



CALIFORNIA
FARMLINK

Impact Report

2025





Cruz Martinez Farm, Madera County



Magaña Farm, Monterey County



Anna's Organic, Madera County

About Us

California FarmLink works to create an inclusive farm and food economy with equitable access to opportunity for farmers, ranchers, and fishers. We connect the next-generation of sustainable farmers and ranchers with land and financing.

We partner with farmers to build strong business skills, access fair financing, and establish secure land tenure. We strive to create economic and environmental resilience of farmers, ranchers, and fishers with limited access to financial resources.

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Letter from the CEO

Dear Stakeholders,

In a year when it seemed like the only constant was change, California FarmLink remained steadfast in serving farmers, ranchers, and fishers throughout California. I'm pleased to share our 2025 Impact Report in a framework oriented towards outcomes. Our impact pillars are active: they describe what we do, how we do it, and what we're working toward. This framework helps us envision a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient food system.

As I reflect on our impact over the past year, I'm struck by the wealth of stories we have to share, the long track record we've built, and the perennial need for the work we do. Farmers, ranchers, and fishers are a special kind of entrepreneur – they stake their livelihoods on our natural world. They tolerate variability and operate in an industry without traditional safety nets other jobs may offer, like healthcare, retirement, or regular

paychecks to name just a few. Working in the food system can seem risky, but the impact is powerful: farmers, ranchers, and fishers work with and restore living ecosystems to provide food, and in the process, they create a meaningful living for themselves and their employees.

Our clients' needs are not unique: across the country farmers, ranchers, and fishers need flexible and supportive capital and resources that respect the complexities of their businesses. Farmers and ranchers need access to land where they can put down roots for the long-term. I want to thank our funders, partners, and clients who trust our vision and share in creating our impact.

Reggie Knox
Chief Executive Officer



Introduction

Understanding Our Impact

California FarmLink has four organizing principles that provide vision and clarity around the work we do. These principles are central to our mission and strategy: they represent the vision for our programs and services and allow us to identify areas we want to grow into to deepen our impact. These principles are the foundation for our impact reporting.

As a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), we are committed to serving our target market of Latine and low-income clients. We deploy at least 60% of our capital to our target market on an annual basis. In serving farmers, ranchers, and fishers throughout California, we often work in rural communities that are underserved by lenders and service providers. Our nonprofit CDFI structure allows us to operate a loan fund, capitalized by impact investors that leverages public small business capital, alongside programs funded by grantors and donors. Our multi-faceted approach centers access to land, capital, and education as catalysts for creating and preserving wealth while conserving and enhancing natural resources. We believe that successful farm and ranch businesses support healthy rural communities with resilient food systems, living-wage jobs, and a healthy environment characterized by working lands providing incomes and ecosystem services.

This impact report demonstrates how we work to achieve consistent, measurable, and intentional outcomes. Our principles are also aspirational. They serve as a guide to adapt and evolve our programs as we strive for excellence in serving small businesses. They are also ideals we stand by as we embody the change we want to see in our food and farming system.

The Principles

Agricultural Credit

Ensure access to affordable, fair, non-predatory agricultural credit that meets the needs of low-income, beginning, and borrowers of color and leverages their knowledge, experience and potential.

Building Wealth & Financial Resilience

Create equitable opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and fishers, particularly from communities of color, those operating at small scales, and those who have limited access to financial resources, to build wealth and achieve financial resilience.

Land Tenure

Increase opportunities for farmers and ranchers to acquire affordable, secure, long-term access to land, with an emphasis on beginning, women, and farmers and ranchers of color.

Climate Resilience

Create equitable opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and fishers to conserve natural resources and lead in climate change adaptation, centering communities of color and those who have limited access to financial resources.

Our Impact Framework



Agricultural Credit

Metrics:

- ✓ Capital deployed to borrowers
- ✓ Types of capital and loan products we offer
- ✓ Portfolio composition
- ✓ Investor participation
- ✓ Innovative financing partnerships

Outcomes:

Farmers, ranchers, and fishers **access affordable, fair capital** to invest in their operations: land, houses and infrastructure, vessels/equipment, operating capital.

