

## Climate Smart Newsletter - March 2023

### In this issue:

- \$20 Million in New Federal Funds Available now for Climate-Smart Ag thanks to IRA
- California Monarch and Pollinator Habitat Kits provided by Xerces Society
- U.S. Secretary of Ag Tom Vilsack talks Climate-Smart Agriculture

### Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices in our region

Bakersfield Service  
Center

**(661) 281-2765**

5080 California Avenue,  
Suite 150  
Bakersfield, CA 93309

Visalia Service  
Center

**(559) 734-8732**

3530 W Orchard Ct  
Visalia, CA 93277

Hanford Service  
Center

**(559) 585-8732**

680 Campus Dr Ste C  
Hanford, CA 93230

### \$20 Million in New Federal Funds Available now for Climate-Smart Ag thanks to IRA

There is now more NRCS funding for climate-smart ag  
than at any time in the last 10 years.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

On August 16, 2022, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) into law. This bill makes historic investments in a wide array of federal programs to address the climate crisis.

As of February 13, IRA funding is already available through the **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** and the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**. For fiscal year 2023, California received nearly \$20 million in IRA funding, which will target primarily at conservation practices and activities found on [this list](#).

**To access this funding, farmers and ranchers need to call their local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office and ask about applying to either program.** Please read left column for NRCS phone numbers in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Deadline to apply: March 17, 2023.

Since there are both IRA and Farm Bill funds available in CSP and EQIP this year, farmers will be able to use both programs to implement whichever practices and enhancements make the most sense for their farm.

Due to the sharp increase in total funds available and new deadlines for the programs, **all applications should be more competitive this year and farmers should strongly consider applying, even if they have been unsuccessful in the past.**

## California Monarch and Pollinator Habitat Kits provided by Xerces Society

Offered to project partners who are willing to provide the time, labor, and land to develop habitats that support monarchs and other pollinators



Many insect pollinators are declining in California, including bees and butterflies. The population of western monarch butterflies has declined 95% since the 1980s, due to a variety of reasons, including habitat loss and degradation.

One important step we can take to protect them is to increase the amount of habitat available to these species. To this end, the **Xerces Society is offering habitat kits that contain climate-smart native plants that support monarchs and other pollinators' habitats.**

If you or someone you know is interested in receiving high-quality, native plant materials for your pollinator conservation project, please consider applying. Potential applicants include farms, ranches, tribal land, school gardens, or other public areas. For more info, [click here](#).

### How to Participate in the California Monarch and Pollinator Habitat Kit Program

Xerces Society is accepting project proposals until April 3rd, 2023. They can be submitted in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

The Project Proposal form asks for information about where the kit will be planted, size of the area, and plans for site preparation, management, and maintenance.

*Xerces' California Habitat kits have provided over 100,000 plants to partners across California. Project partners are selected based on the information provided on the proposal form, so please answer questions with as much detail as possible.*

If you have any questions, please contact: [centralvalleypollinators@xerces.org](mailto:centralvalleypollinators@xerces.org)

[Información sobre el Programa de Kits en Español](#)

Visit our website

## U.S. Secretary of Ag Tom Vilsack talks Climate-Smart Agriculture

From tilling soil to belching cows, agriculture is a major climate polluter, and like it or not, it's responsible for around 11% of [U.S. greenhouse gas emissions](#).

But by using tools like **cover crops, compost and rotational grazing**, soil also holds the potential for carbon sequestration, which is **good for the climate, crops and farmers**. All of that while building your soil.

"That's one of the principal reasons for doing climate smart practices: not just to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or to sequester more carbon, but to improve soil health. **And as we improve soil health, we're also going to improve productivity**," Vilsack says.

For years, the USDA has incentivized environmental best practices through federal incentive programs.

Secretary Vilsack says the voluntary nature of these programs is better than regulations: **"We're gonna get much further, much faster, listening to farmers** who basically said, 'if you create a voluntary system, which is incentive based and market-based, we will respond.'"

Source: [Climate One. Climate Smart Agriculture with Secretary Tom Vilsack](#).

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