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The RCD is committed to supporting San Diego's ever-growing community of Farmers and Ranchers. We equip hard-working stewards of the land with conservation practices known as regenerative agriculture which help to improve farm and ranch productivity. This holistic approach to managing working lands strengthens agricultural businesses while conserving natural resources, reducing the risk of wildfire and adapting to the effects of climate change.

El Distrito de Conservación de Recursos (RCD) está comprometido a apoyar la creciente comunidad de agricultores y rancheros en el condado de San Diego. Proveyendo prácticas de conservación a nuestros agricultores, conocidas como "Agricultura Regenerativa," estas practicas aumentan la productividad de granjas y ranchos. Además, esta manera de cultivación de tierras beneficia a las empresas agrícolas, conserva los recursos naturales, reduce el riesgo de incendios y adapta las granjas a los efectos de cambio climático

Para recibir estas noticias de subsidio, eventos e investigaciones de agricultura regenerativa puede contactarnos en español, solo tiene que responder a este mensaje o escribenos a ag@rcdsandiego.org

Grazing for Fire

Ranchers and grazers are a step ahead when it comes to fire. Livestock are an essential tool to actively manage vegetation and

Recently, our County and State government stepped up to acknowledge the critical role that livestock managers play in mitigating the risks of wildfire. Prior to this month, livestock managers were not permitted to access their operations during a wildfire. Fortunately, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors approved a Livestock Pass program, which allows trained livestock managers to access their operation during a wildfire or other natural hazard. This follows the October 2021 legislation approved through the California State Assembly Bill 1103, which authorized individual counties to establish Agricultural Pass programs. This is a big win on a practical level and also in communicating the importance of ranching and grazing to local policymakers. Ranch owners and managers can [register for the Livestock Pass with San Diego County Ag Weights and Measures through this link](#), **with a deadline of October 1**. The program will open to other agricultural producers in Summer 2023, and municipalities will be invited to create their own pass programs.



Photo from Rancho Jamul Demonstration Site, January 2022

Fire has been the catalyst for so much of this new investment. With new funds available, state and local officials have demonstrated their renewed interest in ranching as a fire management tool. This month, Governor Newsom signed the legislature's final budget bill (AB 179) which included \$80 million for Fire Prevention. Here at the RCD of Greater San Diego County we are taking advantage of other state funds to support grazing. In the next six months we will conclude our CA Dept of Food and Ag (CDFA) Healthy Soils demonstration grant for Prescribed Grazing at Rancho Jamul. In addition, in August we applied for a CDFA Beginning Farmer Training grant that supports [Good Shepherds](#) to expand their grazing outfit and maintain long-term contracts to protect communities from wildfire.

Grazing activities and infrastructure are explicitly stated as tools eligible for funding in the budget bill (AB 179) and the opportunity for safety carries with it the opportunity for conservation. Prescribed grazing has the potential to store carbon in the soil, dampening the source and effects of climate change. Conversely, overgrazing and wildfire can release carbon, creating a negative feedback loop. As we design grazing projects that actively target wildfire-prone landscapes, we can manage those ecosystems in a way that enhances native vegetation and wildlife with climate-smart practices in mind. Our prescribed grazing demonstration at [Rancho Jamul continues to demonstrate this](#), as native purple needle grass re-sprouts from newly grazed slopes and burrowing owls multiply in the clearer pastures. We look forward to continuing long-term monitoring of this historic ranch in coordination with the San Diego Association of Governments and experts from the UC Berkeley Rangeland Science. Researchers across the state continue to actively study the effects of grazing on wildfire, and on landscapes that have already burned. There is room for growth as we cultivate safer, more sustainable communities in partnership with experienced livestock practitioners.

Shapero. [Enjoy this video from a webinar](#) we hosted where Matthew discusses experimental trials on flame height on California Rangelands. And of course, we have great respect for the ranching families and teams of grazers who have dedicated themselves to this demanding and dynamic profession. You can learn more about the methods for managing rangeland habitat with cattle by viewing this [Grazing Management Plan](#) that Liz Kellogg developed for Rancho Jamul. Stay safe everyone!

Wildfire Safety | Fire Safe Council of San Diego County

The Fire Safe Council of San Diego County, in partnership with San Diego County Fire/CAL Fire, is providing fire safety training to local communities that are at high-risk for wildfires. All events are free of charge for local residents, fire safe councils, and CERT members. Light refreshments and coffee will be provided.