We build the field of alternative lenders so that more farmers, ranchers, and fishers can benefit from supportive loan capital.



Building Wealth & Financial Resilience

Metrics:

- ✓ Access to capital by beginning, minority & low-income borrowers
- ✓ Business viability
- ✓ Loan performance
- ✓ Jobs created and retained
- ✓ Knowledge gained through education

Outcomes:

Farmers, ranchers, and fishers have the tools they need to **own and operate successful, resilient businesses** in California.

We provide linguistically appropriate and culturally relevant education that meet the diverse needs of business owners.



Land Tenure

Metrics:

- ✓ Acres secured through agreement
- ✓ Characteristics of tenure agreements
- ✓ Farmland conservation through easements
- ✓ Beginning farmer land ownership
- ✓ Innovative land tenure strategies

Outcomes:

Farmers and ranchers **achieve long-term land tenure** that incorporates relevant business needs and enables land stewardship.

FarmLink's programs improve the availability, affordability, and stewardship of California's farmland.



Climate Resilience

Metrics:

- ✓ Capital deployed for conservation purposes
- ✓ Stewardship practices
- ✓ Organic and beyond certifications
- ✓ Investments in green technology
- ✓ Disaster relief and preparedness

Outcomes:

Farmers, ranchers, and fishers have **equitable access to opportunities** to lead in adapting to and recovering from the impacts of climate change.

Working lands and oceans are sites where people combat climate change by restoring soils and ecosystems.



How FarmLink Creates Impact



Through its investors, funders, and partners, provides:

Land

Capital

Education



to Farmers, Ranchers, and Fishers who

- Grow, raise, and catch food
- Sell to local communities
- Support healthy soils, land, and ocean ecosystems
- Preserve farmland
- Provide employment opportunities
- Operate resilient businesses



which benefits Communities through

- Local, healthy food supply
- Ecosystem services
- Small business entrepreneurship
- Resilient food system economy

Agricultural Credit

We work with nearly 100 individuals, financial advisors, family offices, and foundations who are interested in supporting small farmers, ranchers, and fishers throughout California to build strong businesses and resilient regional food systems.

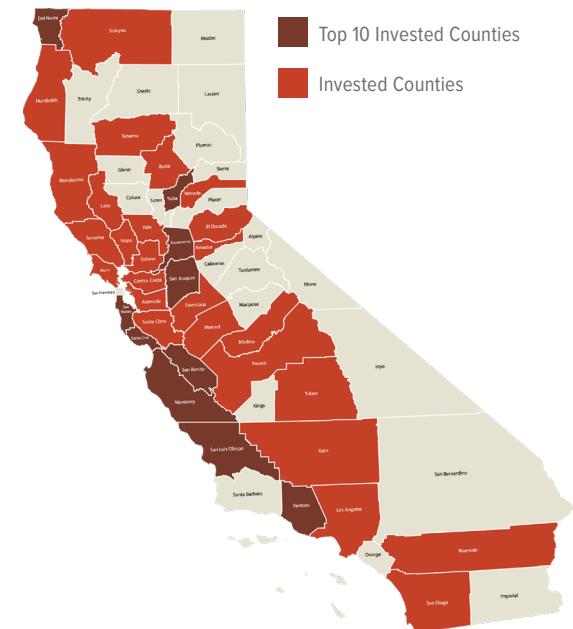
California FarmLink became a lender in 2011 and has deployed over \$92.7 million to over 400 borrowers. We work with borrowers in 39 counties, 25% of whom raise diversified vegetables. In that time, our historic loss rate has been under 1%, demonstrating the resilience and viability of small and midsize, diversified operations. The borrowers in our portfolio are often under-resourced and may not qualify for traditional loans, but our work providing equitable access to opportunity and affordable capital, shows that given the chance, they can succeed.

