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New GHG protocol recruits ranchers in fight against climate change

SAN FRANCISCO – The California Air Pollution Control Officers Association has announced the approval of a new greenhouse gas emission reduction credit protocol that recruits ranchers in the fight against climate change.

The new protocol involves sustainable land management practices that help store atmospheric carbon in the soil through a process of applying compost to rangelands. The practice helps reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases through enhanced photosynthetic capture of carbon dioxide from the air, generates tradable offset credits for ranchers and enhances the productivity and water holding capacity of rangelands.

“The new protocol will serve as a model to stimulate innovative greenhouse gas reduction projects throughout California,” said Alan Abbs, CAPCOA Board President. “Ranchers will be able to help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions while simultaneously improving their bottom line.”

The protocol, titled “Methodology for Compost Additions to Grazed Grasslands,” is based on research conducted through the Marin Carbon Project, a seven-year-long project developed by a consortium of agricultural producers, university researchers, county and federal agencies and non-profit organizations. University of California studies have shown that a one-time application of compost to grasslands can substantially increase the amount of atmospheric carbon captured by rangeland vegetation and sequestered in soils, while also having the co-benefits of improving plant growth and water retention in grasslands. By implementing this innovative practice, ranchers can generate GHG emission reduction credits and sell them on voluntary carbon markets, producing a new revenue source for ranchers, while also creating benefits to California’s environment.

The CAPCOA Board approved the new protocol on December 10, 2014, allowing it to become a part of the CAPCOA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Exchange, or GHG Rx, a registry and information exchange for greenhouse gas emission-reduction credits designed specifically to benefit the State of California. The GHG Rx was created to help protect the climate, promote local GHG reduction projects and stimulate the local economy by providing CEQA mitigation opportunities within local air basins. For more information about the GHG Rx and to see the rangelands protocol go to <http://www.capcoa.org/>.

“We are pleased that CAPCOA has approved our protocol and look forward to developing projects to list on the GHG Rx in the near future,” said John Wick, co-founder of the Marin Carbon Project.

CAPCOA is a non-profit association of the air pollution control officers from all 35 local air quality agencies throughout California. CAPCOA was formed in 1976 to promote clean air and to provide a forum for sharing of knowledge, experience and information among California’s air quality regulatory agencies and air quality professionals.

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