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THE SAN JOAQUIN SUSTAINABLE FARMING PROJECT

Who we are: The San Joaquin Sustainable Farming Project (SJSFP) is a state-funded program operated under the direction of the Sustainable Cotton Project, a nonprofit with a successful 14-year track record of working with Central Valley cotton growers.

What we do: Work with alfalfa, almond and cotton growers in Merced, Madera and Fresno counties to promote sustainable farming systems.

Our goal: Provide information, resources and on-farm assistance to growers interested in reducing their environmental and regulatory risk through science-based information from University of California IPM and UC Cooperative Extension advisors.

Our plan: Work with growers to complete a whole farm self-assessment and strategy for implementing UC IPM Year Round plans and best management practices (BMP) on their acreage enrolled in the program. Our field scouts work with growers' PCAs to augment field scouting. Our field days bring in agricultural experts to address current issues and BMP implementation planning. In addition, our program will provide annual hedgerow seeds and beneficial insects when necessary.

Who benefits:

Farmers and local communities:

- Valuable land stays in farming, providing open space, habitat, and refuge for beneficial insects.
- Local food and fiber production maintains jobs and supplies needed income for local economies.

The watershed:

- Water and air quality improves locally and regionally.

Farmers and California agriculture:

- Alfalfa production helps reduce erosion, increases water penetration and improves soil quality.
- Strip cutting or alfalfa interplanting encourages biological control of insect pests, such as lygus in cotton, and reduces need to spray harmful chemicals.
- Annual and perennial crops add and retain carbon in the soil.
- Planting annual habitat strips along field margins create food and nectar sources for beneficial insects and habitat for wildlife.
- Opportunity to participate in Cleaner Cotton® program and sell local cotton to the textile and apparel markets pursuing the fast-growing consumer market for sustainable fashion.