We work with nearly 100 individuals, financial advisors, family offices, and foundations who are interested in supporting small farmers, ranchers, and

fishers throughout California to build strong businesses and resilient regional food systems. We raise debt capital from accredited and nonaccredited investors who make it possible for us to offer unique loan products with competitive rates. We offer farmland mortgages, down payment assistance, operating capital and equipment loans, disaster relief loans, and loans, to foster on-farm conservation outcomes. Investors in our work have helped us seed loan guarantee funds, enabling us to provide capital to borrowers who are ineligible for state and federal guarantee programs. These innovative capital structures help us serve a diverse set of clients who are often underserved by traditional lenders.

OUR LENDING FOOTPRINT

As of 12/31/2025



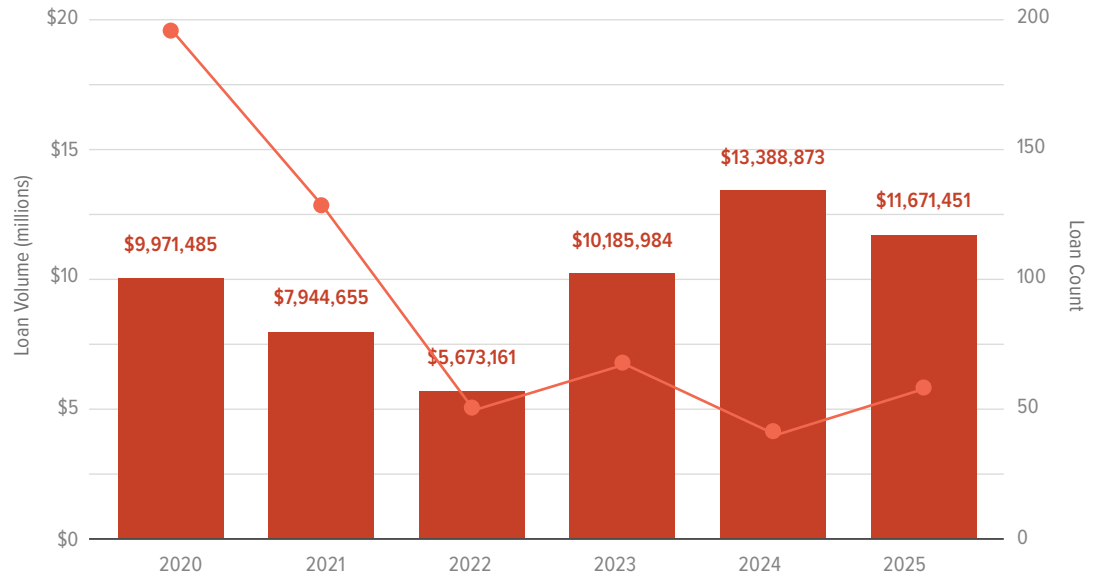


Feeding Crane Farm, Nevada County

Field Building

We believe an important part of our work providing capital is to share our learning with traditional and non-traditional lenders in the CDFI field and beyond. FarmLink has been instrumental in leading a network of lenders and investors working across the country to provide capital to farmers, ranchers, and fishers running small and midsize businesses that contribute to their communities and ecosystems. We work with partners and peers to structure and deploy capital, develop products, and better serve clients.

