



Sierra Harvest Resilience Workshop Summary

Workshop held 22 April 2023

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Background: Farmers and land stewards in the Sierra Nevada Foothills region are facing multiple interacting challenges due to multiple biophysical, social, and political factors. In this workshop, we facilitated small and large group discussions with farmers and land stewards about the challenges and threats they face, and the practices they've identified to mitigate or respond to those challenges. As part of the discussion, each person identified a threat that they face on a map of the local area. The three maps are included at the end of this summary.

Challenges mentioned by workshop participants and adaptive practices to address them

Land challenges (soil type, erosion, fire, etc.)

- Foothills soil: heavy clay, rocky, dry, steep slopes, low nutrient content
- Fire
- Soil contamination

Adaptive practices

- Light tilling, more frequently in veggies. Just till the top 2 inches of soil, it helps with germination
- Adapting growing plants to the land you are on - figure out what the land wants
- Manure; make sure it's good by buying from a known source
- Finding opportunities for learning exchange
- Compost
- Be open to new solutions, ideas
- Cover crops
- Believe in the power of observation
- Hedgerows, with a diversity of plants
- Silvopasture systems

Pests challenges (insects, animals, weeds, etc.)

- Weed seed bank
- Turkeys, geese
- Deer
- Cucumber beetles
- Rodents (squirrels, gophers, voles)

Adaptive practices

- To control gophers: dogs, deep plowing, snakes, traps, manual control
- Raised beds to control voles
- Build up natural predators
- Homeopathic sprays

Money and lifestyle challenges (markets, labor, land tenure, money, etc.)

- Affordable wages for employees
- Labor suitability
- Revenue markets don't allow for fair wages
- Access to workers
- Unhoused staff
- Ethical labor markets
- Farmworker justice
- Capitalism, economic system, owner/worker stratification
- Local income levels for consumers
- Access to markets
- Land use change
- Capital to start a farm
- Creating self-sufficiency
- Cooperative skills
- Understanding community
- Psychological stress
- Economics

Adaptive practices

- Labor suitability
- Look for balance
- Measuring success via technical assistance
- Alternate foods
- Resource organizations, such as Farm Link
- Conservation easements

Water (drought, flooding, water access/rights, etc.)

- Hot temperatures and heat stress
- Wells are deep, old, and running dry
- Water shutoff from local canal, needing to switch to well water
- Learning to be regenerative with water
- Drought

Adaptive practices

- Sudangrass intercropping for shade and weed management with minimum water input
- Hoop houses and shade structures
- Intercropping with trees to provide shade
- Growing under solar panels
- Tall hedge rows interplanting with annual veggies with drought tolerant, tall growing cover (like sudangrass)
- Overhead sprinklers in heat waves

Supplementary materials: Map photos and legend

Sticky note colors

- Pink = threats
- Yellow = adaptive practices, challenges, opportunities

Dot colors (on the maps)

- Red: land issues (soil type, erosion, fire, etc.)
- Yellow: pests (insects, animals, weeds, etc.)
- Green: money (markets, labor, land tenure, money, etc.)
- Blue: water (drought, flooding, water access/rights, etc.)





