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Jacobs Farm del Cabo progresses ClimateLab initiative

[Jacobs Farm del Cabo](#) is making significant progress in its ClimateLab efforts, a program focused on building a more inclusive, climate-resilient food system. For close to 40 years, the company has helped hundreds of small-scale, organic family farms and increased farmer incomes by 10 times, yet climate-related events have rapidly become the most significant threat to protecting and ensuring those gains for thousands of farmers and their families.

“Climate change is here today, will be with us tomorrow, and how we farm now will color what lies ahead,” said Aaron Brookes, director of sales and marketing. “With that in mind, we are focused on helping farmers adapt to existing climate impacts, mitigate our contributions to them, and replicate and accelerate the practices that preserve farm productivity and strengthen food system resilience.”



Aaron Brookes

The first cohort of 60 farms participating in the ClimateLab represents up to 1,400 workers and 3,750 acres (1,520 hectares) of land spread across five climate zones in the Baja California peninsula, each with unique climate challenges. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach offered by traditional certifications, participating farms contribute to their own plans of climate action that meet their individual needs. The work of the ClimateLab team and farmers is focused in the following areas:

Climate Resilient Soils: Even with organic growing practices in place for decades, more than half of the farms participating in The ClimateLab believe their soil quality has degraded in the last 10 years. Through mapping soil types with the participation of each farmer, the ClimateLab team is identifying specific, proven solutions to improve their farmers’ ability to sequester carbon, retain nutrients and regenerate the land, such as green compost applications, ecosystem restoration with native species, crop rotation, and minimal tillage practices.

Climate Risk Alerts: Reliable forecasts for impending high temperatures, hurricanes, and flood warnings, as well as guidance on disaster reduction measures, are high on the priority list for participating farms. To address these critical needs, the ClimateLab team established a WhatsApp

communication channel that serves as an early warning system where all farms are sent disaster risk alerts, as well as recommended practices to proactively protect their people, crops and infrastructure from extreme climate events.

Gender Inclusion and Equity: In 85 percent of participating farms, women make up anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the workforce. The company's gender-focused initiatives are women-led and developed, and focus on empowerment and inclusion in strategic decision making, maternal and child health, as well as awareness of gender inequities that have historically left women disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and how to evolve practices through a gender lens.

Plastic Waste Reduction: Plastic is a central concern, and the recent swap from plastic clamshells to Jacobs Farm del Cabo's new paperboard pack has already reduced the company's plastic waste by more than half a million pounds this year. Beyond packaging, plastic alternatives for weed reduction are being used and tested, including paper mulch on herb rows, as well as flaming and steaming processes that organically rid rows of seedlings by exposing them to high heat. The steady and multifaceted shift away from plastic material in packaging and operations is an ongoing focus within the ClimateLab mitigation efforts.

The initial focus of the ClimateLab program has been in northern Baja, and the ultimate goal is to see successful program practices implemented across all Mexico and California operations. The company will establish key areas of focus and a 2022 work plan for their Northern California farms by early next year.

"In many ways, this is business as usual," Brookes said. "For over three decades we have been supporting farmers with sound organic farming practices, food-safety resources, capital for establishing crops, boots on the ground, and experienced agronomists. The magnitude and velocity of climate events has now renewed our call to action."

To learn more about the ClimateLab and Jacobs Farm del Cabo's long-standing commitment to doing right by people and the planet, visit www.jacobsfarmdelcabo.com/climate-lab.

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