

## FIRST DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION



### SAREP SOLUTION CENTERS *General Concept*

The University of California's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP) has two goals:

- To assist California farmers and ranchers in developing and implementing sustainable production and marketing systems; and
- To support California's rural and urban communities in understanding the concept and value of sustainable agriculture and participating in sustainable food and agricultural systems.

To advance SAREP's mandate to "develop and distribute information through publications and on-farm demonstrations," we are piloting development of virtual SAREP Solution Centers to use new communication and engagement methods to provide **information for decision support to farmers, ranchers, and communities across California, and a variety of outreach partners, including UC advisors and specialists.**

Each SAREP Solution Center will be **driven by users' needs**, which means that users will be involved in design and development from the outset. Although specifics will differ, SAREP Solution Centers will provide access to:

- **Web-based information portals** hosted by SAREP and dedicated to supplying a comprehensive spectrum of **up-to-date, credible, science-based information**, including **practical information in user-friendly formats** covering technical, financial, and regulatory aspects as well as links to supporting scientific publications and assessments.
- **Working prototypes** identified across the state to provide hands-on, real-world learning opportunities.
- **GIS-based information to guide users to prototypes that best suit their needs.** The geographic information system, hosted by SAREP, will include information on the environmental and social context of the specific prototypes (for example: irrigated cropland or rangeland; small, medium, or large farm; types of distribution models; connection to low-income communities and other attributes) that determine relevance for specific users.
- **Networks of qualified technical interpreters and resource people** to facilitate the learning experience.
- **Innovative funding models** tailored for specific solutions and exploring innovative combinations of private investment, public funding, and philanthropy. The modular approach to creation of SAREP Solution Centers also opens opportunities for innovative funding models to sustain engagement and extension functions.

**Examples of possible SAREP Solution Centers:** *closing the loop to convert farm waste to valuable resources (energy, nutrients, water), other sustainable energy alternatives for farms and ranches, best practices for fertilizer use efficiency and agricultural water stewardship, garden-based learning, food system assessment, values-based supply chains, urban agriculture, farmworker and rural community wellbeing ...* and a host of other topics that could be developed incrementally as specific needs for information are identified and as this general concept is tested and developed further in the years ahead.

#### **For further information, please contact:**

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