



Contact Us!

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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.

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. Ademas, 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.

Gathering Around the Grove

It was a beautiful sunny day in Escondido as we gathered with fellow farmers to learn about the benefits of composting and cover crops in an avocado grove. Dr. Craig Kolodge of San Pasqual Valley Soils shared how the key elements of soil health such as structure, nutrients and water holding capacity can be supported with the use of compost and increased soil microbial activity. His colleague, Ernie Klemm of KD Farms and Konyn Dairy, gave us a slice of his lifelong knowledge working with cover crops and how to properly establish and care for them.

We have been working at this avocado grove since 2020 as technical assistance providers for a CDFA Healthy Soils recipient. The project was funded as a Demonstration Site to see

experimental design involved composting the slopes as well as planting separate sections of cover crops with different benefits - nitrogen fixation, erosion control and pollinator habitat. The pandemic posed many challenges in labor availability, and thus the scope of the project has been reduced. Even so, we have worked closely with the farmer to support the implementation of these practices while monitoring the effects on soil organic matter and water infiltration rates.



The issue of labor shortage was no surprise to the farmers in attendance and as we discussed our shared experience, another major challenge to their success came up - lack of equipment. This is particularly applicable to avocado farmers whose steep slopes are not conducive to the same equipment that is used in a flat field for vegetable crops or pasture. We learned about the innovative approaches they have come up with to get compost and mulch on the ground - everything from homemade tools to old fashioned 5 gallon buckets.

There are solutions to this issue, such as compost blowers, but the cost and availability of specialty equipment is a major barrier to entry for most farmers. For us at the RCD, this signaled a call to action, and we are pursuing several avenues of support to create easier

need, we would love to hear more from you:

- What kind of equipment would you need to more efficiently run your operation?
- Do you have any equipment that you are willing to lend to a fellow farmer?
- During what season do you need the most mechanical support?
- What kind of successful equipment cooperatives or rental models have you seen?

Email us your feedback at ag@rcdsandiego.org!



Upcoming Events

UCCE Farm & Agricultural Labor Supervisor Training Presented in Spanish

Tuesday, June 21st | 7:00am - 5:00pm | San Diego Farm Bureau, Escondido

View the agenda [here in English](#) and [here in Spanish](#). If you register by Friday, June 17th, the fee is \$40; after that it is \$60. [Register here to empower your work force!](#)

UCCE Advances in Citrus Water Management Workshop

Join UC Irrigation Specialists Daniele Zaccaria and Khaled Ball, Subtropical Horticulture Advisors Sonia Rios and Ben Faber, and other University of California experts in this in-person workshop to learn about the latest research and advances in Citrus irrigation. Cost of attendance is \$50 and includes lunch and access to workshop presentations. [Register here.](#)

San Diego Irrigated Lands Group Annual Education

Wednesday, July 6th | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Webinar

Learn from UCANR's Dr. Valerie Mellano about regulatory agencies, history of water quality issues, record keeping, employee training, and self-assessments. [Register here.](#)

Smart Ways to Fight Food Waste

Tuesday, July 12th | 6:00pm - 7:00pm | Webinar

Nearly 40% of food produced worldwide is wasted! Learn from the Solana Center about how to reduce your impact and ways to divert food waste. [Register here.](#)

San Diego Women for Agriculture - Stehly Farms Market Tour

Tuesday, July 19th | 5:00pm - 7:00pm | Stehly Farms Market, Kensington

Meet and greet with other diverse women working to protect our local farms as well as listen to guest speakers. \$25 ticket entry price will include wine, a sandwich and several sides. [Join their chapter](#) or email jfrancis@sandiegocwa.org for more information.

Your Support Needed

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.](#)

join decision makers to address the priority topics of land access, water availability and workforce development. These meetings will be held over 3 separate weeks in July at the Farm Bureau office. If you are an agricultural producer interested in attending, [you can register here](#). Limited space per session.



Educational Resources & Opportunities

In case you haven't already seen it, the [Soil Health Institute](#) put out a documentary called *Living Soil*, that features innovative farmers and soil health experts from throughout the U.S. [Click here to watch for free!](#)

Support Compost!

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is seeking comments in the Federal Register on a set of regulations that would add compost and biochar to the list of Conservation Practices eligible for financial assistance to farmers. [Show your support by signing here.](#)



Farming 102 at Wild Willow Farm

Are you looking to learn more about specific crop families? Join the wonderful educators

the brassicas, beets, tomatoes and more. [See here for a full schedule of classes.](#)

Farmer & Farmworker Mental Health

If you, your family, or your staff are struggling with mental health, you are not alone. [Check out these resources](#) from CDFA and [these resources](#) from the American Farm Bureau, and get the support you need.

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. Deadlines are coming up! 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. Join us at our weekly Zoom office hours on Tuesdays from 9-10 AM ([register here](#)) or set up an appointment at the RCD with Joel Kramer (joel.kramer@rcdsandiego.org, 619-562-0096 x103).

Community Alliance with Family Farmers Family Farmer Emergency Fund is currently open to farmers who suffered losses in crops, sales or additional expenses due to the 2021-2022 drought. Applications are due by July 15. [Find the online application here.](#)

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.](#)



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Get funding for carbon farming practices through **Zero Food Print's Restore CA** private grant. They have just re-opened their applications for a short time only, from June 7th through August 8th, and are awarding \$200,000 total with a max individual grant request of \$25,000. If you applied for the Healthy Soils Program, you may have everything you need for this quick and easy application. [Check here for more info!](#)

Zero Food Print's Compost Connector is designed to get the maximum greenhouse gas reduction from organic material--not sending it to 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](#).



Photo Credit: Kathy Keatley Garvey

Seeds for Bees is a program funded by Project Apism, to provide farmers and ranchers with subsidized cover crop seed mixes that support honeybees. Enrollment is open until August 31st, but supplies go fast so [check out more info here today!](#)

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.

of available opportunities!

Job Openings

Local Food Economy Lab Manager

San Diego Food System Alliance

Due June 17th

[Click here for the Local Food Economy Lab Manager job description](#)

Small Farms Lead Community Educator

University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

Due June 23rd

[Click here for the Community Education Specialist job description](#)

Community Garden Coordinator

Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County

Due July 11th

[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** are free and available starting Fall 2022 - [sign up here](#)
- **Grant application support** for conservation practices and related programs
- **Technical guidance** for implementing conservation practices
- **Request a Carbon Farming Plan** [here](#)

- **Plant selection** for native hedgerows and habitat butters
- **Free chipping** for unincorporated County residents - [Visit Fire Safe Council](#)

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