

RCD of Santa Cruz County Receives Funding for New Program for Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers in the Monterey Bay Area

In a June 7th event, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD) was honored by Congressman **Sam Farr**, for a recent grant award of **\$230,000** by the USDA's Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Rancher's Program.



Farmer Manuel Alvarez with Congressman Sam Farr and RCD staff Nik Strong-Cvetich



USDA representative Chuck Clendenin with Congressman Sam Farr

The RCD will use this funding to increase economic and natural resource conservation opportunities for Spanish speaking farmers through its new pilot M.A.N.A. program. Meaning “flows” in Spanish, M.A.N.A. also stands for Manejo Agrícola con Nuevos Amigos (Agricultural Management with New Friends). The program is an outreach effort intended to break down obstacles that currently discourage Spanish speaking farmers from taking advantage of USDA financial and technical assistance programs. Over 15% of agricultural operators in Santa Cruz County are Hispanic and language barriers, cultural hurdles, and perceived lack of trust with government agencies have driven many of these farmers and ranchers to shy away from seeking assistance.



ALBA Executive Director Brett Melone, RCD Executive Director Karen Christensen, EL Pajaro CDC director and RCD staff Nik Strong-Cvetich accept award

Also in attendance at the event were the Agriculture and Land-based Training Association (ALBA) and El Pajaro Community Development Corporation who also received funding for their business incubator and small farmer education programs.

For further questions regarding the MANA program, please contact Nik Strong-Cvetich at 831.464.2950 x 11 OR email nik@rcdsantacruz.org