

# **Symposium: Managing Lands in a Changing Climate to Improve Agricultural Resilience, Food Security, and Health**

September 10, 2018



## **Breakout Session Report Out | Agricultural Conservation and Resilience — Harnessing the Wisdom in the Room toward Action**

**Mondavi Center, Vanderhoef Studio, 3:30 – 5:00pm**

**Attendance: 80, plus three facilitators**

We had roughly 80 participants at 8 different tables that participated in this exercise.

After a brief presentation to stimulate discussion participants were given two tasks:

1. Describe effective strategies to increase agricultural conservation and resilience. Prioritize your top three.
2. Describe effective strategies to scale innovative practices so as to promote their adaptability and uptake. i.e., how can obstacles to implementation be overcome? Prioritize your top three.

Each table engaged in discussion and produced their priorities. They were tasked with only writing down their top three strategies and needs. After internal table debate, these priorities were transcribed on large post-its which were placed around the room. Participants were then asked to put check marks next to their top five favorites around the room.

The Top Votes were as follows:

1. **Making Farmers Partners in Conservation**
  - a. Avoiding top-down solutions
  - b. Ensuring landowner/farmer buy-in
  - c. Solutions that farmers don't like are doomed to fail

2. **On Farm Resilience**
  - a. Soil Health for instance
  - b. Prioritizing protection of best farmland first
  - c. Land use planning
  - d. Investing in renewables
3. **Farmer Resilience**
  - a. Access to education for farmers
  - b. Access to extension services
  - c. Access to credit
  - d. Uplift farmers of color
4. **Linking Rural and Urban Planning**
  - a. Integrated planning allows us to avoid planning that benefits one at the expense of the other.
  - b. There is a greater possibility of win/win planning opportunities.

Below is a list of all of the answers that were written down and voted upon.

Table 1

1. Strategies
  - a. Maximize co-benefits on agricultural land
    - i. Biodiversity conservation
    - ii. Soil carbon sequestration
  - b. Groundwater Recharge on agricultural lands
2. Needs
  - a. Innovative Compromise
  - b. Better framework for accounting of co-benefits
  - c. Streamlined definitions of conservation issues of concern
    - i. Food waste
    - ii. Access to:
      1. Water
      2. Education
    - ii. Resources
    - iii. Soil Carbon
    - iv. Salinization

Table 2

1. On the farm resilience
  - a. Protect the best farmland
  - b. Building healthy soils
  - c. Land use planning
  - d. Investing in renewables
2. Farmer resilience

- a. Financial support
- b. Equitable access to resources
- c. Peer to peer demonstrations
- d. Uplift farmers of color
- e. Technical assistance

Table 3

- 1. Policy (the stick)
  - a. Cultivate political will
  - b. Increase education
  - c. Demonstrate leadership
- 2. Funding (the carrot)
  - a. Seek out private donors
  - b. Increase government funding
  - c. Expand cap and trade

Table 4

- 1. Making Farmers Partners in Conservation
  - a. Continue existing incentive programs
  - b. Emphasize collaborative community engagement
  - c. Multi-benefit projects should be emphasized
- 2. Sustainable Groundwater Management
  - a. Attain community buy-in
  - b. Build water conservation infrastructure
  - c. Build data collection and monitoring
  - d. Ensure farmers are exposed to best practices

Table 5

- 1. Linking Rural and Urban Planning
  - a. Coyote Valley in Santa Clara County, CA is an example
  - b. High Speed Rail need is another
- 2. Co-beneficial Subsidies and Strategies
- 3. Needs
  - a. Provisions of ecosystem services
  - b. Climate resilience
  - c. Moving from economic subsidies to co-benefits from working lands
  - d. Shift in cultural values

Table 6

- 1. Key Strategies
  - a. Easements
    - i. Agricultural Easement

- ii. Productive Easement
  - b. Free Market Based Solutions
    - i. Cap and Trade
- 2. Needs
  - a. Coordinated Infrastructure
  - b. Economically Viable solutions
    - i. Must be Data and Science Driven

#### Table 7

- 1. Access to finance and incentive programs
  - a. Access to public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaboration
- 2. Landowner/Farmer Buy-In
  - a. Connections between science and implementation
  - b. Building trust

#### Table 8

- 1. Process to address climate change for multiple benefits
  - a. Include multiple stakeholders
  - b. Emphasize a shared value partnership
  - c. Incentivize public-private partnerships