



2023-2028

# STRATEGIC PLAN

CAFF works with farmers Maria Catalán (Hollister) and Miguel Avedano (Fresno) to create new market and agritourism opportunities to strengthen their businesses.



On the cover: Donald Sherman (center), owner of Sherman Produce Market in Fresno, participated in CAFF's Food Safety Partner Farm Program and developed a multi-farm CSA with the support of our Farm to Market team.

## CAFF at 45 Years

Since our early days in 1978, CAFF has been a partnership forged between farmers and their communities: neighbors, farmworkers, food service directors, social justice advocates, and anyone working to build a better food and farming system in California.



CAFF's definition of "family farms" includes those farming at the community scale: working the land sustainably, growing healthy food for their communities, and contributing to their local economy.

**We advocate for the family-scale farmer. The farmer with their hands in the soil, planting for today, and stewarding the land for future generations.**

We believe that farmers can work in concert with the land to generate solutions to the climate crisis, rather than exacerbate it.

We amplify the voice of small and mid-size farmers, advocating for policies that work for them, not against them.

The farmers featured in this strategic plan reflect the trusted relationships we've built with farmers across the state. They also reflect an evolving organization – one that's placing equity in California agriculture front and center. Together we are building a trusted network of farmers and food advocates to advance collective change, one farm and one season at a time.

We work for an equitable and just food system and we invite you to share in our vision as we lay out our plans for the next five years.

Sincerely,

**Paul Towers**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Towers".





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Bob Kuang, owner of BK Farm and president of the Bay Area Chinese Growers Association, received emergency funding from CAFF during the pandemic and has helped CAFF provide technical assistance to reach other Chinese-American growers.

We **envision** a just future for California where all farmers are dignified and thriving, cultivating healthy ecosystems, and feeding local communities.

Our **mission** is to build sustainable food and farming systems through policy advocacy and on-the-ground programs that create more resilient family farms, communities, & ecosystems.

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Our **values** form the foundation on which we conduct our programs and activities. The values support our work, how we interact with each other, and how we fulfill our mission.

Ecological Stewardship | Justice & Equity  
Practical Solutions | Economic Fairness  
Farmer-centered | Strong Local Communities

# We are working to realize these long-term goals for California's food and farming communities.

1

Farmers & land stewards provide access to responsibly-grown, culturally-relevant, fresh food for their communities

2

Thriving farms support local food economies

3

Racial justice is embedded in food and farming systems

4

Public institutions are accountable to family-scale farmers and land stewards

5

Farms holistically mitigate and adapt to negative impacts of climate change

## CAFF's core capacities collectively lead us towards our long term goals

### Short-term financial assistance

We mobilize financial assistance to farmers impacted by ongoing climate-related stressors and natural disasters to support farm viability.

### Co-learning & technical assistance

We provide hands-on support and facilitate knowledge exchange between farmers to support ongoing learning.

### Policy advocacy

We amplify farmer needs to ensure policies, regulations and laws reflect their experiences.

### Relationship building & organizing

We advance change by building relationships with agricultural communities.

### Farmer centered research & demonstration

We focus on practical research that has direct applications for farmers

### Value chain coordination

We strengthen relationships across food systems that serve mutual interests of farmers, buyers and communities.



# How we will shift power & create change over the next 5 years

	1 year	3 years	5 years
<b>Short-term financial assistance</b>	Distribute <b>\$1M in farmer grants</b> for drought and wildfire relief; identify pathways for future funding	Distribute <b>\$3M in financial assistance</b> , the majority going to small-scale and BIPOC farmers	Distribute <b>\$5M in financial assistance</b> , the majority going to small-scale and BIPOC farmers
<b>Co-learning &amp; technical assistance (TA)</b>	Lay groundwork for transforming materials, delivery, outreach, and evaluation methods to <b>serve needs of Latinx farmers</b>	Deepen capacity to deliver <b>culturally appropriate TA</b> rooted in the real-world needs of working farmers	Continue to respond to <b>emergent farmer needs</b> through culturally competent staff and programs
<b>Policy advocacy</b>	Advance new training (e.g. Latinx policy cohort) & leadership and <b>representation from historically underserved farmers &amp; land stewards</b> in CAFF policy bodies and those in which CAFF engages	Secure significant state policy changes that <b>provide resources and prioritization for family-scale &amp; BIPOC farmers</b> , particularly for land and water access	Work on the implementation of key state policies; strengthen local policy leadership and staff capacity to <b>support implementation</b> ; utilize <b>strengthened network of informed policy leaders</b> , including San Joaquin (SJ) Valley & Southern CA

1 year      3 years      5 years

<b>Relationship building &amp; organizing</b>	<b>Grow relationships with and accountability to Latinx/Spanish-speaking farmers</b> in order to better understand and serve this growing population of farmers	Engage in multi-year effort organizing small farmers in <b>advocating for Sustainable Groundwater Management Act reform</b>	Develop mature and trusted relationships that inform CAFF's program and policy priorities. <b>Support 10 communities of farmers</b> as formal or informal chapters across the state
<b>Farmer centered research &amp; demonstration</b>	Develop and implement <b>new ecological pest management</b> work in walnuts, wine grapes, and small-scale vegetable systems	Influence investment dollars and development of research <b>projects that will directly benefit small CA farmers</b> . Continue to carry out on-farm research/demonstration	Establish collaborative relationships with <b>Latinx partner farmers to carry out on-farm research and demonstration projects</b> . Farmer-centered research includes multiple cropping systems
<b>Value chain coordination</b>	Increase CAFF's presence in the SJ Valley through leadership in the <b>Fresno-Merced Future of Food Initiative</b> . Support the development of an <b>Agroecology hub, regional branding campaign</b> , and increased <b>market access for BIPOC farmers</b> .	Continue efforts and relationship building in the SJ Valley while providing support to other areas of the state through <b>Farm to School and Farm to Market</b> work.	<b>Robust access to markets and value chain connections</b> for BIPOC growers in SJ Valley & Central Coast. <b>Increased participation</b> statewide in Farm to School work.

# Programs at CAFF

## Farm to Market

We connect farms with businesses, providing growers with a suite of practical services – from **coordinating institutional purchasing to developing marketing resources** – to ensure supply and demand grow together.

## Farmer Services

We provide direct technical support through our **Small Farm Tech Hub**, which supports farmers and food enterprises in adopting tech based solutions for their marketing challenges, our **Food Safety program** that helps growers provide healthy and safe produce to their markets, and our **Wildfire Resilience program** that develops and delivers recovery and preparedness resources for small farmers impacted by wildfires. In 2023 we will begin providing Organic Transition technical assistance to farmers.

## Ecological Farming

We work with farmers, policy makers, researchers, and local TA providers to **promote, improve, and better understand the adoption of ecological farming practices** in California – including sustainable water use, integrated pest management, on-farm diversity, and hedgerows.

## Policy & Advocacy

We are the voice of family-scale agriculture in California. We advocate with and on behalf of family-scale farmers for state and national policies that center racial equity, local communities, and create more sustainable and resilient ecosystems.

## California Family Farmer Emergency Fund

We provide direct financial assistance to small-scale farmers impacted by climate related disasters.

## California Small Farm Conference

We convene farmers and ag advocates to share resources, trade best practices, learn and collectively advocate for family farms in their community.

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Hope Sippola, co-founder of Fiery Ginger Farm in West Sacramento and Spork Food Hub works closely with CAFF's Farm to Cafeteria program, developing innovative ways to connect school districts and other institutional buyers to local farms.



## We are grateful to our supporters

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