. A recent 2018 urban farm survey of 35 agriculture operations in the East Bay found that 80% were non-profit organizations, 20% were for-profit operations, and 66% were women-led (Sowerwine et al. 2018: <http://food.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Urban-Farms-Web-1.pdf>). Survey respondents

also identified that one of the biggest challenges was access to government grants. Urban agriculture operations are not always a for-profit “traditional” farm business model, and this can preclude their access to government grants, resources and programs. Most importantly, the focus or mission of many urban farms is a combination of community education and addressing food insecurity. Just from this survey alone, the average urban farm provided food for 235 people each season. Urban agriculture is an important asset and component of California agriculture that is often not equated with rural agriculture, but one that continues to grow and develop in scope and importance.

This report summarizes findings from fifteen in-depth interviews with CDFA Division Directors and staff, eight interviews with representatives of six government agencies who also work with agricultural communities, thirteen interviews with external partner stakeholder groups, and a survey administered to members of CDFA boards and committees. There were also in-depth interviews with fifteen farms representing 33 individual farmers, and a quantitative analysis of CDFA grant programs.

Recommendations for Addressing Challenges Facing Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

1. Land Tenure

A primary challenge facing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in California is land tenure. Although the 2017 Ag Census reported that the majority of all demographic groups of farmers and ranchers in California own their land, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers face significant land tenure challenges. Specifically, many socially disadvantaged farmers operate on leased land without a long-term lease arrangement or protections in cases of lease termination. It is difficult for these farmers to plan for the future or implement conservation practices when lease terms are year-to-year. Often farmers operate on parcels of land that are not suitable for agriculture, and according to one interviewee, they just “have to make it work, because there is no other land available.” Other farmers, faced with increased rent costs, find it too expensive to keep leasing the land. In addition, many socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers do not speak English as a first language, which can make understanding lease arrangements and costs to lease land difficult. This challenge is compounded in urban and peri-urban areas where land is scarce and more expensive to purchase or lease.

Ten of the 15 farm businesses interviewed for this report have moved their operations at least once during the past year due to an increase in rent, lease termination or natural resource issues such as lack of water, poor soil and



Farm Location:

Elk Grove, Sacramento County

Legislative Representatives:

Assemblymember Jim Cooper, District 9
Senator Dr. Richard Pan, District 6

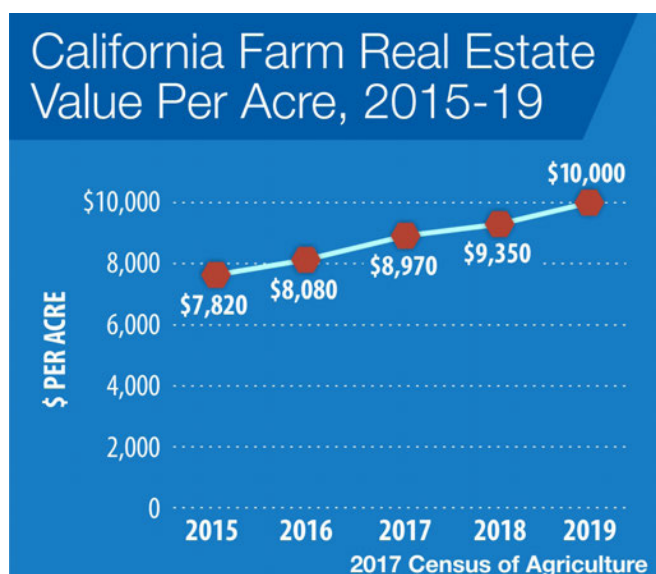
Nathan and Fam farmed five acres of strawberries on a parcel sub-leased to several Hmong and Mien farmers. They utilized organic practices and also implanted several conservation practices with grant assistance, including compost application and hedgerows. After several years of leasing land at the site, rising rent and decreased water allotments led to the decision not to renew their lease in 2020. They moved their entire farm and infrastructure to a smaller half-acre plot.

“Our biggest challenge is the uncertainty. We can’t plan ahead for anything, which is very hard when you are a farmer. Even though we have a good relationship with the new landlord, we don’t know what will happen after this year.”

flooding. Thirty of the 33 individual farmers interviewed operated on leased land, and 75% of those farmers were unsure if they would operate under the same lease after the 2019 growing season.

Socially disadvantaged farmers are often not able to access capital to purchase land, thus are more likely to lease. Many traditional banks do not have loan programs that serve small-scale or beginning farmers. There are several loan programs that are available to serve these farmers and ranchers through California Farmlink and the USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA). However, many socially disadvantaged farmers are unaware of those loan programs.

Land tenure is an issue that can affect farmers and ranchers' eligibility for CDFA resources such as grants as well as inform their decisions on adopting long-term conservation practices. This is a key issue that should be recognized when developing programs, policies and resources because it affects all aspects of farm businesses, regardless of crop type or size or location of the farm. For beginning farmers with little or no access to capital or existing land in California, land tenure is the single most important and difficult issue to address in order to begin a farm business.



Recommendations

1. Outreach and Education: Identify opportunities for cross-promotion of CDFA programs with USDA-FSA and other non-profit organizations' programs, loans and other resources that assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Opportunities could include: conferences, listening sessions, grower field days and CDFA website and social media channels.

2. Recognize and incorporate land tenure issues and leased land in CDFA's programs and policies. Review grant program guidelines to ensure that farmers who operate on leased land have equal access to apply for grant programs, and encourage these farmers to participate in the programs. Consider how CDFA policies or statewide policies might affect farmers who have short-term leases.

