**Natural and Working Lands Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

**March 23rd, 2023 | 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

**Attendance List:**

Pelayo Alvarez

Jane Gray *(Not in attendance)*

Mike Howard *(Not in attendance)*

Humberto Izquierdo

Gretchen James

Andrew Truman Kim

Sarah Morgan

Neil Mueller

Heather Nichols

Julia Olsen *(Not in attendance)*

Kate Reza

Denise Sagarra

Adrian Solis

Scott Stone

Eric Wilson

**Amendments to Sequestration Strategies and Survey Questions**

* Add a column of co-benefits to the sequestration strategies table
* Remove the “Reduced livestock manure methane emissions” strategy from the list for its relevance
* A suggestion was made to simplify the survey and ensure that it only take 5-10 minutes to complete.
  + A suggestion was made to shorten the survey. It was added that the “softball” questions should be at the top of the survey, emphasizing what carbon practices are currently being implemented and what strategies farmers are interested in.
* A suggestion was made to add context to what the County’s climate goals are and how agriculture plays into them, explaining why the County is asking for survey responses.
* A question was asked whether the first page of the outreach survey should remain included.
  + A suggestion was made to move those initial questions to the end of the survey, with the most important questions being at the top (i.e. Questions 11-12) . The emphasis of the survey should be to inform growers on what strategies are available and effective, what strategies are currently being implemented, and what are the interests/priorities of the ag community.
  + It was added that the survey should not seem accusatory or confrontational to farmers. (i.e. framing data of 50% of emission levels coming from Ag as blame)
* Provide acreage definitions for different size farming operations.
* Remove question on how much water is used for irrigation.
* A suggestion was made to take out water-concerned questions from the survey, and to focus on carbon sequestration. It was added that information on water use can be gathered later in the process.

