



**CRC Agricultural Producers Working Group
Meeting Notes
March 20, 2024
1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

| Meeting Attendees | | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Name | Title | Org | Email |
| Rich Wilkinson | District Manager | Carson Valley Conservation District | richard.wilkinson@nv.nacdn.net |
| Allen Moody | State Agronomist | NRCS Nevada | allen.moody@usda.gov |
| Marena Lovejoy | Senior Natural Resource Specialist | Carson City Parks, Rec & Open Space | mlovejoy@carson.org |
| Lori Leonard | Property Manager, RFR | The Nature Conservancy | lori.leonard@tnc.org |
| Kaitlyn Garber | CA Climate Action Fellow | Alpine Watershed Group | awg.kaitlyn@gmail.com |
| Cami Hodges | Owner | Break-A-Heart Ranch | chodges@natc-ht.com |
| Brenda Hunt | Watershed Program Manager | CWSD | brenda@cwsd.org |
| Kelly Nicholas | Watershed Tech | CWSD | watershedtech@cwsd.org |
| Staci Emm | Nevada Extension Project Leader | UNR | emms@unr.edu |
| Jessica Gwerder | District Conservationist @ Minden office | NRCS Nevada | jessica.gwerder@usda.gov |
| Nik Noomen | Owner | Wild Harmony Ranch | wildharmonyranch@gmail.com |
| Ed Kleiner | Past President | Comstock Seed | ed@comstockseed.com |
| Marlee Jenkins | Western Region Staff Specialist for Conservation Districts | DCNR | mjenkins@dcnr.nv.gov |
| Laurel Saito | Nevada Water Strategy Director | The Nature Conservancy | laurel.saito@tnc.org |
| Christy Sullivan | District Clerk | Lahontan Valley Conservation District | christy.sullivan@nv.nacdn.net |

1. Round robin was delayed for Staci Emm’s presentation on Regional Food Business Centers (see attached Otter slideshow).

Staci Emm is the program lead for Nevada within the Southwest Regional Center. Each Center received between \$20M-\$35M over five years for taking ag products to market – processing and distribution. UNR received their contracts in mid-January 2024; contracting was completed in February. FBCs 1) coordinate, 2) provide technical assistance, and 3) build capacity. Because UNR already has connections with Utah, Nevada will probably build upon those relationships and lean on the expertise of Utah food scientist Karen Allen.

Nevada’s budget includes a grant writer to help producers get started. Builder subawards are available up to \$100K per producer – supporting staff time, business planning, software, special-purpose equipment. The process will be the same across centers and will be released in June. \$4M will be available for regranting in our

region over the next four years. There is a leadership council for which Nevada has two seats. There is a Stakeholder Advisory Committee that will interact with the other states in our region, but Staci wants an internal one for Nevada too; send Staci an e-mail with your resume and your area of interest.

Consumer preference research will start to be conducted around local and regional food systems. This data will be provided to producers who are looking at a potential business for feasibility. 2024 will bring more information. Differences between Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program and Regional Food Business Centers: RFSI will not pay for anything involving meat and poultry. Expected to have funding year to year; this is the first year it's been available in Nevada; they will regrant \$1.2M. RFBC can fund anything in the supply chain. Some funds may be noncompetitive; larger dollar amounts will be competitive. Staci pointed out there needs to be additional legislation in the next session for local products and cottage foods. Haven't seen grants available for producers to use regenerative ag, but the workshops UNR has conducted have been highly attended. Resilient Food Systems should have funds for 2025; applicants will need a UEI number, which means they must register with sams.gov. Specialty crop funding may have room for regen ag tools such as a no-till drill. Nik Noomen – Is this a changeover for the producer-to-consumer process? Also, ABI has a good no-till drill that is effective for 100 acres or less and costs ~ \$10K. Staci – One of the topics for roundtables is looking at cottage food laws; a food sovereignty law is part of that, and there was a legislative tour in Fallon. To be part of the roundtables reach out to her. The Grow Local dinner will be April 27 at the Overland in Gardnerville.

2. Round Robin

Brenda Hunt – intro

Kelly Nicholas – intro

Marena Lovejoy – Listening in. Brenda: Anything going in with water rights for Buzzy's Ranch? ML: Applied for water rights funds through Conserve Nevada; waiting to hear.

Rich Wilkinson – Fields are drained, everyone is getting ready to go and the CVCD is getting busy. No-till drill is available within district boundaries, which includes Carson Valley and Carson City; there is also a Teardrop that is smaller and more maneuverable. Currently hiring several conservation technician positions. He will send over the fee structure for the larger drill.

Cami Hodges – Purchased a used John Deere tractor; going to be using to pull their no-till drill.

Kaitlyn Garber – Progress on AC composting program. Diamond Valley School will be the primary food waste diversion site.

Lori Leonard – On Apr. 13 will have an open house 11-4, May 5 will have docent training, and then May 18 will have a native plant sale 9-1.

Allen Moody – No updates but here to answer questions, particularly for the different practices.