3. Interagency Collaboration: Enhance inter-governmental agency collaboration by including opportunities to build awareness of land tenure issues to leverage funding, programs and land tenure policies that will better serve socially disadvantaged farmers and their communities. Specifically, partner with the Department of Conservation to identify opportunities to address accessibility for beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers into existing agricultural land conservation programs in the state. It is important to ensure that the interagency collaboration occurs at all levels, so that all agency staff can better understand land tenure issues. Program-level staff communicate regularly with farmers, and thus would be a valuable component to discussions about land tenure in addition to leadership-level participation. This is an excellent opportunity to also engage with external stakeholder groups such as

County Agricultural Commissioners, University of California Cooperative Extension, California Resource Conservation Districts, land trusts, California Farm Bureau Federation and other non-profit organizations.

2. Language

Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers do not always speak English as a first language. Many recent immigrants and immigrants who have lived in California for generations, who were skilled agriculturalists in their home countries, have chosen to become farmers or ranchers in California. Some of these farmers have found niche markets to sell their crops and grow their businesses. Many struggle to find resources and information because the majority of the information available about farming practices, programs, marketing and regulations is in English. Many of the skilled agriculturalists who start farming upon arriving in California are older, and often struggle to learn English. Often, these older farmers ask their children or grandchildren for translation assistance. Along with language differences, cultural differences are important to understand when designing outreach and education and conveying information about regulations and policies. There are also many diverse cultures and languages spoken within different countries, thus many immigrant farmers could speak indigenous languages and follow customs that are not widely recognized or known here in California. Of the 33 individual farmers interviewed for this report, 28 did not speak English as their first language, and 26 of those 28 were first-generation immigrants to California.



Misayel, Gerardo & Luis

Farm Location:

Watsonville, Santa Cruz County

Legislative Representatives:

**Assemblymember Mark Stone, District 29
Senator Bill Monning, District 17**

Misayel, Gerardo and Luis farm a 20-acre plot of organic mixed vegetables on the Central Coast, near Watsonville. They are in their second season of farming there and have had many challenges with soil fertility and pest control. One of their biggest challenges has been to find information and resources about soil fertility and pest control in Spanish. Beginning, small-scale farmers often do not have the ability to pay a consultant to assist with these issues. Pictured with the farmers is Sacha Lozano with the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District. Technical assistance providers like Sacha help farmers implement conservation practices and help solve critical challenges like soil fertility for beginning farmers.

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Recognizing the clear need to provide increased communication in different languages, in 2019, CDFA took an important step and hired a new public affairs position to conduct outreach and increase communication with Spanish-speaking farmers and ranchers. Spanish is the most common spoken language among farmers and ranchers in California after English, so CDFA saw this position as instrumental to expanding CDFA's resources and information.

In 2019, CDFA created a Spanish-language Twitter account, is now translating all CDFA news releases into Spanish and is assisting in translating important public facing documents for farmers and ranchers for conferences, workshops and events. Additionally, there are now dedicated public outreach staff for the Office of Environmental Innovation (OEFI), Inspection Services Division and CalCannabis Cultivation Licensing Division (CalCannabis). The combination of dedicated staff for programs affecting farmers as well as a person dedicated to outreach and engagement with Hispanic and Spanish-speaking farmers and ranchers, will enhance the language access for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers over the coming year. Additionally, the Farm Equity Advisor will continue to work with CDFA divisions and the public affairs team to identify and address language access and communication.

Recommendations

1. Communication: Continue to build capacity for CDFA bilingual staff to communicate and engage with farmers in multiple languages through formalizing a translation program and offering training on effective outreach for staff who engage with farmers in various capacities.

CDFA has 74 total staff certified for verbal translation in three languages: Spanish, Mandarin and Tagalog. Currently, there is an incentive program for CDFA staff to become certified through a test for bilingual competency, which also includes a pay incentive. Staff with bilingual capabilities are a strong asset, and this asset could be further developed into job duties. CDFA is exploring ways to formalize this program and offer opportunities to recognize language capabilities to improve communication with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Training opportunities should include outreach and engagement strategies and important cultural considerations of various groups of farmers and ranchers. It is especially critical for positions that engage directly with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, to have a point of contact that speaks the same language and understands different agricultural and cultural practices. This will increase the likelihood of farmer participation in programs.

2. Policies, Resources and Programs: Department-wide written translation services that specialize in certified agricultural translation.

Developing materials in other languages is critical to helping non-English-speaking farming communities understand CDFA's programs, resources and policies. Some programs provide this service on an ad-hoc basis but there is a need for Department-wide written translation services with certified translators who understand agriculture and agricultural terms.

3. Communication: Continue to develop and enhance the CDFA website with information and resources in other languages and explore outreach and engagement via other communication channels utilized by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

CDFA recognizes the need for multiple languages to be available on the department's website and has taken several important steps in 2019 to improve language accessibility. The CDFA website now has a [dedicated page for farmer resources](#), and it will be available in Spanish by May 2020. A Google translate button will be added to increase access to materials in other languages in addition to Spanish. Public affairs staff and the Farm Equity Advisor will continue to explore new methods of culturally relevant communication in addition to the website. These methods of communication could include radio, smart phone applications, social media, community gatherings, festivals and conferences.

3. Engagement with Agricultural Industry and CDFA Boards and Commissions

Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are not likely to engage with traditional agricultural industry groups, marketing associations or decision-making bodies such as CDFA boards and commissions. They are also not likely to attend public meetings about regulations affecting their farms, particularly if the meetings are held only in a language they do not speak or understand. Because these farmers are not engaged with "traditional" opportunities for information, policy and decision-making, they are not often receiving important information, and their voices are not always included in important policies that affect their farm businesses.



Farm Location:
Allensworth, Tulare County

Legislative Representatives:
Assemblymember Devon Mathis, Dist. 26
Senator Melissa Hurtado, District 14

Dennis has a 60-acre farm planted in certified organic alfalfa. Dennis strives to build his farm operation to be able to provide economic opportunities for the residents of Allensworth, a historically African American community that has few job opportunities and high rates of poverty. He strives to make his business sustainable so he can offer year-round employment and a living wage to his employees.

"I consider myself to be well-connected with resources available for farmers. If I didn't know about CDFA programs, then most people don't know. I have sought out support and looked for resources to help this business... More should be done to get the word out, especially if there are programs that directly benefit farmers."

