Natural and Working Lands Technical Advisory Committee

April 10, 2023 | 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Center for Land-Based Learning

40140 Best Ranch Rd, Woodland, CA, 95776

Join via Zoom: https://yolocounty.zoom.us/j/83861052404

In attendance:

In-person

Heather Nichols
Neil Muller
Pelayo Alvarez
Gretchen James
Kristen Wraithwall
Andrew Truman Kim
Eric Willson
Sarah Morgan
Kate Reza
Scott Stone

Via Zoom

Mica Bennett
Sarah Halterman
Mike Howard

1. **Review Updated Survey Questions** *(Attachment A)*
    a. Do the updates match the feedback provided at last month's meeting?
        i. The first section only asks for operation size, approx. Acreage, and typical crop and livestock types.
        ii. A suggestion was made to move some more detailed questions, such as acreage size, to the end of the survey.
        iii. A suggestion was made to add a drop down menu for people to choose multiple options for practices being implemented.
        iv. It was added that interviewers could have a standardized form to fill out interviewee responses.
        v. A comment was made that question 3 has two distinct objectives (1. What are you doing, 2. What are you interested in doing) and that the distinctions can get lost when put together.
            1. A response was made that the questions were condensed for the sake of saving space, but the importance of answering both parts of that questions is significant so they can be broken down to clarify.

vi. It was asked whether there should be clarification on what carbon-negative means.
    1. A comment was made that the community is likely familiar with the term carbon negativity by now.

vii. A comment was made that the community will likely want to know how information from the survey will be used.
    1. A response was made that this survey will be used to determine the priority of practices for the County to fund and support. It is critical that funding programs have value and are feasible for the farming community.
    2. It was added that it is also important to understand what existing barriers are to the implementation of high-level recommendations, and to get an understanding of what practices are the most feasible and relevant to Yolo County.
    3. It was added that SB-1383 requires new compost facilities, though regulatory agencies are conducting business as usual.
        a. A response was made that Staff will communicate with the County regarding SB-1383.
    4. It was added that it is important to be transparent with farmers about how information from the survey will be used and what benefits they may receive.
    5. A comment was made that statewide blanket policies don't take smaller factors into consideration such as soil type. It was added that it should be known that the survey will help County action be more specific to Yolo County farms.
    6. A suggestion was made to gett feedback from the farming community on what information is needed for 1) future policies, 2) future programs, and 3) the CAAP.
    7. A comment was made that the survey is to inform the County on how best to serve the County's agricultural community.

viii. A comment was made that the format will be cleaned up for the next version of the survey.

ix. A comment was made that the analysis of sequestration potential will be better if the survey is able to collect numbers on acreage size. It was asked what the best way would be to ask for this information.
    1. It was added that in a previous version of the survey there were ranges provided to define small, medium, and large operations.
        a. A response was made that a 4- or 5-tier range would be an effective way to get farmers to fill out the survey. It was added that this could also be helpful when cross-analyzing acreage size with existing sequestration practices.
        b. A comment was made that the acreage should stay in the survey.

c. It was added that a scale would be easier for both people filling out the survey and for data collection.
d. It was added that the Ag Division has existing data on operation acreage to create ranges for the survey.
e. It was clarified that the survey is anonymous.
f. It was added that none of the portions of the survey are mandatory.
g. A suggestion was made to highlight that the survey is anonymous in the Purpose section.

x. A suggestion was made to add an 'Other' option to question 3.
xi. A question was asked whether there will be a pilot run of the survey.
1. A response was made that this is not officially in the plan, though it can be done to alert the TAC to potential issues early.
2. It was added that the survey can be brought to 1:1 interviews before fully sending it out to see if there are any changes to be made.

xii. A question was asked regarding whether Question 3 (K) Pulverized Rock Amendments is relevant to Yolo County Operations.
1. A response was made that this practice is still in the research phase.
2. It was added that there is a brief explanation provided.
3. It was added that this practice is being tested at UC Davis.
4. It was added that CDFA Healthy Soils is running research on this practice.
5. A question was asked regarding how this practice is distinguished from soil nutrient management.
a. It was added that this could be considered under Soil Amendments.
b. The TAC group agreed that Pulverized Rock Amendments could be considered under Soil Amendments.

b. Is there any language that should be adjusted or rephrased to be more farmer-friendly?
i. A comment was made that the language is pulled from NRCS.