Christy Sullivan – Deadline for tree sale was Mar. 15; Extension Master Gardeners will host a workshop on planting trees and shrubs on Apr. 2, Tues at 10 a.m. (775) 423-5121. Tree pickup is Apr 13; any extras can be sold discounted Apr 15. Across the street from the Extension office. Work days: Apr. 18 Oasis May 13-14 Numa, where high schoolers help teach the students at the different stations.

Jessica Gwerder – Here to answer questions re: EQIP, AMA, CSP and eligibility for those programs

Ed Kleiner – Jacob O'Farrell has inherited his father's seed tilling and drilling equipment: Thriving Roots. Very busy meeting seed orders. Busy with fire seedings. Some of the summer projects are custom collections to grow out seed for genetically local source as per the Forest Service. New varieties being released by plant materials center for Utah State; four are Great Basin varieties and should be available in a year or two.

Marlee Jenkins – Here to listen.

Nik Noomen – Busy with spring. Finished 4.5 miles of ditch burn, built a rock diversion, building and revamping a field that's been out of production. Got trees from the tree sale for their riparian area along the corridor. Christy would like to keep tabs on the outcomes of those trees. Some will go toward a plant-out in irrigated fields for fruit-, nut- and fodder-bearing trees in a test for which Nik hopes will be a future Carson Valley common practice. Not a good time this year for a site visit.

--LVCD also purchased a no-till drill and they have a 1979 backhoe for sale.

3. Grant Updates:

a. **Clean Water Section 208 NDEP Planning Grant – Soil Health and Regenerative Ag Update**

Grant wraps up in June. The best practices aren't going to rewrite the NRCS list but rather focus on what worked/is working/is recommended for the three places for which soil was sampled (Joe Frey's, River Fork, Break-A-Heart). Brenda would like feedback on the white paper draft and hopes there will be time to resample the same fields. The grant will probably be over by then, but she hopes to get another to do follow-up.

b. **319**

NV 319 grant applications were due Feb. 14. CWSD applied for its own programs and also applied for grants working with Break-A-Heart and Frey Ranches for regenerative ag practices at implementing regenerative ag practices and looking at them over time to see how they improve soil health and water quality. Both properties are right on the river and in impaired reaches; CWSD would administer the grants. Lori applied for funding to support additional rotational grazing at River Fork Ranch, as well as native tree planting along the West Fork and the creation of enhanced wetlands, depressions where irrigation water would settle before returning to the West Fork.

4. (2:30 -2:50) Specific funding opportunities:

a. [NRCS grant programs in NV](#) (click link, scroll down)

- i. [EQIP](#) and [AMA](#) grants due March 29, 2024.
- ii. [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) due April 5, 2024.
- iii. [CWSD is exploring the Regional Conservation Partnership Program - NV](#) to see who eligible applicants are. Working with conservation districts will be a way to access this funding.

b. [Western SARE has two grants](#) open with fall deadlines.

- i. [Farmer/Rancher Grant Program 2025](#) (\$25,000 – \$29,900/up to 3 years) 1-3 producers required
- ii. [Sabbatical Research and Education Grant Program 2025](#) (\$75,000/1 year)
Working with producers interested in research or with the USDA Agriculture Research Service may be a way to

c. NDA grants:

- i. [Nevada Foundational Seed Program – RFQ Spring seed application](#) due March 29, 2024.
- ii. [Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program 2024](#) due March 29, 2024.

5. Goals Workshops I:

a. Strategize creating a demonstration farm network in the CRW

This is not something Cami can implement, but she suggested a rancher near Ft. Churchill or maybe Ft. Churchill themselves. Marena is interested, but there is much work to be done before implementation. Rich may know of a farmer getting started in organic farming who is working on his water rights and irrigation systems.

Marena Lovejoy and Brenda Hunt discuss potential collaboration with a smaller working group to explore ideas for a community workshop.

Marley mentions a new platform called Nevada Farm Network for outreach and information sharing.

b. Joe Frey's for field tour.

6. Events/Outreach

- a. PFC and Riparian Grazing Mgmt. Workshop at TNC's River Fork Ranch. Class is full but there are other opportunities in Elko, Eureka, and Winnemucca.
- b. Earth Day – Apr 20 FPST; Apr 27 Teddy Bear Parade; May 4 WEPD

- c. Ag in the Classroom - April in Fallon; May x 2 in Carson Valley
- d. Get on the Bus Tour June 11-12

Meeting adjourned.

[Staci Emm's presentation about Regional Food Business Centers](#)

Chat:

14:25:06 From Christy.Sullivan - Lahontan -CD : LCD also has a no till-drill we just purchased. We also have a 1979 Backhoe for sale. Contact # (775) 217-5273.

15:01:35 From Christy.Sullivan - Lahontan -CD : I learned so much at this meeting. Sorry I need to leave early.

15:14:17 From Richard.Wilkinson : Brenda, I have to head out to an appt. we will be in touch

15:14:20 From Richard.Wilkinson : Rich

15:17:13 From Marlee Jenkins : I'm tentatively fine with either!

15:17:34 From Cami H : I can likely do June or September

15:21:19 From Lori Leonard : I'd be up for a meeting in Fallon. Perhaps later in the summer - early fall(?)

15:23:44 From Marlee Jenkins : Thank you Brenda and Kelly!