Attend a training this Fall & Winter! [Learn more info and register here.](#)

Wynola | Saturday, November 19th | Santa Ysabel Nature Center

Campo | Saturday, December 3rd | CAL Fire Station #40

Julian | Saturday, December 10th | Julian Library

Upcoming Events

Sustainability in Leadership Presentation

Sunday, September 25th | 2:00pm- 3:00pm | Ramona Ranch Vineyard & Winery

Learn from esteemed Spanish businesswoman, Tara Norton, about the importance of sustainability in business and leadership. She is an independent Board Director at Supply Shift, a senior associate with the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, and holds an M.B.A. from London Business School and a B.A. in International Studies and French from Northwestern University. After the presentation, enjoy a glass of wine and some live music. The host, Ramona Ranch Vineyard & Winery, remains the only certified sustainable vineyard and winery in SD County.

San Diego Food System Alliance 2nd Annual Food Vision 2030 Gathering

Thursday, September 29th | All Day | CA Center for the Arts, Escondido

It's that time of year again! Join us in learning about how we can cultivate a healthier, more sustainable, and more just food system in our region. [Learn more and register here.](#)

NOTE: If you are a farmer or rancher interested in attending, please reach out for a discounted rate: codi.hale@rcdsandiego.org.

USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Series

Learn from leaders in agriculture about how to get started in the industry. Join all sessions via Zoom [at this link](#) or call in at the number noted on the flyer below.

BEGINNING FARMER & RANCHER SERIES

AUG. 24, 10-11am (PST) – Educational Resources



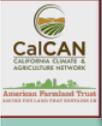

Kylie Wagner - Farmland Program Director of Kiss the Ground
 Anthony 'Tony' Lattner – Instructor at Archi's Institute Sustainable Agriculture
 Katie Brimm, Director of Farmer Campus

SEPT. 28, 10-11am (PST) – Women Farmer Advocates




Dr. Tammy Gray-Steele – Director, National Women in Ag Association
 Rose Tryon Van Cott – First Vice President at American Agri-Women

OCT. 26, 10-11am (PST) - Policy & Legislative Partners




Tessa Salzman - Organizing Manager at California Climate & Ag Network
 Kara Heckert, Resilient Agriculture West Advisor, American Farmland Trust
 Caitlin Joseph, Policy Manager at American Farmland Trust

NOV. 9, 10-11am (PST) – Produce Safety




Audrey Draper – FDA Liaison for Produce Safety at USDA AMS
 Don Stoeckel – Sr. Environmental Scientist at CDFA Produce Safety
 Mauricio Castelo – Produce Safety Expert at U.S. Food Drug Admin.



Join on your computer or mobile app
[Click here to join the meeting](#)
Or call in (audio only)
 +1 323-886-7051, 638993455# United States, Los Angeles
 Phone Conference ID: 638 993 455#

Learn About Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB)

Saturday, October 1st | 10:00am

[21610 Crestline Road](#) on Palomar Mountain

The Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council is inviting community members to a free screening at San Diego County Fire Station 79 of a new video and live Q&A about fighting the Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB), the invasive bug that has killed many thousands of San Diego County's signature oak trees.



Farmer Veteran Coalition | CA Chapter Stakeholder Meetings

The presentation is the same for all 3 meetings:

Monday, October 17th at 5:00pm

Saturday, October 22nd at 7:00pm

If you are interested in joining, please email them directly for the Zoom link: chapters@farmvetco.org.

Celebrate San Diego's Farmer of the Year

Thursday, October 27th | 6:00pm | [San Diego Zoo Safari Park](#)

Join the San Diego Farm Bureau in honoring Neil Nagata as San Diego's Farmer of the Year!

[Learn more and buy tickets here.](#)

Save the Date: San Diego Farm & Nursery Expo

Thursday, November 10 | 9:00am - 3:00pm | [Escondido Center for the Arts](#)

Participate in seminar series featuring top professionals in the field, network with a wide variety of farmers and vendors and learn about programs that might be beneficial to you. [Register here!](#)

Save the Date: 8th Annual Latino Farmer Conference

November 17th and 18th | CA Center for the Arts, Escondido

[Get more info and register at this link.](#) For additional support, reach out to omarr@ncat.org.