Currently, CDFA engages with farmers and ranchers through in-person public meetings, conferences and workshops, the CDFA website, CDFA press releases, the Planting Seeds blog and email listservs with stakeholder groups. Currently press releases are released in English and Spanish.

Farmer Engagement with the Agricultural Industry

In the course of interviewing farmers for this report, 85% of the interviewees said they did not attend industry meetings because they did not feel the meeting applied to them. 50% said they did not regularly hear about meetings, and that the meetings were held at times when they were working on the farm. Additionally, 55% stated they did not join an association or commodity group because they did not see a value in joining the group. Only two of the 33 farmers interviewed for this report knew about boards and commissions or how to join a CDFA board or commission, and only one had applied for a position. Furthermore, only three farmers indicated they might be interested in joining a board or commission, but stated they were unsure of the time commitment and travel costs and didn't feel that they could contribute much to the group.

Engagement and outreach with socially disadvantaged farmers depends on time, trust and an understanding of the different challenges in different regions of California. CDFA recognizes that partnerships with external stakeholder

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groups are critical for engagement and outreach with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers primarily rely on locally based technical assistance providers like University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) staff or Resource Conservation Districts for information regarding their farm businesses and regulations that apply to their businesses. CDFA also relies on these same organizations to assist in important outreach and engagement regarding grant programs and regulations that affect farmers and ranchers. The University of California Cooperative Extension is the key organization dedicated to providing direct engagement

The University of California Cooperative Extension Small Farm Advisor in Fresno County reports that 78 percent of farmers accessing extension services there are farmers of color.

and outreach with farmers and ranchers statewide, and has advisors, veterinarians and small farm advisors and associated staff who are key links between California farmers and ranchers and CDFA programs, resources and regulations.

CDFA works hand-in-hand with outreach organizations to reach and engage with farmers and ranchers. CDFA's current outreach and engagement model is to collaborate with or directly fund partner organizations such as the Farm Bureau, Resource Conservation Districts, County Agricultural Commissioners and other non-profits organizations who work directly with these farmers. In 2019, CDFA acquired one-year grant funding through the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to fund ten short-term staff positions within UCCE to assist farmer and ranchers in applying for the CDFA Climate Smart Agriculture programs. This technical assistance model has already seen positive results, with 95 new applicants to the CDFA Climate Smart Agriculture programs in 2019. In 2020, CDFA and SGC extended this funding for an additional two years, through 2022. There would also be secondary benefits to CDFA stakeholder organizations and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers for this type of partnership, if the positions were to be established as long-term positions.

UCCE provides trusted assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers throughout California. Partnership with UCCE staff is critical to the success of CDFA's programs. There is a growing need for dedicated staff who share a cultural background and speak the same language as the farming community.



Michael Yang, UCCE

Legislative Representatives:

Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula, District 31

Senator Melissa Hurtado, District 14

Michael Yang has worked for the UCCE in Fresno for 25 years. He grew up in Fresno, and his mother was one of many local Hmong family farmers. Michael has become a fully trained expert in pest management, production practices, marketing, and other topics that pertain to farmers in the Fresno area. But most of all, he is a trusted resource for the Hmong farming community, as well as for other organizations around the state that are trying to serve the Hmong farming community. Michael hosts a weekly radio show in Hmong where he discusses various topics for farmers.

Michael is pictured with a Hmong farmer who grows mixed Asian vegetables, and obtained SWEEP funding to upgrade his irrigation system to conserve water.

“This type of outreach requires a one-on-one type of work. When working with agricultural industry groups, it is easy to connect and get on an agenda and they have the infrastructure to respond to policy, public comment, research, etc. But there’s no infrastructure among socially disadvantaged farmer communities. There’s just no place where these groups gather. More than being able to speak the language, it’s just hard to break into the farmer world if you aren’t already involved with a farming family.”

| Climate Smart Ag Specialist |

Recommendations – Outreach and Engagement

1. Collaboration with External Stakeholder Groups: Build upon existing programs and continue to support long-term funded partnerships with UCCE advisors, veterinarians and small farm advisors who work with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. This is a critical statewide program and essential partnership model for CDFA to ensure that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers engage with the agriculture industry and gain access to resources and information.

2. Outreach and Education: In addition to building strong partnerships, identify training needs for engagement and outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Provide opportunities for CDFA staff, UCCE, California Farm Bureau Federation, California Resource Conservation Districts and other non-profit organizations to share ideas and develop best practices for engaging socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers with the agriculture industry and increase participation on CDFA boards and commissions. Focus areas for training

should include cultural awareness, communication methods and outreach and engagement practices. The Farm Equity Advisor can identify and offer these training opportunities to address this recommendation.

Farmer Engagement with CDFA Boards and Commissions

An additional challenge that was noted within farmer interviews was the lack of knowledge or engagement with CDFA boards and commissions. Only two out of 33 farmers indicated they knew about CDFA boards and commissions and only three indicated they would be interested in joining a board or commission. CDFA has 35 boards, commissions and committees that function to guide policies, regulations and information for California farmers. New member positions are advertised through CDFA news releases and different listserv groups, as well as in agriculture publications and among industry stakeholder groups. For the purpose of this report, an anonymous survey was distributed only to the 35 boards, committees and commissions that do not fall under a marketing order or marketing program, as stipulated in AB

1348 language. There were 106 responses to the survey. The survey was designed to better understand communication, logistics and board tenure in order to begin to develop a more robust communication and outreach plan.

It is a priority for CDFA to increase outreach and engagement of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers with CDFA boards and commissions. CDFA has taken initial steps to expand recruitment and outreach strategies to encourage a diverse pool of candidates to apply, and the department is committed to do even more. The following recommendations will help to increase representation and participation.

