

Carbon Farming in Santa Barbara

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On Thursday, September 8, CEC's CEO/Executive Director Sigrid Wright spoke at the [California Adaptation Forum](#) on a panel about the potential to implement "carbon farming" techniques on a large scale in Santa Barbara County.

Carbon Farming Research in Santa Barbara

Titled "From Pilots to Big Bold Visions: Rapid Scaling of Carbon Farming," the panel will explore how a robust partnership in Santa Barbara County – including landowners, NGOs, universities, private foundations, and state and federal agencies – is navigating rapid developments in research and policy to recruit ranchers in the fight against climate change. In partnership with the Cachuma Resource Conservation District, the National Resources Conservation Service, the Carbon Cycle Institute and others, this project includes a research pilot on one of the largest private ranches in the region, as well as [an analysis of how best to capture existing organic waste and convert it to low-cost, high-quality compost](#).

Compost in Carbon-Capturing Action

Recent research in Marin County, which has similar soils and agricultural makeup to Santa Barbara, shows that a one-time application of compost on rangelands can stimulate plant growth at a significant level. By kickstarting the carbon cycle, this strategy uses native grasslands as vehicles for pulling excess carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and sequestering it in the soil. (For a quick primer on how the carbon cycle works, check out this video from [the Soil Story](#).

Click here to watch “The Soil Story with Pashon Murray”: <https://youtu.be/npu6GBbB-Oc>

Santa Barbara Applications of Climate-smart Agriculture

The team of Santa Barbara partners has calculated that about 270,000 acres in the county is suitable for compost application – most of it private rangeland. If just 15% of that available land received a one-time dusting of compost, our analysis shows that the increased sequestration could offset all of the greenhouse gas emissions from the county’s agricultural sector.

The panel will also highlight how, in addition to helping meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, climate-smart agricultural techniques can significantly improve the water holding capacity of soil and increase percolation – important benefits during an extended drought.

California Adaptation Forum Opportunities

First organized in 2014 by the Local Government Commission and the State of California’s climate change initiative, the forum aims to create a community of action by bringing together hundreds of local, regional, and state leaders from a wide swath of public and private sectors with specialties ranging from air quality, energy and agriculture to transportation, equitable development and emergency management. The forum creates opportunities for forming partnerships and also provides tools and strategies for community leaders looking for assistance as they develop and implement solutions for adapting to a more carbon-neutral way of life.