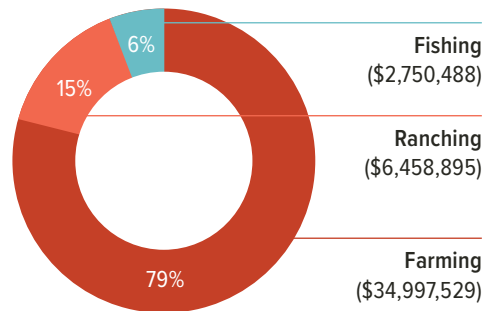
LOAN VOLUME AND COUNT, 2020 – 2025



Note: Numbers of loans in 2020-21 include forgivable PPP loans

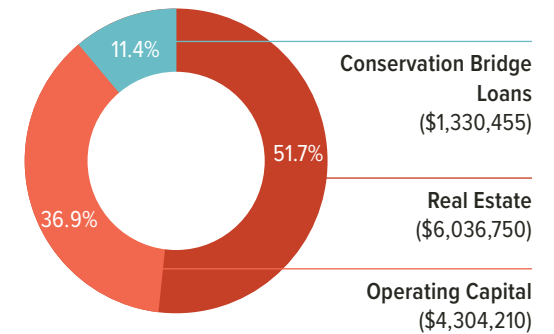
LENDING BY PRODUCTION TYPE

as of 12/31/2025



LENDING BY PRODUCT TYPE

Closed in 2025



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Yadira Mendiola

Access to conservation funding has long favored farmers with available capital, leaving many small and underserved farmers behind. Yadira Mendiola, owner of Queen of Vegetables in Salinas, knew her farm needed water and energy efficiency upgrades but faced a common barrier: conservation programs require significant upfront investment before reimbursement.

California FarmLink's Conservation Bridge Loan program closes this gap by providing low- to zero-interest financing repaid only after program funds arrive. With this support, Yadira accessed the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) to implement climate-smart upgrades, including solar panels for her water pump, automated irrigation controls, and tensiometers to monitor soil moisture and optimize irrigation.

The improvements have delivered measurable results saving roughly 40 hours of labor per week, reducing annual costs by nearly \$40,000, and enhancing crop quality, water efficiency, and reducing energy use. Yadira also received technical assistance from FarmLink staff and her local Resource Conservation District, showing how capital paired with guidance helps farmers turn challenges into opportunities.



“As small farmers, we don’t have the cash flow to cover these costs upfront. The bridge loan made it possible for us to participate and invest in improvements that strengthen our farm for the future.”



Building Wealth and Financial Resilience

In 2025, 63% of capital deployed went to borrowers in their first 10 years of owning a business.

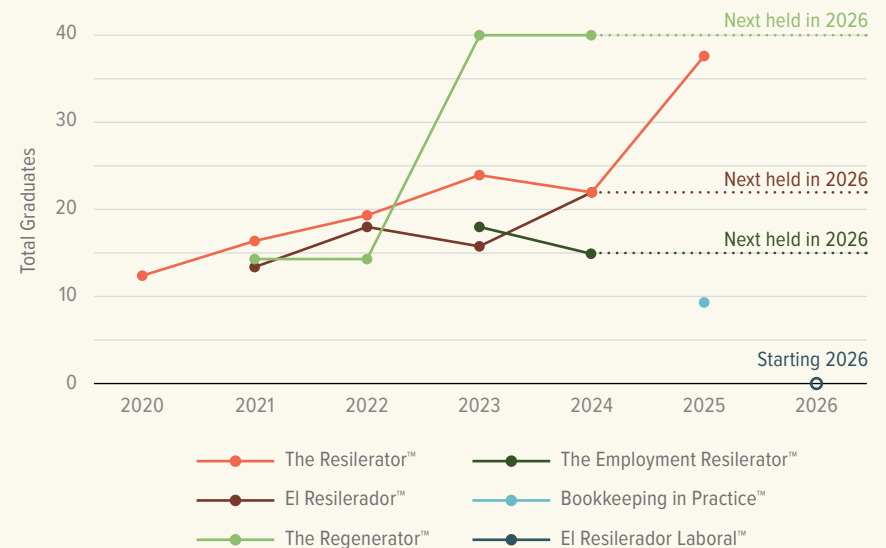
Farmers, ranchers, and fishers are entrepreneurs. They own their businesses, create employment opportunities, and contribute to their local and regional economies. We believe that business ownership is a powerful pathway to building wealth. [Research](#) from the Aspen Institute suggests that entrepreneurship can help bridge the racial wealth gap through increases in net worth.

Agriculture and fishing require significant capital investment: land, equipment, vessels, quotas and fishing permits, permanent crops, and infrastructure (including housing). Farmers, ranchers, and fishers need access to credit to appropriately capitalize their businesses. FarmLink helps clients become loan ready by providing specialized education and technical assistance appropriate to their industry and language needs. Our programs include content on financial planning, management, and analysis, labor and employment matters, entity structure, and transition planning. We offer loan products built for early stage to mature business owners that can help establish, scale, and stabilize their operations. Our products can help beginning entrepreneurs access capital they would not otherwise qualify for with traditional lenders because of insufficient business history. In 2025, 63% of capital deployed went to borrowers in their first 10 years of owning a business.