**Meeting Summary**

1. **Introductions**
2. **Updates and Announcements**
3. K. Wraithwall provided an update on compensation for meeting participation. Members of the TAC are eligible for $50 of compensation per meeting.
4. It was shared that the title of the Natural and Working Lands Group is converting from a Working Group to a Technical Advisory Committee to allow for more flexibility and accessibility to meeting.
5. **Overview of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) Process, Timeline, TAC Purpose** *(Attachment A)*
6. K. Wraithwall provided an update as to what the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan is. It was shared that the County set a carbon-negative by 2030 goal, with emphasis on the role of agriculture and the necessity of carbon sequestration. The NWL group was created to uplift the voices of the agricultural community.
7. The TAC will provide input on sequestration strategies and the CAAP process. The County is currently working on outreach and engagement plans, which will involve conversations with the Ag community. This group is intended to meet regularly to have conversations on how the farm community is impacted by the CAAP process.
8. It was shared that the NWL TAC has opportunity to interact with the Equity & Engagement TAC, with this group having a higher emphasis on the farming community.
9. It was shared that the members of the TAC were chosen to represent small farming operations, large farming operations, ranchers, and farmworkers.
10. S. Morgan asked what Dudek’s role will be with the NWL TAC
    1. K. Wraithwall responded that Dudek’s role is to compile the conversations held at meetings to develop strategy and outreach documents. All materials created by Dudek will have opportunity to be reviewed by the TAC.
11. **Review and Finalize Sequestration Strategies and Survey Questions (***Attachment B & C)*
    1. It was suggested to add a column of co-benefits to the sequestration strategies table.
    2. It was shared that these strategies were developed by the Dudek Team, and that the final list of strategies will be put forward at the end of the program. It was added that this initial list will be a living document with opportunity for amendments throughout the process.
    3. A suggestion was made to centralize funding resources for growers so that they don’t have to go through multiple agencies to find funding opportunities.
       1. It was added that this can be an online resource that helps growers navigate several funding opportunities.
       2. It was added that technical assistance would be useful to assist growers in filling out necessary forms.
       3. It was added that there are farmer case worker programs that can help growers fill out grants, and that this could be a possible way to provide technical assistance to farmers. It was also suggested to have ready & accessible grant applications that could be sent out to multiple programs, although this may cause confusion without technical assistance.
       4. It was added that technical assistance can be a barrier to adopting sustainable farming practices. A suggestion was made to provide tutorial materials, such as a YouTube video, that walks people through how to fill out applications.
       5. RCD responded that they are working on building technical assistance programs. It was added that they are working with Kitchen Table Advisors for some of these programs.
       6. It was added that there could be a centralized hub for resources, assistance for equipment maintenance, and someone designated to assist farmers who need expertise assistance.
       7. A question was asked regarding what gaps the group sees in the strategy materials.
          1. An additional question was asked regarding what could potentially drive farmers adopt many if not all sequestration strategies, along with how to get more farmers involved in sustainability practices.
          2. It was responded that implementation takes time, and that juggling these responsibilities on top of running a farm can be difficult.
          3. It was added that there could be an educational/knowledge gap on the benefits of sequestration practice and what practices would be best for different farming types.
          4. A question was asked regarding what the general knowledge level of carbon farming Yolo County farmers have. It was responded that it is a new concept for sustainable farming, although the strategies have existed for a long time.
          5. It was shared that there is a wide range of knowledge on carbon farming and sustainability needs.
          6. A suggestion was made to present ideas with focus on the benefits of farmers to adopt carbon farming practices along with, or in place of, environmental benefits.
          7. It was added that this could be done with incentives and providing opportunities for farmers to interact with experts.
       8. A question was asked whether there were any strategies that spark strong reactions.
          1. A suggestion was made to remove the “Reduced livestock manure methane emissions” strategy from the list for its relevance.
       9. It was shared that if low-emission equipment was available at a lower cost with comparable range and efficiency to gas-powered equipment, it would be more likely to be adopted. It was added that currently, electric equipment (such as field pumps) is known to fail.
       10. A question was asked how these strategies will be implemented by the County (if there will be any mandatory implementations, if there will be incentives, etc.)
           1. It was estimated that 10%-25% of Yolo County farmers are looking to implement sustainable farming practices.
    4. A comment was made that the outreach surveys can serve to determine how best to use incentive funds to get farmers to implement these strategies, and which practices are most likely to be adopted.
    5. A question was asked regarding which strategies seem like they would gain the most interest of farmers in Yolo County.
       1. It was shared that farmers and ranchers will likely adopt 2-6 strategies on their farming operations.
       2. It was added that co-benefits could play a significant role in getting growers to implement these strategies.
    6. A suggestion was made to highlight what carbon farming practices are already being done. It was added that case studies on the benefits of carbon farming can be added to presentations and online resources.
    7. A suggestion was made that a carbon farming emissions reduction quantification tool to show what strategies are already being implemented in the County would be a useful resource.
       1. It was added that part of the CAAP involves creating a resource that outlines what reduction quantities are possible with the implementation of each carbon farming strategy.
    8. A suggestion was made to add more planning-level efforts to outreach materials along with farming strategies.
    9. A suggestion was made to recognize farmers who adopt carbon farming practices, possibly with awards?, to encourage other farmers to consider adoption.
    10. A question was asked whether the survey is reasonable/accessible, and whether there are any amendments wanted for the questions?
        1. A question was asked regarding how the survey will be distributed.
           1. It was responded that this will be a mix of in-person, hard copy distribution and online accessibility.
        2. A comment was made that marketing is critical to engagement to encourage farmers to fill out the survey. This can include sharing benefits of carbon farming practices.
        3. A comment was made that farmers may hesitate to fill out the survey in order to not look bad in terms of their farming practices.
    11. A suggestion was made to simplify the format and ensure that the survey should only take 5-10 minutes.
        1. A suggestion was made to shorten the survey. It was added that the “softball” questions should be at the top of the survey, emphasizing what carbon practices are currently being implemented and what strategies farmers are interested in.
    12. A suggestion was made to add context to what the County’s climate goals are and how agriculture plays into them, explaining why the County is asking for survey responses.
    13. It was shared that data on the County’s emissions and GHG storage levels are out of date, and that the last climate plan did not involve sequestration.
        1. It was added that Dudek will put together estimates of current carbon levels in the County.
    14. A question was asked whether the first page of the outreach survey should remain included.
        1. A suggestion was made to move those initial questions to the end of the survey, with the most important questions being at the top (i.e. Questions 11-12) . The emphasis of the survey should be to inform growers on what strategies are available and effective, what strategies are currently being implemented, and what are the interests/priorities of the ag community.
        2. It was added that the survey should not seem accusatory or confrontational to farmers. (i.e. framing data of 50% of emission levels coming from Ag as blame)
    15. **Action Item:** Provide acreage definitions for different size farming operations.
    16. **Action Item:** Remove question on how much water is used for irrigation.
    17. A suggestion was made to take out water-concerned questions from the survey, and to focus on carbon sequestration. It was added that information on water use can be gathered later in the process.
    18. A suggestion was made to remove the (a. b. c. d.) from questions 11-12.
        1. A response was made that those are in place to easily refer to question responses.
    19. A suggestion was made to reformat the online presentation of the survey.
    20. A suggestion was made that when adding the co-benefits of sequestration strategies, the survey could reference success stories to validate that these practices are effective.
        1. A response was made to include statistics and percentages of implementation rather than name-dropping farmers and their operations.
12. **Review Agricultural Equipment Retrofit Early Action Project** *(Attachment E)* 
    1. It was shared that the County has been in conversation with the AQMD about implementing a eUTV retrofitting program outside of the FARMER program.
    2. It was shared that $10,000-$15,000 would be allotted for each retrofitting project.
    3. It was shared that many farming operations have around 5-10 UTVs on their farms, and that eUTV replacements might make more of a difference on smaller operations.
    4. It was suggested that orchards would benefit from eUTV replacements.
    5. **Action Item:** Share information on the AER Project with CAF, the Small Farming Advisory
13. **Regular Meeting Schedule and Format Preferences**
    1. It was shared that regular 90-minute meetings will take place on the 2nd Monday of the month at 3 PM – 4:30 PM.
    2. It was shared that afternoons are typically better for farmers.
    3. It was shared that most farming shifts are done by 3-4pm, though they will get later as the season gets drier.
    4. The next NWL TAC meeting will take place on April 10th at 3 PM. This meeting will take place on Zoom
    5. A suggestion was made to include phone-in options for farmers. The TAC format of the group allows for more flexibility.
    6. A comment was made that the Center for Land-Based Learning could host the TAC.
    7. **Action Item:** Send updated calendar invite for new NWL TAC meeting time.
    8. **Action Item:** Send out a Committee Roster with contact information to share with the TAC and the Commission.

Next Steps:

* Determine the best groups to engage with for outreach.
* Follow up on Agricultural Equipment Retrofit Early Action Project
* Review outreach materials on the next agenda
* **Review and Discuss NWL Outreach Opportunities**