2. **Review Updated Carbon Storage and Emissions Reduction Strategies** (Attachment B)
a. A question was asked whether Alley Cropping, Silvopasture and Stripcropping are relevant.
i. A response was made that they don't seem relevant to California.
ii. A response was made that hedgerows and riparian borders are common practice for farmers.
1. A response was made that Silvopasture intermingles trees on the farming unit rather than just surrounding the perimeter.
2. It was added that grazing at tree basins is also common.
3. It was added that Silvopasture could include use of the trees for timber.

        a. It was added that this isn't necessary, though both descriptions are considered Silvopasture. It was added that this could also be covered under prescribed grazing.
    4. It was added that it's possible that the term "Silvopasture" hasn't been used despite being done in the County.
    5. The TAC agreed to update the description of Silvopasture and keep it in the strategies document.
iii. A question was asked whether Alley Cropping and Stripcropping should remain in the strategies document.
    1. A response was made that growing crops in between rows of other crops to improve soil health is common practice.
    2. A suggestion was made to add a co-benefit for young orchids that this practice adds an additional income stream
iv. A suggestion was made to order the strategies by their relevance to each other.
    1. The TAC concluded that alphabetical order would be easier to find strategies in the document.
v. A question was asked whether the phrase co-benefits could be rephrased to seem less technical, such as "Producer Benefits"
vi. A comment was made that providing this information for best practices in one place is helpful for growers when they receive questions.
vii. A suggestion was made to reword 'Avoided Conversion' to 'Farm Preservation'.
    1. A suggestion was made that this could be removed from the survey.
        a. It was added that this is more a strategy for the County than for growers. Growers are not likely to answer whether they have plans to develop their land.

b. Are there co-benefits that should be reframed to be more practical/useful? Are there co-benefits that are missing?
    i. A comment was made that there could be more co-benefits added to Soil Amendments.
    ii. A comment was made that last minute co-benefit additions can be added once amendments to the strategies list that come from this meeting are made.

3. Review and Discuss NWL Outreach Opportunities

a. Provide overview of outreach structure (H. Nichols)
    i. One-on-one interviews
        1. It was shared that the list of interviewees is being finalized and that they will begin once these documents are finalized.

b. Discuss Outreach Opportunities Document *(Attachment C)*
    i. Is this an appropriate list?
    ii. Are there distribution/outreach outlets missing from this list?
    iii. Are there upcoming events/outreach opportunities you would like to highlight?
    iv. A question was asked regarding what the timeline is for the survey response and outreach data collection.

1. A response was made that the rough timeline is to have data collected by the summertime. There will be outreach events and workshops happening over the summer and the draft CAAP will be open to the public for review by the end of this year.

v. A question was asked if there will be any cold contact efforts.
    1. A response was made that growers in the County will be called.
    2. It was added that the Farm Bureau will be distributing the survey as well.
vi. A suggestion was made to add the Center for Land-Based Learning to this List.
vii. It was suggested to include the Irrigated Land Owners
viii. A comment was made that the County should try to get as many operations engaged as possible regardless of operation size or type.
ix. It was emphasized that people who engage with surveys should be provided with the gathered data before being asked to fill out more engagement materials.
    1. A response was made that results could be sent out in June or July. It was added that there could be a voluntary list serve for interested people to receive the data from surveys.
x. It was added that Valley Vision Sacramento will have upcoming events to distribute surveys
xi. It was asked whether Greenhouse Farming or Nurseries should be included.
    1. A response was made that they would be considered Working Lands though less of the strategies would apply to those types of operations. It was asked whether these operations are widespread.
        a. A response was made that there are a significant number of these operations though they are smaller in acreage size.
xii. It was asked how specific crop and operation types should be.
    1. A comment was made that the Ag Division's Report groups crop and livestock types together.
    2. A question was asked whether a blank free-write answer option would be better for data collection than a drop down menu.
        a. A response was made that a drop-down menu might be easier to understand if growers use different terms for the same kinds of operations.
        b. It was added that categorizations could be made later after data collection.
        c. A comment was made that the drop-down menu would be easier to understand in case it is difficult to categorize people's responses.
        d. A question was asked whether organic farming is a necessary piece of information.
            i. A comment was made that this may not be necessary and that the primary goal is to reach as many growers

as possible. He added that this is not a quantitative research study.