Recommendations for Engagement with CDFA Boards and Commissions:

1. Outreach and Education: Over the course of 2020, share survey results with CDFA board and commission members, CDFA division directors and CDFA board liaison staff and discuss opportunities to expand recruitment methods and communication strategies. A specific focus should be to increase female farmers participation. Currently females represent only 10% of CDFA board and committee members.

2. Communication: Expand current CDFA board and commission index website to include basic information about each board, commission or committee, such as a brief description of their purpose, the number of members, the location of meetings, position tenure and how to apply.

Myrna Arambula

Farm Location:
Holtville,
Imperial County

Legislative Representatives:
Assemblymember
Eduardo Garcia,
District 56

Senator Ben Hueso, District 40

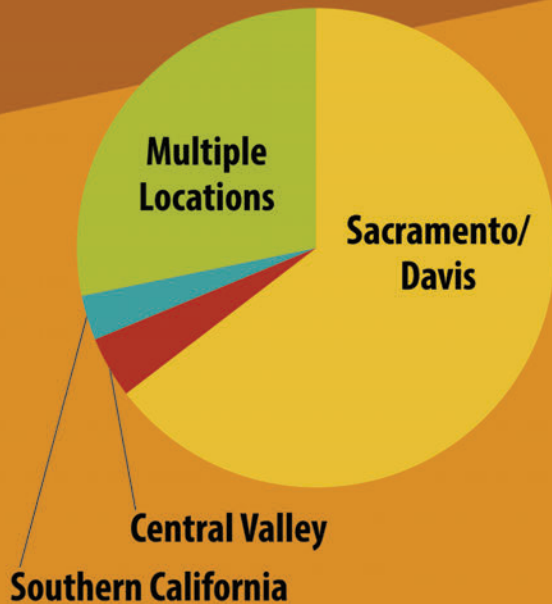


In 2013, Myrna was farming culinary herbs near Westmoreland. She only had a 6-month lease. Soon after planting the herbs, including rosemary and tarragon, which are perennial crops, the land owner unexpectedly told her the lease wouldn't be renewed. Myrna was able to purchase 45 acres near Holtville and is in a phase of slowly rebuilding after losing her entire stock. But she is confident now because she has permanent land.

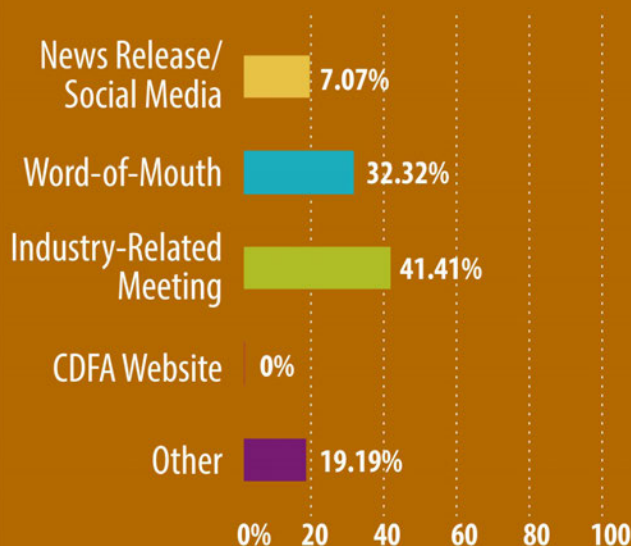
For Myrna and her farm manager, Alma, the biggest challenge is that they are located so far away from markets that wholesale is often the only option. She would like to sell direct to restaurants but doesn't know how to get in contact with restaurants in the San Diego area. They are often competing with very large herb farms.

Myrna received USDA EQIP funding for conservation practices such as a hoop house and irrigation practices and is also a certified organic farm through California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF).

Meeting Locations for CDFA Boards & Commissions



How did board members hear about the position?

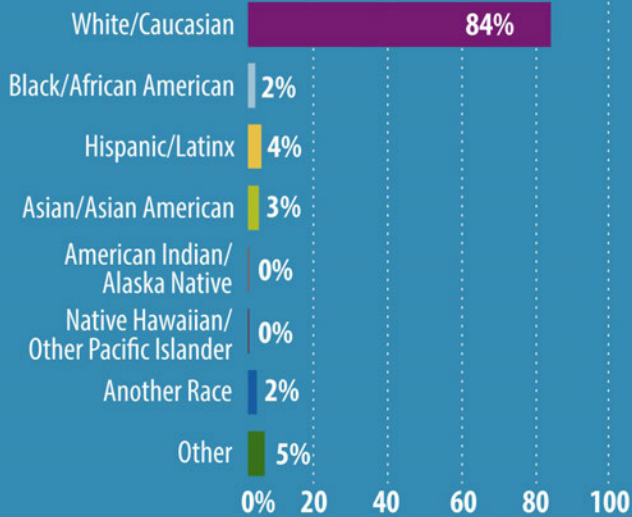


3. Communication: Expand current outreach and recruitment strategies for new board members. Work together with current board members and CDFA Division Directors to enhance direct recruitment of new members.

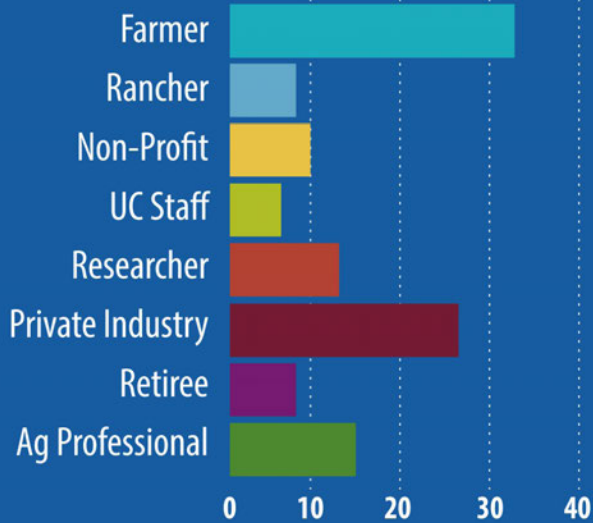
4. Training: Offer annual training for board and commission members about cultural considerations, communication and outreach strategies to enhance current board members' awareness of these issues and develop solutions