We believe that lending to small and midsize businesses helps owners build equity, on and off the balance sheet. For minority and limited resource farmers, ranchers, and fishers access to land,

capital, and education is especially critical. In the 2022 Agriculture Census, only 8% of producers belong to minority groups; in California, 20% of producers are from minority groups. By contrast, California FarmLink works with over 60% minority borrowers and clients. We believe investing in farmers, ranchers, and fishers from diverse and underserved backgrounds improves equity and helps more business owners participate in the food economy.

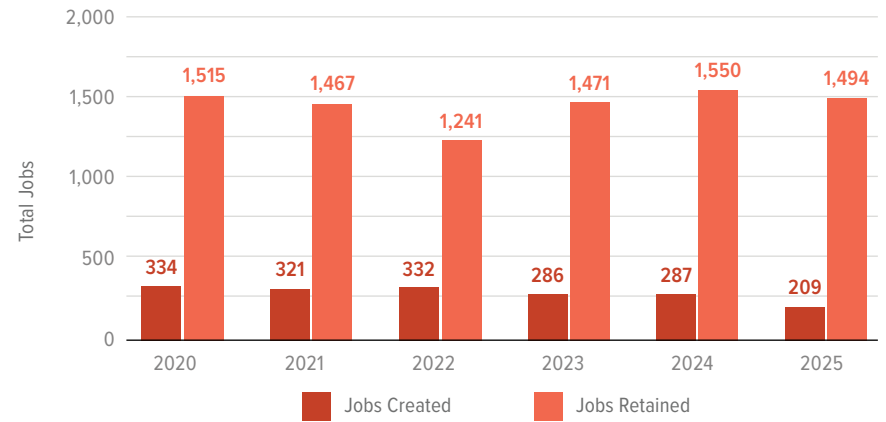
GRADUATES BY COURSE, 2020 - 2026





Cruz Martinez Farm, Madera County

JOBS CREATED OR RETAINED, 2020 - 2025



Borrower Demographics

MINORITY OWNED BUSINESSES

61%

5-year average

LOW-INCOME OWNED BUSINESSES

58%

5-year average

Financial Resilience

CURRENT ON LOANS

85%

Current on loans in 2025 (as of December 31, 2025)*

** < 30 days delinquent*

REINVESTING IN THEIR BUSINESS

78%

of respondents to our annual impact survey report reinvesting in their businesses (by purchasing land, equipment, infrastructure, and more)



CLIENT SPOLIGHT

Mauricio Gonzalez

Mauricio Gonzalez, owner of Gonzalez-Huerta Organics, has more than 25 years of experience in the Salinas Valley ag industry, beginning as a strawberry picker and later becoming a foreman. After years of hands-on experience, he launched his own farm in 2021, growing diversified organic vegetables including celery, parsley, broccolini, snap peas, fennel, and green beans, partnering with Coke Farm as his distributor to bring his crops to market.

To expand and sustain his farm, Mauricio received an operating loan from California FarmLink, which helped cover seeds, plants, labor, and job creation. When severe storms and flooding disrupted his operation, he faced the challenge of relocating to new land in Chualar, creating unexpected costs and logistical hurdles.

With continued support from FarmLink, including a second operating loan for land rental, supplies, and startup expenses, Mauricio was able to stabilize his farm. He also participated in FarmLink's El Resilerador course to strengthen his business and financial management skills. Together, these resources helped him overcome setbacks, expand his operation, and build a sustainable, thriving organic farm business.



“Every season brings new challenges, but also new lessons. With the right support and perseverance, I’ve been able to grow my business and move closer to becoming self-sustainable.”



Land Tenure

In California, there are nearly seven times as many senior farmers as there are those 35 and younger.