REGISTRESE

Juntos Creciendo

SOBRE LA CONFERENCIA

NCAT y NRCS están orgullosos de presentar la octava conferencia estatal de agricultura sostenible para agricultores. ¡¡¡Todo será presentado en español!!!

La conferencia de este año se ha ampliado para incluir dos días completos de educación y formar conexiones. El primer día se centrará en recorridos por granjas en el área de Escondido; El segundo día de la conferencia incluirá un área de expositores, oportunidades para establecer contactos y presentaciones sobre temas relacionados con la conservación, la producción agrícola orgánica y regenerativa y la gestión empresarial.



<p style="text-align: center;">17 de Nov (Espacio Limitado)</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">VISITAS A 2 GRANJAS LOCALES</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">CHARLAS</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">EXPERENCIA PRÁCTICA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">18 de Nov</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">DISCURSOS</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">FORMAR CONEXIONES</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">EXPERENCIA TEÓRICA</p>
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San Diego Agricultural Planning Program

The Agricultural Planning Program is a two-year planning grant funded by the CA Dept of Conservation with Cap-and-Trade proceeds, and is managed by the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). [You can learn more here at our website.](#)

We hosted our Strategic Planning Meeting on Tuesday, September 6th. Thank you to all that attended to provide their input and became members of each working group. Through Fall of 2022 and into Spring of 2023, each working group will meet monthly to begin working towards their individual project goals. The projects that each working group will focus on are:

1. **Land Access:** Creation and management of a central database for matchmaking agricultural producers with public and private lands available for lease or sale

California's [CropsWAP](#) program which incentivizes the replacement of mature orchard trees with low demand crops or root stock

3. **Agricultural Workforce Development:** Streamline development of farmworker housing by preparing farmworker housing templates that are pre-approved by the County and municipalities, noting ADU exemptions, vulnerable populations and VMT benefits

Throughout the new few months, our team will be compiling a report documenting the process and results from the Outreach, Mapping and Policy phases. We aim to create a comprehensive document for future reference, as well as a short and informative pamphlet that can be distributed to policy makers.



Free Irrigation Evaluations for Commercial Ag Operations

If you are interested in receiving an irrigation evaluation or pump efficiency test, [you can sign up at this link](#). These resources will be offered to all regions except North West San Diego. Plug your address [into this map](#) to see if you are located in our jurisdiction or the Upper San Luis Rey Conservation District.

If you are located in the Mission district, you can receive similar support from them [here](#). Every drop of water saved is money saved, as well as more stability for managing your farm during extreme weather. We are here to help you improve your operation!

Educational Resources & Opportunities

Farm to Food Accelerator

The California Farm2Food Program supports Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and women small-scale farmers and food entrepreneurs by providing practical tools and knowledge to increase income stability and resilience to unpredictable market events. [Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

CARCD Annual Conservation Education Speak-Off Competition

The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts hosts an annual speech competition for high school students, addressing a specific topic relating to conservation. This year's topic - "*How does the long-term California drought affect your region? What can local Resource Conservation Districts do to help?*" – is particularly relevant. Students first compete at the regional level by submitting their speech via video, with the top speakers advancing to the state competition. Local winners can win up to \$250 and will compete in Sacramento for additional prizes and the state competition will take place in early December.

[For all information and the application click here!](#)

Enhancing Pollinator Habitat on Working Lands

Are you a commercial farmer or rancher interested in promoting native habitat for pollinators? In partnership with Partners for Fish & Wildlife, NRCS and Earth Discovery Institute, the RCD of Greater San Diego County is offering site visits to assess the quality of native pollinator habitat on farms and ranches.

Assessors then present producers with an actionable plan to enhance native pollinator habitat, as well as connect them with support to apply to NRCS funding opportunities for the installation. [Use this form to sign up for a site visit](#). You can also [consult this guide](#) for more information on the benefits of maintaining pollinators and their habitat on your working lands.



Wild Willow Farm Classes

Propagation Basics - Monday, October 3rd | 9:00am

Intro to Integrated Pest Management and Gardening for Pollinators - Sunday, October 16th | 9:00am

Beekeeping 101: Intro to Beekeeping - Saturday, October 22nd | 11:00am

... and MANY more! [Check out the full lineup of classes here.](#)

Funding Opportunities

Disaster and Extreme Weather Assistance Programs

Drought, Fire, COVID-19 - if your business has been struck by disaster this year, non-profits and agencies are offering funds to help. If you are a small-scale producer in San Diego or part of a socially disadvantaged group, we are here to help you complete your application. To help you navigate the application process, set up an appointment at the RCD with Joel Kramer (joel.kramer@rcdsandiego.org, 619-562-0096 x103).