5. Access to meetings: Work directly with CDFA boards and committees to include electronic accessibility via webinar or telephone for boards and committee meetings. Include considerations for small- or medium-sized farm owners who may also be parents, or who may be working on the farm during the normal business day. Considerations include: family-friendly venues or evening or early morning board meetings times. As the graphs indicate, an overwhelming majority of board and commission meetings are held in Sacramento, and nearly all meetings are conducted in person. This is certainly an advantage for conducting board business; however, for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, particularly smaller, family owned operations that do not have employees, this could be a barrier to participation. There is a critical need to make the meetings accessible using technology, such as webinar, phone call, or moving the meeting to different locations around the state. Additionally, if farmers do not have internet access, measures could be taken to ensure there is a location where they can access the internet/webinar. For example, arrangements could be made at a local CDFA field office, County Agricultural Commissioner offices or a USDA office for webinar access.

CDFA Board and Commission Member Demographics



CDFA Board and Commission Member Occupations



Sol Seeker Farm

Farm Location:
King City,
Monterey County

Legislative Representatives:

Assemblymember Robert Rivas, District 30
Senator Anna M. Caballero, District 12



Kaley Grimland-Mendoza and Edgar Mendoza have raised certified organic chickens, ducks and turkeys since 2014. Edgar studied agriculture and farmed in his native Paraguay. Kaley is a farm loan specialist with USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA) who works on food safety issues. They had been leasing land for six years and had to move their pastured poultry farm operation twice. They were finally able to purchase land in 2019 thanks to a USDA-FSA loan. However, land costs forced them to purchase land one hour south of where they live and where their young children attend school.

“One of the biggest challenges for small farmers is food safety. CDFA needs staff who know agriculture and speak Spanish. Someone who understands organic, can provide education on basic recordkeeping, and can also be available during food safety audits, especially if the auditors do not speak Spanish.”

4. Knowledge of Available Resources and Programs

Many socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers do not have knowledge of available resources and programs. Of the 33 farmers interviewed for this report, only five had knowledge of CDFA grant programs. Three of those five farmers spoke English as their first language. One farmer, who used the internet frequently and had received USDA funding for several practices on his farm, also did not know there was a CDFA website. The 12 farmers who were aware of CDFA reported that they had visited the website for the purpose of learning about regulations related to their farm business. Socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers can greatly benefit from incentive programs and indirectly from grant programs that prioritize funding for socially disadvantaged groups. This represents an opportunity for CDFA to increase outreach and communication about grant programs in order to increase participation by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Currently, CDFA has several grant programs that are directly and indirectly available for farmers and ranchers. The three main grant programs that directly affect or include farmers and ranchers are the Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP), the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and the Climate Smart Agriculture Programs, which include the Healthy Soils Program, the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program, the Alternative Manure Management Program and the Dairy Digester Research Program. Additionally, a new Biologically Integrated Farming System grant was released in 2019. The Climate Smart Agriculture Programs are unique in that farmers can apply directly for the funding, whereas the other programs are for 501(c)(3) organizations,

but the projects can include specific groups of farmers. These grant programs are integral to the work that CDFA does and they allow for research and innovation in various sectors.

In 2019, several new practices were implemented within CDFA's grant programs. These modifications are important steps to encourage socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to apply for the programs and to increase support for organizations that serve socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. For example, the Climate Smart Agriculture Programs prioritized funding for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and female farmers. In the first round of grant funding for the Healthy Soils Program, which prioritized socially disadvantaged applicants, nearly 50% of funded projects were from these groups. The range in size of operation for applicants was between 1.25 acres and 31,000 acres. The average size was 1,296 acres. The top counties for funded projects were Fresno, Sonoma, Solano and Butte counties.

Farmers applied for the following conservation practices within the Healthy Soils Program: alley cropping, compost application, cover crop,

In the first round of grant funding for the Healthy Soils Program, which prioritized socially disadvantaged applicants, nearly 50% of funded projects were from these (socially disadvantaged and female farmer) groups. The range in size of operation for applicants was between 1.25 acres and 31,000 acres. The average size was 1,296 acres.

Selected Grant Programs at CDFA



The Specialty Crop Block Grant

Program administers an annual USDA grant to serve the specialty crop agricultural industry. Non-profit organizations and research institutions are eligible to apply. There are different grant program priorities and categories under which to apply, as well as an external technical review committee for each category. CDFA's Office of Grants Administration takes comprehensive action to improve the benefit of the program for social disadvantaged/beginning farmers and underserved communities.

The State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program

(SWEET) provides financial assistance in the form of grants to implement irrigation systems that reduce GHGs and save water on California agricultural operations.



The Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP) funds and facilitates research to advance the environmentally safe and agronomically sound use and handling of fertilizing materials. FREP serves growers, agricultural supply and service professionals, extension personnel, public agencies, consultants, and other interested parties.



CDFA's Dairy Digester Research and Development

Program provides financial assistance to help dairies install digesters that capture methane to generate energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Dairy digesters are a remarkable technology that uses livestock manure to produce methane, which is a renewable source of electrical energy generation and transportation fuel.

CDFA's Alternative Manure Management

Program (AMMP) provides financial assistance for the implementation of non-digester manure management practices in California, which will result in reduced GHGs. Alternative manure management practices involve handling manure in ways that don't involve using an anaerobic digester.