Land is the foundation of all agriculture businesses. California farmers and ranchers face particular challenges securing land, despite being the top-producing agricultural state in the country. For beginning, young, and limited resource farmers, these challenges can make starting and sustaining a business challenging; however, these farmers are more likely to operate small businesses that have outsized benefit in their communities. Through our land tenure work, we've facilitated over 640 lease, purchase, and succession agreements.

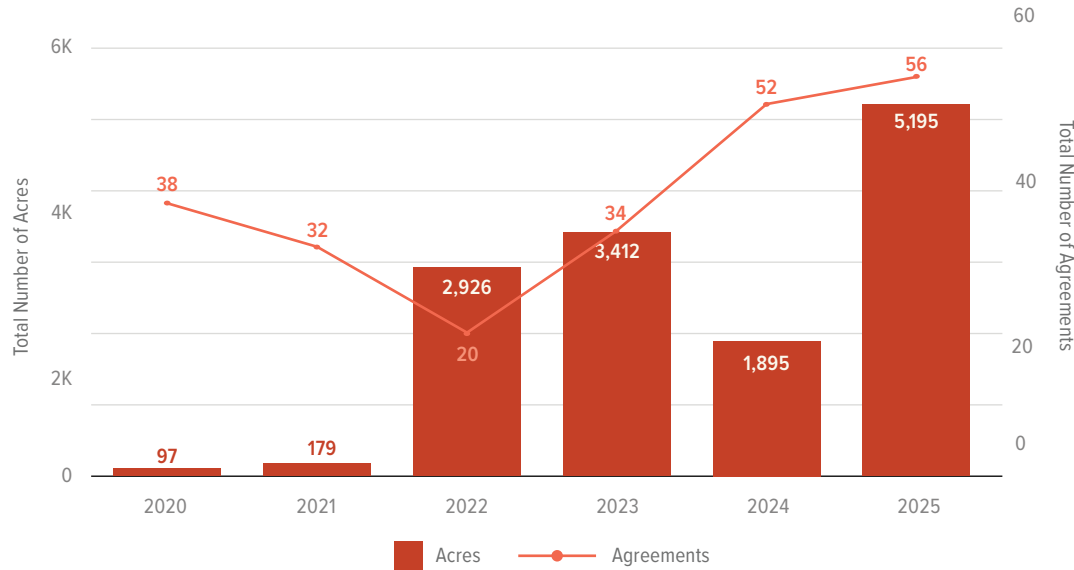
In California, there are nearly seven times as many senior farmers as there are those 35 and younger. As older farmers retire, facilitating land transfer to the next generation is essential to preserving farmland and offering affordable entry points to young and beginning farmers. An emerging strategy that can address affordability, farmland preservation, and create opportunity for beginning and limited resource farmers is through collective land access models. We work with partners and individuals who are creating models for group land access by supporting land acquisition, working with the groups to develop lease and sublease agreements, and providing technical assistance on entity structure and leveraging conservation opportunities.

FarmLink works on land tenure at individual and systemic levels:

- ✓ We make land available by running a Land Portal with vetted opportunities.
- ✓ We work with landholders and landseekers as they negotiate tenure agreements to improve understanding and clarify terms.
- ✓ We offer a year-long succession planning course, The Regenerator, where retiring farmers and their next-generation successors put together their succession and land transfer plan with the help of lawyers, financial advisors, and mediators.
- ✓ We work with a network of mission-aligned partners on innovative land tenure agreements, and policy to reduce farmland loss and ensure equitable opportunities for California farmers and ranchers to access land.



TOTAL ACRES AND SIGNED AGREEMENTS, 2020 – 2025



TOTAL AGREEMENTS

56

total land tenure and business agreements

SPANISH-SPEAKING CLIENTS

24

Spanish-speaking clients received technical assistance related to land tenure

PATHWAY TO OWNERSHIP

6

land tenure and business agreements included a pathway to ownership

BEGINNING FARMER LAND OWNERSHIP

77%

of our land loans were to borrowers in their first 10 years of owning a business.

Coyote Family Farms, Sonoma County



Conservation Easements

Conservation easements can be an effective tool to preserve farmland by protecting it from development. We support farmers and ranchers in pursuing conservation easements and access easement-protected land.

