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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Senator Melissa Hurtado, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 947

**Hearing Date:** 7/1/25

**Author:** Connolly

**Version:** 2/20/25

**Urgency:** No

**Fiscal:** Yes

**Consultant:** Reichel Everhart

**Subject:** Agriculture: Cannella Environmental Farming Act of 1995

### **SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to oversee a sustainable agriculture program to provide research, technical assistance, and incentive grants to promote agricultural practices that support climate resilience for farms and ranches and the well-being of ecosystems, air quality, and biodiversity. This bill renames the Scientific Advisory Panel on Environmental Farming to the Scientific Advisory Panel on Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture for the purpose of providing advice to the secretary on the implementation of research, incentive, and technical assistance grant programs for sustainable agriculture. This bill would expand the panel from 9 members to 11 members to add members of the public that represent scientific expertise in sustainable agriculture and members of state agencies that represent expertise in programs and policies related to agriculture.

### **BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Cannella Environmental Farming Act of 1995:
  - a. Requires CDFA to establish and oversee an environmental farming program to provide incentives to farmers whose practices promote the well-being of the ecosystems, air quality, and wildlife and their habitat.
  - b. Requires the secretary to convene the Scientific Advisory Panel on Environmental Farming (SAPEF) to advise and assist federal, state, and local government agencies on issues relating to the impact of agricultural practices on air, water, and wildlife habitat.
  - c. Requires the department, in consultation with the panel, to establish and oversee a Healthy Soils Program to provide incentives including, but not limited to, loans, grants, research, and technical assistance, educational materials and outreach to farmers who participate in practices that contribute to healthy soils.

- 2) California Farmer Equity Act: Established to address historical inequities and barriers faced by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.<sup>1</sup>
- 3) Office of Agricultural Resilience and Sustainability (OARS)<sup>2</sup>: Provides one-on-one support to farmers and ranchers from consulting on project design to developing a conservation plan, providing grant writing and project management services. OARS focuses on providing technical assistance to underserved and small producers, those that may need translation services, or those lacking the financial resources needed to hire consultants.
- 4) Healthy Soils Program: Provides grants and incentives to farmers and ranchers to implement healthy soil and carbon sequestration practices.<sup>3</sup>
- 5) State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET): An incentive program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save water by funding the implementation of advanced irrigation systems and technologies.<sup>4</sup>
- 6) Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP): Provides financial assistance for the implementation of non-digester manure management practices on dairy and livestock operations in California that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The program supports several project types focused on handling and storing manure in environmentally responsible ways, with the goal of limiting how much manure ends up in liquid, anaerobic environments where its decomposition produces methane.<sup>5</sup>

### **PROPOSED LAW:**

This bill:

- 1) Requires CDFA to establish and oversee a sustainable agricultural program to provide research, technical assistance and incentive grants to promote agricultural practices that support climate resilience.
- 2) Expands access to technical assistance to include training, agricultural planning, and grant-writing support.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/farmerquity/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oars/technical/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oars/healthysouls/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oars/sweep/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oars/ammp/>

- 3) Updates CDFA's Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel responsibilities and composition.

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to the author:

“AB 947 will uplift farmers by expanding technical assistance for farmers by supporting farmers and ranchers with the application process, providing general planning and training for climate-smart agriculture, and more thus removing barriers to sustainable farming.”

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:**

None received.

**RELATED LEGISLATION:**

- 1) AB 389 (Chapter 928, Statutes of 1995): Established the Cannella Environmental Farming Act of 1995.
- 2) AB 1348 (Chapter 620, Statutes of 2017): Required CDFA to include socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, regulations, and policies and programs.
- 3) AB 2377(Chapter 868, Statutes of 2018): Established a technical assistance grant program to provide funds to technical assistance providers who work with applicants for the Healthy Soils Program (HSP), alternative manure management programs (AMMP), and the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP).

**PRIOR ACTIONS:**

Assembly Floor:	78 - 0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	14 - 0
Assembly Agriculture Committee:	8 - 0

**SUPPORT:**

A Voice for Choice Advocacy  
Agricultural Institute of Marin

California Association of Resource Conservation Districts  
California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)  
California Climate & Agriculture Network (CALCAN)  
California Dairy Campaign  
California Farmers Union  
California Special Districts Association  
Californians Against Waste  
Carbon Cycle Institute  
Community Alliance With Family Farmers  
Wild Farm Alliance

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