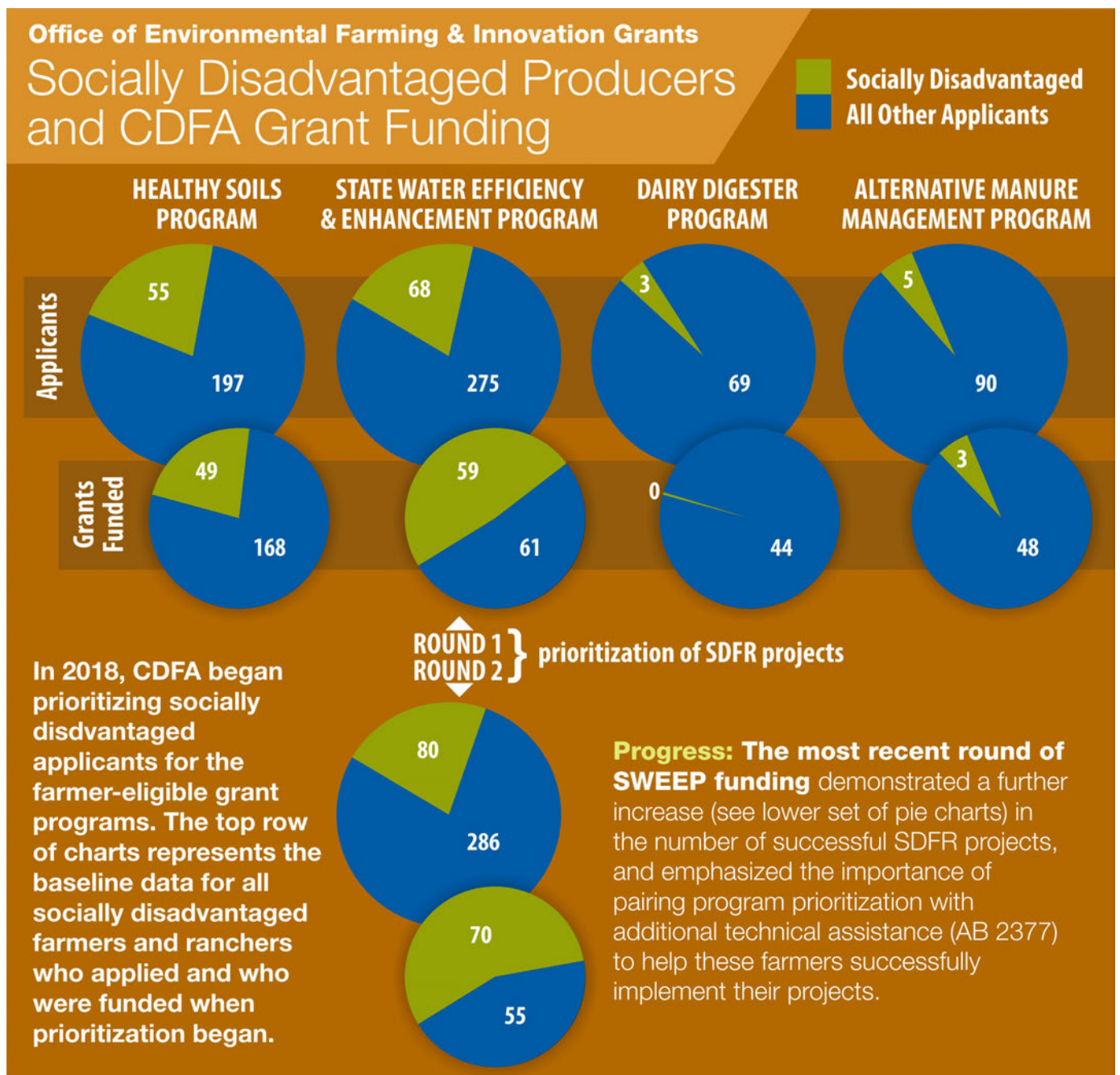
The Healthy Soils Program provides incentives for conservation practices to improve soil health, sequester carbon and reduce GHG emissions. Demonstration projects also showcase these practices so other farmers and ranchers can see what's possible.



conservation crop rotation, no-till, reduced till, filter strip, forage and biomass planting, grassed waterway, prescribed grazing, hedgerow, mulching, multi-story cropping, nutrient management, range planting, riparian forest buffer, riparian herbaceous cover, Silvopasture, windbreak or shelterbreak, field border, and tree or shrub establishment.

In April 2019, the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program created a new category for first-time applicants and provided direct

assistance to applicants to submit their proposals. Seven projects were funded through this effort, and the program priorities were updated to include this focus within the 2020 request for proposals. This is an example of a grant program being responsive to an identified need and increasing access for organizations who serve socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. When a program prioritizes different groups of farmers in the request for proposals, there is a direct increase in applications



that serve these groups of farmers. In 2015, the SCBG program priorities included a focus on projects serving socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The number of projects awarded funding for those groups increased from three in 2014 to 10 in 2015. Likewise, the program priorities around food access in underserved communities were refined in 2015 and the number of projects awarded funding that benefitted these communities increased from four in 2014 to six in 2015. Under the 2014-2016 Farm Bill, CDFA's Grants Office funded 16 SCBG projects totaling \$4,475,678 that benefit socially disadvantaged/beginning farmers, 23 projects totaling \$6,024,480 that benefit underserved communities and two projects totaling \$253,548 that benefit both socially/disadvantaged beginning farmers and underserved communities. This graph demonstrates the increase in the numbers of proposals focused on socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers when the request for proposals included a priority for this focus.

Additionally, CDFA implemented the requirements of AB 2377, which developed a grant program to fund technical assistance providers to assist farmers and ranchers to apply and implement the Climate Smart Agriculture Programs. This new program prioritized funding for organizations that are directly working with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers; applications were prioritized for organizations that spent at least 25% of their time serving socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Additionally, this program offers funding for organizations to help farmers implement their Climate Smart Agriculture project. Assisting farmers with implementation was one of the challenges identified by stakeholder groups in previous rounds of funding. This program ensures socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers throughout the state will have increased access to CDFA incentive programs

Nikiko Masumoto

Farm Location:
Fresno County

Legislative Representatives:
Assemblymember
Joaquin Arambula,
District 31

Senator Melissa Hurtado, District 14



Nikiko Masumoto is a third-generation Japanese-American farmer in Fresno county, farming 80 acres of certified organic peaches, nectarines, apricots and grapes (for raisins) with her father David Mas Masumoto. The farm was started in 1948 by Nikiko's grandfather.