In 2025, five agreements secured or increased farmers tenure on land with easements. We also work with borrowers who operate on easement-protected land, pursue conservation easements, and make bridge loans to landowners navigating buy-sell-protect transactions.



Anna Nakamura Knight

Anna Nakamura Knight is a fifth-generation farmer at Old Grove Orange in San Bernardino County. She and her family participated in our Regenerator course, which demystifies succession and teaches practical steps to facilitate land and business transfer. Anna shared, “Truthfully, even the nuts and bolts of how we’re going to do succession came out of the course. It really solved a lot of the technical needs that we had, not just relationally, but in terms of transition strategy and professional guidance.”

Each succession story is unique and based on the needs of the participating individuals. In the case of the Knight family, the Regenerator introduced them to an innovative transition model where Anna formed a new company that kept the land and legacy in place, rather than transfer ownership of the existing business and trigger costly taxes. This approach protects assets and offers flexibility moving forward, as Anna takes on management of her family’s farm and moves toward future ownership.



“Succession is about more than business continuity. It’s about honoring our heritage and nurturing a sustainable future. We’re not just farming oranges; we’re cultivating relationships and community.”



Climate Resilience

Five percent of farms in California are USDA-certified organic. Nationally, of the over 1.8 million farms only 1% are certified organic. By contrast, over 35% of the borrowers we serve are certified organic.

Climate resilience often looks like adaptation: We are seeing farmers, ranchers, and fishers respond with urgency and ingenuity as we experience the effects of climate change disrupting established weather patterns, increasing the severity and frequency of natural disasters, and impacting what food we grow and catch. Our programs help clients navigate challenges and access resources and information to run their businesses in highly variable environments. We integrate climate resilience into the education programs we run, the land tenure and land access education we facilitate, and the loan products we offer.

We know that methods matter in agriculture and fishing and can make a significant impact in the health of ecosystems and communities. Organic agriculture, in particular, uses conservation practices that build soil health and maximize biodiversity. Five percent of farms in California are USDA-certified organic. Nationally, of the over 1.8 million farms only 1% are certified organic. By contrast, over 35% of the borrowers we serve are certified organic.

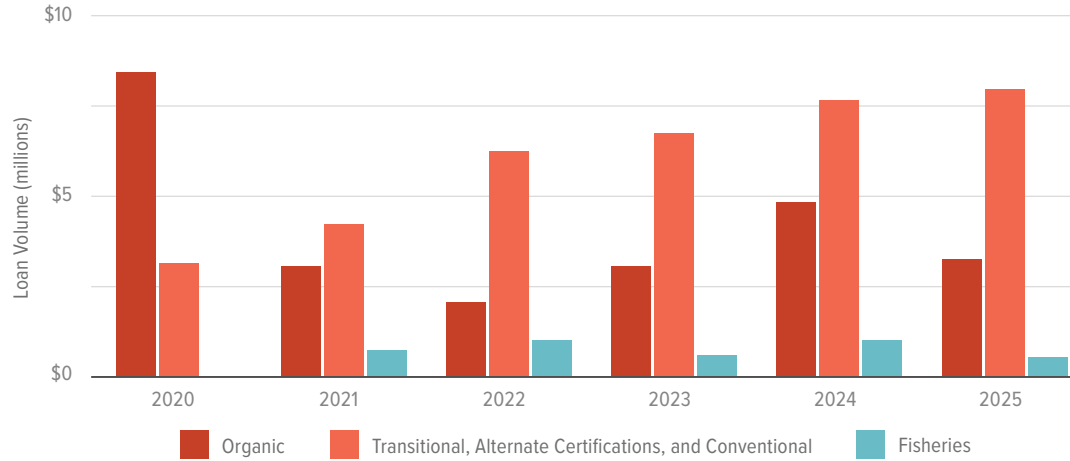
We believe that access to green infrastructure is also central to our clients' climate resilience. Our SolarFresco™ initiative helps small-scale farmers participate in the transition to climate-smart cooler technology on farms. The SolarFresco™ program helps farmers with limited resources use solar-powered coolers to build wealth, profitability, and resilience, while lowering their carbon footprint.