OPEN NOW: CCOF Hardship Assistance Grants for Organic Producers

Deadline to Apply is Friday, September 30th

If you—or an organic producer you know—have experienced hardship during the 2022 calendar year, we encourage you to apply for financial assistance through the Brimont Hardship Assistance Fund. [Learn more and apply here.](#)

OPEN NOW: CDFA 2022 Drought Relief Direct Farmer Grants

Deadline to Apply is Monday, October 31st

These direct grants will assist small-scale and historically underserved producers to apply for relief grants for those most in need of immediate drought assistance.

Examples of covered expenses can include but are not limited to:

- Increased electric utility bills of 50% or more due to increased electricity rates
- Surface water costs if increase from year prior
- Cost of hauling water for livestock
- Lowering ag well pumps if a primary source of water is lost
- Emergency upgrades to irrigation system (paired with conservation)
- Decreased crop yields/crop loss due to less water available or having to fallow land

Not Covered:

- [Upgrading pump to a larger size which would draw more water](#)

[Producers must apply for the funds through the Asian Business Institute & Resource Center at this link.](#)

For more information about the fund, please reach out to Madi Her at (559) 402-0067 ext:107 or email her at madi@fresnoabirc.org. You can also reach out to Choua Thao at (559) 402-0067 ext: 103, or email him at choua@fresnoabirc.org.

County of San Diego is offering support to businesses impacted by COVID-19. [You can learn how to apply here.](#) Awards average \$5,000 and the grant can be used to reimburse previous expenses, or for new expenditures within 60 days of the grant award.

US Department of Agriculture offers a variety of programs to help farmers, ranchers, communities, and businesses that have been hard hit by natural disaster events, like drought, fire and flooding. [See here for more info.](#)



Zero Food Print's Compost Connector is designed to get the maximum greenhouse gas reduction from organic material - keeping it out of the landfill is good, but turning organics into compost and applying it onto working lands is great. Everyone is eligible, though farms willing to take larger amounts of compost will likely be prioritized. Projects can be submitted at any time, and will be fulfilled on a rolling basis. For additional information, head to their [website](#).



The RCD is currently applying for funding from the Department of Food and Agriculture to provide farm conservation plans. Examples include Carbon Farm Plans, Grazing Management Plans, Pollinator Habitat Plans and Irrigation Management Plans. If you would like to have your operation be considered for the RCD application, [complete this intake form](#) by September 30. [Learn more about the funding opportunity at the CDFA website.](#)

Organic Farmers and Farmers in Transition can receive support from the USDA to help cover costs of organic certification and additional expenses in the process. Applications are due October 31st. [See more information here.](#)

Do you want to get serious about conservation practices on your working land? The National Resource Conservation Service offers financial and technical support to agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers through the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**. [See here](#) for how to apply! Deadline for applications is April 1st, with additional funds set aside for border regions.

Looking for other funding options? [Check out UC Cooperative Extension's directory](#) of available opportunities!

Job Openings

Community Garden Coordinator | RCD of Greater San Diego County

We are seeking someone who is passionate about agriculture and conservation, to manage both of the RCD's community gardens, including providing support and resources to garden members and maintaining communal areas of the garden and a hedgerow at the Tijuana River Valley Community Garden. If you are interested please read the full job description below and apply by emailing ann.baldrige@rcdsandiego.org with your resume and cover letter. [Click here for the Community Garden Coordinator job description.](#)

Carbon Farming Support

We are here to help you! From direct assistance to technical advice, here are some of the services that the RCD offers to San Diego farmers and ranchers, free of charge:

- **Soil sampling** for organic carbon content
- **Irrigation evaluations** - [sign up here](#)
- **Technical guidance** for implementing conservation practices
- **Request a Carbon Farming Plan** [here](#)
- **Plant selection** for native hedgerows and habitat buffers
- **Free chipping** for at risk homeowners within the San Diego River and Consortium Watersheds - [Visit Fire Safe Council](#)

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Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County

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