“One of the biggest challenges as a female farmer is having a voice on policy issues such as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)... There are inherent complexities that often involve power and historical access issues, that are replicated when new policies are formed. It is difficult to find information about the time, location and agenda for local SGMA meetings; once I arrive, it is often a room with 80-90% white men representing the largest farming operations in the area. I can't even imagine how I would find the information if English wasn't my first language,” Nikiko says.

Natural resources and climate change issues – policies and regulations that affect all scales of agricultural production – must include an “equity lens.”

and will also ensure that technical assistance providers are focusing their efforts on assisting these farmers to apply for the programs.

In the Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP), four grant projects have focused on socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Two of those four projects focused on translating materials into other languages, whereas the other two focused on specific groups to conduct research and outreach. This grant program has incorporated several innovative ideas into its design, including grower training workshops throughout the Central Valley to assist growers with requirements for the Irrigated Lands Program and certifying their Nitrogen Management Plans. Additionally, FREP produces a blog and an events calendar that lists upcoming workshops and conferences. This is an example of how a CDFA grant program can highlight and incorporate additional outreach and education components for farmers and ranchers in response to regulations that will affect their farming operations.

Recommendations

1. Continue to design grant programs with considerations or priority funding for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers,

and continue to build stakeholder feedback into the process. This will ensure more socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have the opportunity to apply for and obtain grant funding for their operations.

2. Resources and Programs: Continue to design regulatory programs with an educational component that includes information in other languages. It is critical that education and outreach is provided to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers alongside the implementation of regulations. Three CDFA

Three CDFA divisions - Inspection Services, Animal Health and Food Safety Services, and CalCannabis - have all developed educational components to their regulatory programs. Opportunities where farmers can first learn how to comply with regulations by interacting with CDFA staff can go a long way in building strong partnerships and trust among socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

divisions - Inspection Services, Animal Health and Food Safety Services, and CalCannabis - have all developed educational components to their regulatory programs. Opportunities where farmers can first learn how to comply with regulations by interacting with CDFA staff can go a long way in building strong partnerships and trust among socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

3. Communication and Engagement: Continue to formalize strategies for outreach and engagement with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers that include, for example, sharing information about grant programs and regulations with other government agencies. The Farm Equity Advisor is working with CDFA programs to hold a meeting annually with a focus on socially

disadvantaged farmers and ranchers with translation services provided during the meetings. The Farm Equity Advisor is also working to identify opportunities to present annually at inter-governmental agency meetings on grant programs and regulatory outreach strategies. Additionally, the 2019 Grant Information Act (AB 2252) will require all grants to be registered with the California State Library so there will be a statewide catalogue with consistent information about all available funding opportunities available for potential applicants.

4. Programs and Resources: Develop long-term program evaluation and metrics for all grant programs, designed with input from interested stakeholder groups and including methods for gaining feedback from grant recipients. Ensure that the data is utilized to inform programmatic decisions and goals. This practice will ensure that programmatic decisions are data-driven and that grant programs align with other statewide regulatory goals. As funding allows, an external evaluator should be hired to provide an un-biased method of feedback. Grant programs that affect farmers and ranchers, including socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, need to incorporate careful consideration of program priorities, metrics, goals, and a framework for continual participant feedback.

5. Outreach and Communication: Continue to highlight and promote stories of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers who have received CDFA funding, as well as those who have been directly impacted by other CDFA grant funding, or farmers who have interacted with one of CDFA's educational programs about regulations. Utilize social media and promote the stories in multiple languages to ensure more farmers and ranchers know about these opportunities.



Farm Location:
Berkeley, Alameda County

Legislative Representatives:
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, District 15
Senator Nancy Skinner, District 9

Moretta Brown and Marianne Olney-Hamel are the two farm managers for this urban Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, which is operated at three sites, in backyard plots. The farm is primarily raised-bed vegetables, fruit and herbs; they grew more than 30 crops this season and fed 30 people through the CSA program. They also sell and donate to a local soup kitchen.

The biggest challenge is farming in multiple locations – but locally available resources, services, programs and customers are among the “ecosystem benefits” of farming in an urban area. Success here depends on the community, and on homeowners who are willing to let their backyards be used for food production. There is a need to recognize such community efforts, such as with tax incentives and favorable city policies, to incentivize homeowners to participate and support urban agriculture.

Recommendations for Addressing Farmer Equity within CDFA

Beyond the specific programmatic recommendations for addressing equity, there is a need for CDFA to recognize and examine the historical legacy of racial inequity in agriculture and make a concerted effort to begin a healing process for those who have been affected by historical injustices. There are opportunities for CDFA as an organization to set an example of what “California For All” can mean in the agricultural sector. The first step is recognizing and acknowledging that agriculture is practiced in many ways, at different sizes, for different purposes and by a myriad of different people. Anyone who grows food or other agricultural commodities and cares for the earth and its natural resources should be celebrated, acknowledged and lifted as a respected professional who is doing their part to feed their family and nurture the rest of the world in the process. There are several ways in which CDFA can be a champion and a leader by focusing on strengthening internal practices, reflecting the broader community by including an equity lens, and also promoting collaboration across government agencies on important equity issues.

Recommendations

1. Participation in the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) training. Expanding this training beyond the Farm Equity Advisor to additional staff will provide valuable racial equity tools and training. Program staff can then return and offer smaller trainings as it pertains to their division.

There are several ways in which CDFA can be a champion and a leader by focusing on strengthening internal practices, reflecting the broader community by including an equity lens, and also promoting collaboration across government agencies on important equity issues.

