

From: [Ron](#)
To: [Francovich, Victor](#)
Subject: comments Environmental Agriculture hearing 2-10-21
Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 1:28:16 PM

Here are my comments regarding developing an Environmental Agriculture, as the Position Letter Portal is not available since this hearing does not have a bill attached to it.

Let's feed our neighbors vs feeding the world

The allusion to feeding the world in the first line of the background document is alarming. "We need to feed the world" has been used to rationalize using excessive chemical fertilizers and spraying toxic pesticides. We can't use organic farming practices because they are less productive (untrue) and we need to feed the world. Who gave us the mandate to feed the world? Certainly not the farmers in the receiving countries who can't cover their cost of production when competing with subsidized imported food. Certainly not the farm workers sickened by high nitrate levels in their drinking water and pesticide toxin load in their bodies. Certainly not the neighbors down wind and down stream from the farms that suffer from dust, polluted air and water. The carbon foot print of the food when it arrives in another country is unacceptable in our world facing climate chaos. The transport of drought limited water in produce going out of our state has to be questioned by our community. The degradation of our community resource of productive fertile land with toxic pesticides and synthetic nitrogen fertilizers is leading us on a downward spiral of ecological, economic and social decay.

Five things to grow a plant

We need just five things to grow a plant. They are air (CO₂), water, sunlight, soil, and a seed or cutting. There are thousands of fertilizers and pesticides sold to farmers to "help" them grow a crop. None of them are necessary. I propose adopting agroecology as the political, economic and social policy of CDFA. We can train farmers to return to their high status of primary producers of energy and value vs being cogs in the gear of industrial agriculture, mere consumers of ag inputs, tractor drivers, and processors of animals.

Biologically based farming

I am a bug farmer. I produce beneficial insects and help farmers control pests using the principles of biological control, in other words, working with nature. As a pest control advisor, I know that pests can be managed using biological methods and focusing on plant health – biologically focused IPM or ecologically based pest management (EBPM). It is time to drop the charade that we need chemicals to produce our food, fiber, medicine. After WW2 we hammered our swords into plowshares – we converted nerve gas to pesticide and nitrate for explosives to nitrate fertilizer. We now have a clear vision of the destruction of our soil, degraded rural communities, poor quality food, and poor health of our population, from the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in an industrial agriculture. We now face an existential imperative to rapidly transition to a biologically based agriculture (call it what you may) that is socially just, builds community, and increases life in the soil every year. Lets start building to a future that is survivable.

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From: [Kyra Rude](#)
To: [Francovich, Victor](#)
Subject: Comment to Agriculture Committee about Environmental Agriculture
Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 2:01:17 PM

Dear Sirs:

Everyone on or near farms and consuming farm products wants to be safe from toxic inputs. A regenerative system excludes toxic inputs. It mitigates dust by covering and not tilling soil. An organic farm at least prohibits chemical pesticides and fertilizers and usually builds biodiversity. The path to scale environmental benefits to 30% of farms is to scale organic production to at least 30% which requires policy to grow markets for organic such as benchmarking quotas for government purchase of organic.

CDFA programs need to stop paying farmers that use poisons. Stop allowing the use of Warning and Danger label pesticides in CDFA programs. No more Roundup on HSP grantee farms. It is an antibiotic, destroying soil carbon biology. Included in the Governor's budget is a proposed change to the pesticide mil fees, tiered by toxicity level. The Administration is now thinking in the right direction.

Besides organic, investments should support experienced 'Lighthouse Farmers' in other words peer to peer farmer learning. Right now HSP policy excludes the most experienced farmers, because they have already been doing the practices rewarded in Comet Planner before CDFA started paying for them. First invest in organic, and then support community-based learning from those who have been doing it so that their know-how spreads.

Thank you for hearing my comment.

Sincerely,
Kyra Rude
Ventura, 93001

From: [Jan Dietrick](#)
To: [Francovich, Victor](#)
Subject: HEARING TODAY: How to Scale Environmental Agriculture
Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 1:42:25 PM

We wholeheartedly welcome this hearing and the excellent staff report. We use the term agroecology (not mentioned) as a way to look at all of these aspects **as a system**. It includes the environmental farming practices mentioned, such as for Integrated Pest management that starts with pest and disease prevention. And incentives for low emissions equipment. CARB must establish uniform statewide incentives for electric tractors now.

It includes the growing of above and below ground biodiversity -- Chico State is a wonderful resource. It encompasses economic sustainability and grower and farmworker well-being that requires markets. The organic standard is the best tool now to connect those farmers to people who want a baseline of no synthetic chemicals and efforts toward biodiversity.

Everyone on or near farms and consuming products from farms wants to be safe from toxic inputs and dust. A regenerative system excludes toxic inputs and mitigates dust by ensuring soil is covered and not tilled. ***We see no pathway to scale these environmental benefits to 30% of farms without scaling organic production by helping build markets for organic with a similar goal of at least 30%.***

Denmark is advancing environmental agriculture by investing in organic. The nation requires that public kitchens buy 60% organic food. Even if only our schools had to buy 30% organic, this would build momentum for farmers to scale the development of regenerative farming systems. Organic certification and inspection in Denmark is free. Their organic extension experts give one day of consultation for free for farmers thinking about going organic. ***It is ridiculous to charge organic farmers extra to develop the kind of farming we all want while we subsidize and help market and export products from farms that degrade and pollute.***

Sincerely,

Jan Dietrick, MPH,

Executive Director

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