We work with clients who have the following certifications:

- Audubon Conservation Grazing
- Bee Friendly Certified
- Certified Natural
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
- Land to Market Verified
- Mendocino Renegade
- Real Organic Certification
- Regenerative Organic Certification
- Sustainability in Practice
- USDA Organic Certification
- Xerces Bee Better Certification



LOANS TO CERTIFIED ORGANIC VS TOTAL DEPLOYED, 2020 - 2025

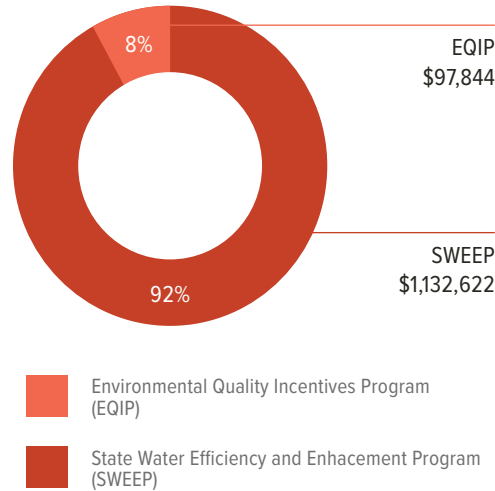


CONSERVATION PRACTICES

According to our annual impact survey, the top five most common conservation practices across our client base are:

- 76%** Cover Crop
- 75%** Apply Compost
- 60%** Rotate Crops
- 53%** Low-Till and/or No-Till
- 51%** Plant/Maintain Buffer Zones (e.g. hedgerows, pollinator strips, organic certification barriers)

CONSERVATION BRIDGE LOANS



Anna's Organic, Madera County





INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

Red Sea Urchin Harvesting

Fishers face complex challenges from climate change. This story about red sea urchins and the fishers who harvest them exemplifies how businesses are adapting and building climate resilience with FarmLink's support. Red sea urchin are found in rocky subtidal reefs with abundant kelp along the Pacific coast from Alaska to Baja California, Mexico. Kelp forests are incredibly important ocean ecosystems that can temporarily store massive amounts of carbon, relieving ocean acidification, which is an impact of climate change. Urchins are hand-collected into mesh bags; no traps or mechanical gear are used, making it a highly selective and low-impact fishery.

Since 2014, California's red sea urchin fishery has undergone a severe and prolonged decline, not because of overharvesting, but due to a cascade of environmental disruptions that destabilized the coastal ecosystem. Once a robust commercial fishery, red urchin harvests have been in decline since the mid-2010s as California's kelp forests collapsed from a combination of factors attributed to global warming and climate change: prolonged marine heatwaves, the "Blob" warming anomaly, and a powerful El Niño.

These factors disrupted the upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich water that kelp depends on, causing widespread die-offs of bull kelp, especially in

Northern California. In some areas, more than 90% of kelp canopy disappeared, effectively removing both habitat and the primary food source for red sea urchins. Compounding the problem was the mass mortality of sunflower sea stars due to Sea Star Wasting Syndrome. These predators once played a crucial role in keeping purple sea urchin populations in check. Without them, purple urchins exploded in number—by more than sixtyfold in some regions—devouring any kelp that remained and creating expansive "urchin barrens," areas stripped of vegetation where red urchins struggle to survive.

In Southern California, red urchin have fared slightly better in a habitat that favors giant kelp and proved more resilient to warming. Last year, FarmLink made an operating capital loan to a multi-generation fishing team who run a business harvesting red sea urchins in southern California with over 30 years of experience in this industry. In spite of the challenges, exciting research is happening to restore kelp forests and develop aquaculture initiatives like "urchin ranching". In this system, purple urchins are harvested from the ocean, then "finished" in harbor-adjacent systems to improve uni size and quality, making them marketable. FarmLink is participating in cost-return studies to evaluate the economic viability of these models as business diversification strategies with conservation benefits.



Thank You

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Founded in 1999

Platinum
Transparency
2025

Candid.