

Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP):

Natural Resources Conservation Service



What Is It?

A state-driven, partnership and field-based program to build strong employee-producer relationships and increase employees' knowledge of production agriculture and natural resources in their local areas.

How Does It Work?

NRCS will match producer volunteers who are passionate about conservation and teaching with field employees who have fewer than three years of experience with NRCS. The producers will have an opportunity to mentor the employees through "on-the-land," hands-on learning to help them develop their knowledge of:

Common agricultural practices, equipment, inputs, and other agricultural factors in the local area, including:

- The types of challenges and decisions producers face day to day.
- Local resource problems and concerns.
- How NRCS and producers address local resource problems and concerns.

The program provides the opportunity for mentor producers to engage with mentee employees several times over the course of the program, which lasts one year for each participating employee.

By focusing on field-based, active learning, we aim to accelerate employees' early career development and enhance their ability to provide customer service of the highest quality, while also increasing their confidence, connection to their local communities, and their understanding of producers' needs.

Who Is Involved?

There are three main groups of people who are involved in the program:

1. Volunteer producers (CAMP mentors) who are passionate about conservation and teaching.
2. NRCS (mentees) who have fewer than three years of experience with NRCS.
3. The NRCS supervisors for participating employees.

What Is the Time Commitment?

The time commitment is minimal. Producer mentors commit to engaging out on the land with their mentees a few times each year, at times that are convenient for the mentors.

Who Can Participate?

Producers who are passionate about conservation and teaching, and who agree to provide a safe learning experience for program mentees can be a CAMP mentor.

How Can I Get Involved or Learn More?

To get involved or learn more, please reach out to your State Conservationist or local District Conservationist.

To find your local service center, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/contactstates



What Specifically Will CAMP Mentors Do?

CAMP mentors will engage with mentees on their operations several times during the year to help them advance their knowledge, skills and abilities related to local production agriculture and natural resources.

Specifically, CAMP mentors help employees develop their knowledge of:

Production agriculture in their local areas

- Crops and why they're grown there
- Seasonality of crop and livestock production cycles (e.g., planting, harvesting, etc.)
- Equipment and machinery
- Respect and incorporation of cultural diversity in California in Conservation Planning
- Inputs (e.g., chemicals, fertilizers, seed, irrigation, etc.)
- Labor and labor issues
- Cost considerations (e.g., inputs, leases, loans, equipment, etc.)
- Customer markets and price trends
- Risks (e.g., weather, financial, etc.)
- Environmental policies and regulations
- Stakeholders (e.g., NRCS, FSA, districts, landlords, etc.)

Local resource concerns

- On-land soil, water, air, plant, animal, human, and energy problems (declining ground water, salinity, etc.)
- Causes of on-land problems/resource concerns
- Deepen awareness of tribal resource concerns and indigenous perspective on land management
- Emerging trends and resource issues

How NRCS and producers address local resource concerns

- Appropriate practices for the local area and why those practices are used
- Deepen awareness of traditional land management practices and Traditional Ecological Knowledge
- Basic costs and benefits of conservation practices
- Existing conservation practices on the land and the "story" of those practices
- Ways NRCS employees can help producers overcome barriers to participating in NRCS conservation programs



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Volunteer Interest Form

Volunteer Name: _____

Business/Entity Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Physical Address: _____

City/State: _____

County: _____

Area of training interest: _____

(ie. Commodities, Organics, Tribal)

Volunteer availability: _____

(ie. Once a month, Quarterly)

How did you learn about CAMP? _____

Interaction Preference: In person Phone Call Email Video Chat

Other Considerations: _____

Please submit form to your local NRCS staff or CA State CAMP Coordinator:

Emma Chow

920 E. Stowell Road

Santa Maria, CA 93454

(805) 863-9926

Emma.Chow@usda.gov