2. CDFA should ensure that different types of farmers are featured in public outreach materials, on the website, in blog posts and on social media to highlight the diversity of California’s farmers and ranchers and the important contributions that these people are making in agriculture. Specifically, farmers of color, female farmers and urban farmers should be highlighted for their important contributions to agriculture.

3. CDFA can be a leader in increasing interagency collaboration at the top and bottom levels. Creating a shared understanding of the challenges facing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and rural communities will provide value as state agencies continue to address water quality regulations, pesticides, air quality, and water supply. This can be accomplished through convening key staff from agencies who serve rural and agricultural communities to discuss shared outreach strategies, programs and opportunities to leverage funding. Examples of agencies include the Department of Conservation, Department of Pesticide Regulation, California Air Resources Board, Water Resources Control

Board, Environmental Protection Agency, Strategic Growth Council, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, also known as Go-Biz.

As one interviewee stated, "All agencies can learn from each other, and we need to build a framework for reaching and engaging with these farmers and ranchers. When funding becomes available, such as through the recent ban on Chlorpyrifos, we need to use these opportunities to leverage funding to improve outreach and communication as well as form working groups to improve cross-agency collaboration."

By the end of 2021, an update on the progress of these recommendations and any further recommendations will be submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture. Just as outreach and engagement take time and trust, changing practices will also take time and trust -- but beginning the conversation is an important first step. CDFA has begun to take the first steps to addressing farmer equity and ensuring farmers of color, women farmers and urban farmers have equitable access to CDFA programs, resources, policies and information, and will continue to prioritize this work through the Farm Equity Advisor position and a shared understanding of governing by our values of growth and inclusion.

All agencies can learn from each other, and we need to build a framework for reaching and engaging with these farmers and ranchers.

The Bautista Family

Farm Location:
Mecca,
Riverside County

Legislative Representatives:
Assemblymember
Eduardo Garcia, District 56
Senator (Vacant), District 5



The Bautista family has been farming 14 acres of certified organic dates in Mecca since 1999. Alicia and Maricela's father bought the farm when the landowner retired, and now the entire family of six all work for the farm, either in production or marketing or selling their dates at farmers markets. They implement many different conservation practices on their farm. They graze sheep below the trees for weed control, apply mulch and utilize several different irrigation methods so they don't have to flood irrigate. Their local USDA-NRCS representative told them about the EQIP program and organic certification, and they learned about selling online from a customer, and these steps have helped grow their business enough to support the entire family.

The biggest challenge is the changing weather – the timing of rain is changing, and the wind is stronger during peak growing season. The rain brings humidity. The Bautistas have been adapting to these changes, but it is getting more and more challenging each year.

Research Methodology

The research methods for this report included in-depth interviews, an online survey and a compilation of quantitative CDFA grant program data and the 2017 USDA National Agriculture Statistics Survey (NASS). The research methodology included:

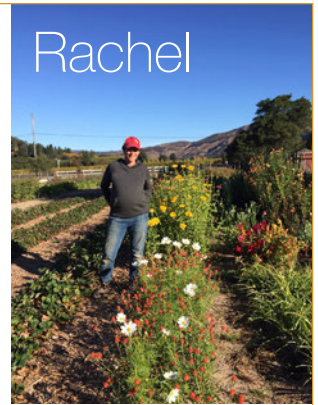
- 15 in-depth interviews with CDFA Division Directors and staff
- 8 in-depth interviews with staff of 6 government agencies
- 13 in-depth interviews with external stakeholder partner organizations
- Online survey of CDFA board and commission members
- Quantitative analysis of CDFA grant programs and USDA National Agriculture Statistics Survey
- 16 farm interviews, with 33 individual farmers from around the state

The author utilized a snowball sampling methodology to select the farmer and rancher interview pool. The external stakeholder organizations interviewed for this report were identified via the CDFA Division Directors as key partner organizations, as well as organizations which focus on socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Additionally, the government agency interviewees were identified and selected based on their focus on agricultural issues pertaining to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and disadvantaged communities throughout the state.

Many thanks to those who participated in the interviews and survey, and a special thanks to Chanceuse Twagirimana and Jay Van Rein for helping pull together the data and the report.

Farm Location:
Napa, Napa County

Legislative Representatives:
Assemblemember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, District 4
Senator Bill Dodd, District 3



Rachel grows diversified vegetables and flowers on a one-acre plot in Napa, and sells 100% of her produce directly to customers in Napa. She says, “There is a lot of demand for local flowers and vegetables here because the majority of farmers have wine grapes. However, all the services, programs, policies and resources are geared towards the wine industry. Even though part of the Napa strategic plan is to source local food, there is a core issue around land access that hasn’t been addressed.

“I’d like to implement more conservation practices, but my greatest challenge is that I want to know that I will be able to stay on the land long enough to see the benefits of those practices. I’ve been farming for ten years, and I have never lived where I farm. Farming here in this plot doesn’t feel like long-term, but I’m here for now.”

Special thanks to the growers who gave of their time, expertise and experience to help us develop this report. These profiles are featured throughout the document to give readers a window into the world of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in California.



Farm Location:
Salinas, Monterey County

Legislative Representatives:
Assemblymember Robert Rivas, District 30
Senator Anna M. Caballero, District 12

As a cannabis grower near Salinas, Christina leases three greenhouses and focuses on rare strains of cannabis, along with developing three in-house brands, seed production, and product development.

“Women-owned cannabis operations are sought out by buyers. It is a huge marketing tool... it has brought a lot of opportunities. I try to support other women farmers and also hire women employees.”

“Monterey County... has been a great partner so far and a helpful resource for information, too. We always welcome inspections from CDFA, as it is a good opportunity to learn what we need to do. We are all trying to learn and follow the regs the right way, its helpful to be able to ask questions in the process. As cannabis growers, we really need more information and resources on organic pest control. One particular example would be guidance and recommendations on aphid pest control. It is very hard to find this information or an organization locally who can help.”

2020 Report to the California Legislature on the Farmer Equity Act

EQUITY

