

# Q & A

## SAN DIEGO CLIMATE SMART INCENTIVE PROGRAM



**ON-FARM SUPPORT + FREE COMPOST + EXTRA \$ ON SALES\***

Soil-based farmers are daily participants in the carbon cycle and how we farm either sequesters or emits greenhouse gases. The Climate Smart Incentive Program is a voluntary, farmer-centered opportunity for your operation to be compensated for the food you produce and sell utilizing verified “climate smart” methods. Please read this Q&A document and get involved by signing up at [foodshedcooperative.com/climate](https://foodshedcooperative.com/climate)







## WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS PROGRAM?

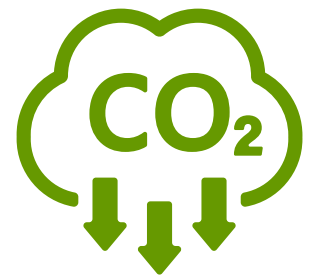
Our goal is to increase the food security of our region by building on-farm resilience and establishing viable market channels that source local food to vulnerable communities.

## HOW WILL THE PROGRAM BUILD ON-FARM RESILIENCE?

San Diego's unpredictable weather shifts require farmers to invest in multiple strategies to protect our harvests. For example, practices that build soil organic matter protect against drought while hedgerows protect against high winds. Each farm has a unique set of opportunities and challenges to consider when developing a "resilience practice" and each farmer has a unique approach to stewarding the land and building on-farm resilience. To meet your interest and capacity level, this program has two levels of participation:

**Track A:** The basic level of participation aims to increase soil health through increased compost application and soil health monitoring. Participants in this category will work with the certified compost facility of their choice and receive free delivery of compost. Program staff will work with farmers to conduct soil health assessments twice per year to assess the impact of increased compost application.

**Track B:** The more comprehensive level of participation includes free compost and soil health monitoring plus support for planning and implementing multiple "climate smart practices".



## WHAT MAKES A PRACTICE "CLIMATE SMART"?

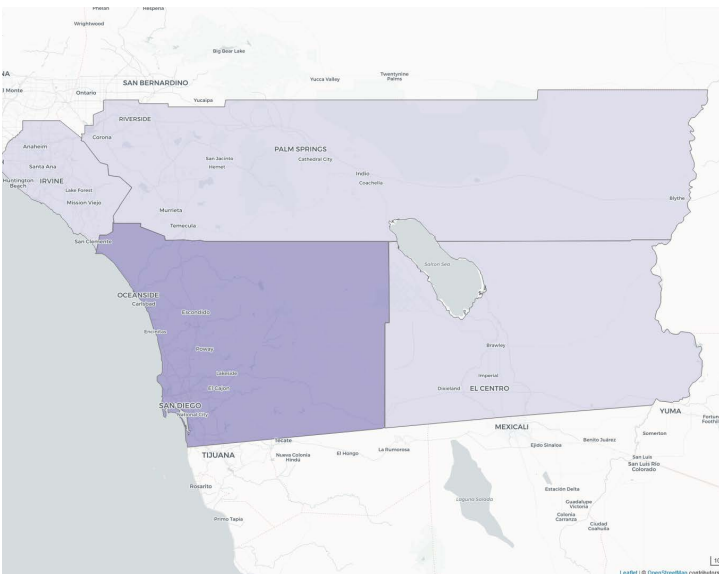
"Climate Smart" farms focus on building healthy soil with rising levels of organic matter and microbial activity. For the purposes of this USDA-funded project, most conservation practices certified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will qualify as "climate smart", however, we are most focused on reducing tillage, soil carbon amendment, mulching, and tree/shrub establishment. For a full list of potential practices, you can go to [www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/conservation-practices](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/conservation-practices)

# HOW WILL THIS PROGRAM INCENTIVIZE SALES?



Communities that experience economic hardship are more vulnerable to climate events such as extreme heat and flooding. They are also more likely to lose access to healthful foods during disruptive events (as we saw during the Covid pandemic). This project seeks to build more equitable food security by strengthening the local food supply chain so that historically underserved communities are strongly linked to local farms. Therefore, **Track A participants that sell their food through a pre-approved “climate smart market channel” will receive a 10% cash payment on top of their sale price and Track B participants will receive 15%.** Climate smart market channels can include public schools, hospitals, prisons, historically underserved neighborhoods, food banks, Native American reservations and rural communities. For example, a \$1,000 Farm to School sale by a Track B farm will have a \$150 added incentive paid directly to the participating farmer.

# WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?



To participate in the Climate Smart Incentive Program you must:

- Operate a soil-based farm in San Diego, Riverside, Imperial or Orange County, or on a neighboring Tribal Nation;
- Make at least \$1000 per year in commercial sales;
- Have an authentic interest in improving the resilience of your farm.

There are no participation limits based on ownership vs. leasing of land or length of time in operation.



# WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPATION?

Foodshed's USDA-funded Climate Smart Incentive Program will launch in October 2023 and end in September 2028. Participating farms may enroll between October and December each year and must:

- Complete a 4-part enrollment orientation (farms that complete orientation will receive a \$2,500 incentive payment);
- Participate in two soil health tests per year;
- Verify progress towards their climate smart goals through an annual site visit; and
- Furnish receipts and invoices for their Climate Smart Market Incentive payments.
- Track B farmers will also work with Technical Advisors to complete and implement a Carbon Farm Plan. For more on Carbon Farm Plans visit: [www.carboncycle.org](http://www.carboncycle.org)

# WHAT TYPES OF TRAINING & TA WILL BE AVAILABLE?

In addition to the incentives offered through the Climate Smart Incentive Pilot, participating farmers will have access to training and technical assistance from an experienced group of partners. This will come in the form of *optional* quarterly online and in-person trainings, referrals to organizations that are experts in their field, one-on-one mentorship, and direct support to apply for additional funds to implement comprehensive Carbon Farm Plans.

As part of the Climate Smart Incentive Program, farmers will also have access to a tool demonstration library and in some cases, financial assistance to acquire tools or equipment that expedite climate-smart farming practices. This project was designed by small farmers, so it is our goal to ensure that all training & TA is voluntary, high-quality and relevant to your operations.

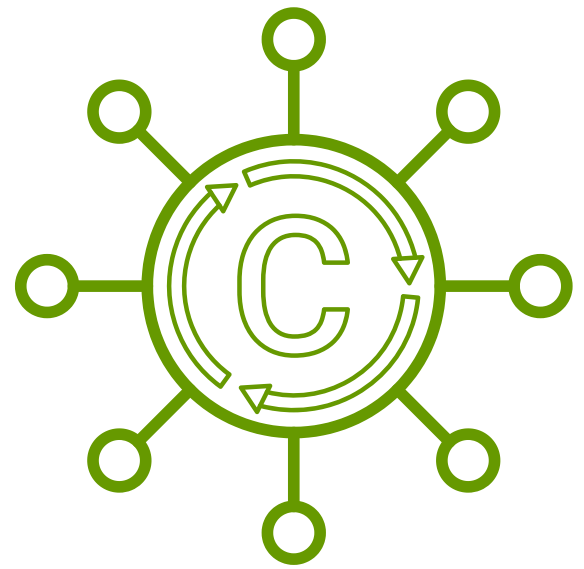




# WHO IS MANAGING THIS PROJECT?

This project was developed and will be implemented by Foodshed Cooperative, a farmer- and worker-owned aggregation and distribution company established in 2020. To learn more about Foodshed, check out:

[foodshedsmallfarmdistro.com](http://foodshedsmallfarmdistro.com) or visit our hub at **3340 Fairmount Avenue in City Heights** Tuesday-Friday 10 AM to 6 PM or Saturday 9 AM to 2 PM.



# HOW DO I LEARN MORE?

There are three ways to get involved in the Climate Smart Incentive Program:

- 1) Attend a periodic introductory session (**upcoming is October 16 at 6pm**)
- 2) Complete the enrollment application at [foodshedsmallfarmdistro.com/climate](http://foodshedsmallfarmdistro.com/climate)
- 3) Contact Bea Alvarez, Climate Resilience Specialist: [climate@foodshedcoop.com](mailto:climate@foodshedcoop.com)

**We hope you will consider joining us in this exciting new endeavor!**

