



Stanislaus County Water Advisory Committee
January 31, 2024

Comment Card on the Working Definition of Small Farmers and the Presentation

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a “small farmer” as an operation with gross cash farm annual income under \$350,000. Within this definition are commercial and noncommercial farms. The USDA and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) defines a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher as a member of a socially disadvantaged group who’s been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include African Americans, Native American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. The USDA goes further to include “Historically Underserved Farmers or Ranches” to include beginning, socially disadvantaged, Veterans, and Limited Resourced.

1. Limited-resource farm households with low farm sales and low household income for two years in a row. Low farm sales meant direct or indirect gross farms sales less than \$350,000 and low household income means less than 85% of the median household income (MHI).
2. A ranch or farm that had 50 acres or less and that is operated by a farmer or rancher who qualifies as a socially disadvantaged, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher.
3. Who has an owner that is socially disadvantaged and subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. This includes women owned farms or ranches.
4. Beginning farmers or ranchers who have materially and substantially participated in the operation of any farm or ranch for 10 years or less. All operators of the farm or ranch must be a beginning farmer or rancher to qualify under this definition. A beginning farmer or rancher can also qualify if they have undergone a transformation in agricultural processes in the last 10 years and are operating under a regenerative agricultural process, indigenous farming methods, cover crops, agroforestry, permaculture, or any other farming and ranching practices that results in a regeneration of the soils to increase carbon sequestration.

A veteran farmer or rancher is a person who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

Please use this space and the back for your comments



