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Julia Jackson, Founder,  
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Bryce Lundberg,  
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David Mancera, Director  
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Michelle Passero,  
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Doria Robinson,  
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January 10, 2025

Secretary Karen Ross  
California Department of Food and Agriculture  
1220 N Street, Suite 400  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Ross:

Over the last two years, the California State Board of Food and Agriculture has worked closely with your department in engaging in a robust public process to determine a definition for the term "Regenerative Agriculture" for state policies and programs. After careful deliberation, the Board has approved and recommends a definition for your consideration.

Enclosed, please find the recommendation **Defining Regenerative Agriculture for State Policies and Programs**. The proposed definition is to inform state agencies, boards and commissions on the definition of regenerative agriculture as it relates to state policies and programs. This is not a definition for certification or a recommendation for incorporation into state statute.

As stated within the recommendation, "Regenerative agriculture is not an endpoint, but a continuous implementation of practices that over time minimize inputs and environmental impacts and further enhances the ecosystem while maintaining or improving productivity, economic contributions and community benefits." As such, the recommendation should be periodically revisited as new technologies, research and innovations occur.

Further, the Board strongly encourages state agencies and departments to coordinate with CDFA on the development of measurable and verifiable outcomes related to policies and programs that focus on regenerative agriculture.



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This recommendation would not be possible without the public participation and input received or the dedicated work of departmental staff in the process. In addition, the work of the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel (EFA SAP) as well as the Regenerative Agricultural Work Group was critical in providing a foundation and framework for the Board's recommendation.

Lastly, as part of public engagement, it would be remissive of this Board not to acknowledge the significant feedback received by constituents that referenced organic production as a foundation for regenerative agriculture. The Board's recommendation on this issue reflects the diversity of agriculture in the state as well as an aspiration for expanded on-farm practices that provide an ongoing continuum of sustainability for California's farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Cameron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Don Cameron

Enclosure

cc: Members of the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel (EFA SAP)  
Members of the Regenerative Agriculture Work Group

***Recommendation from the California State Board of Food and Agriculture to CDFA Secretary  
January 2025***

**Defining Regenerative Agriculture for State Policies and Programs**

“Regenerative agriculture,” as defined for use by State of California policies and programs, is an integrated approach to farming and ranching rooted in principles of soil health, biodiversity and ecosystem resiliency leading to improved targeted outcomes.

Regenerative agriculture is not an endpoint, but a continuous implementation of practices that over time minimize inputs and environmental impacts and further enhances the ecosystem while maintaining or improving productivity, economic contributions and community benefits. “Regenerative agriculture” is an ongoing continuum of sustainability for California’s farmers and ranchers, informed by current science as well as the traditions and innovations from the original Indigenous stewards of the land.

Examples of target outcomes include:

- (a) Building soil health, soil organic matter and biodiversity. ([Healthy Soils Program](#)); ([AB 1757](#))
- (b) Increasing statewide implementation of conservation practices that improve soil health, sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gases; (USDA NRCS [Conservation Practice Standards](#))
- (c) Furthering sustainable pest and integrated pest management to reduce the reliance on pesticides; ([Accelerating Sustainable Pest Management: A Roadmap for California](#)); ([UC Statewide Integrated Pest Management](#)), (USDA NRCS [pest management conservation system](#))
- (d) Protecting the welfare and care of animals in agriculture; ([Animal Care Program](#))
- (e) Building healthy, local communities; ([Ag Vision](#))
- (f) Protecting spiritual and cultural traditions as well as supporting Native-led stewardship practices;
- (g) Minimizing negative impacts to other target outcomes;
- (h) Maintaining positive impact on the economic vitality/livelihoods of farmers and ranchers.

Regenerative agriculture will require processes, practices, monitoring, evaluation, and innovation to be customized to specific production systems, ecoregions, and local Indigenous cultural regions. Practice selection is based on the best available science and practice, including but not limited to, organic and traditional ecological knowledge, for production systems.

State agencies and departments shall coordinate with the Department, contingent upon resources, in the development of measurable and verifiable outcomes related to individual policies and programs and are responsible for incorporating verification and reporting.

*This recommendation is to inform State Agencies, Boards and Commissions on CDFA’s definition of regenerative agriculture as it relates to state policies and programs.  
This is not a definition for certification.*