

Solectrac Wins 500K Bay Area Air Quality Grant to Demonstrate Electric Tractor Viability

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Soletrac, Inc. manufacturer and distributor of zero-emission electric farm and utility tractors is proud to announce that the company has been awarded a \$514,688 grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District as part of its Funding Agriculture Replacement Measures for Emission Reductions Demonstration Program, or FARMER program, which provides incentives to reduce agriculture sector air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.

The FARMER program provides up to 80 percent of the cost for farmers to replace diesel tractors with less polluting alternatives. The California Air Resources Board created a new project category late last year for advanced technology demonstration projects to show the viability of new technologies, such as Soletrac's electric tractors, to perform the same work as the diesel equipment they would replace. Soletrac is one the first recipients of this new project category.

“Soletrac has demonstrated great leadership in the manufacturing industry to help reduce air pollution and protect the climate with its innovative zero-emission farming equipment,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. “The Air District is pleased to award Soletrac with this grant funding to further this work.”

This project was supported by the California Climate Investments program. The FARMER program is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing GHG emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment— particularly in disadvantaged communities. The Cap-and-Trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investments projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling, and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are located within and benefiting residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households across California. For more information, visit the California Climate Investments website at: www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov.

“We are excited to put our quiet and powerful tractors to work in one farming and two vineyard operations to validate their performance,” said Steve Heckerroth, Soletrac Founder/CEO. Soletrac's 40 HP eUtility electric tractor is one of the current models that will be put to the test. The other model is a narrow-width 70 HP electric tractor, to be called the e70N, that is currently in development. “The grant funds will allow us to develop the e70N tractor for larger operations and vineyards,” Heckerroth noted.

Each partner will also test Soletrac's patented exchangeable battery pack technology, which solves the issue of limited run time with its quick-exchange battery packs. The packs can be charged from the electric grid or directly from clean renewable energy sources.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to be part of this trial of Soletrac electric tractors in collaboration with the BAAQMD,” said Michelle Riddle, vice president of the company that manages the two vineyards in the study, Burdell Properties. Calplans Premium Vineyards, located in Napa, CA, grows over 300 acres of premium quality wine grapes, mostly Cabernet

Sauvignon. “We use a fleet of tractors to help us accomplish many key aspects of farming, including leafing, mowing, disking, mechanical weed control and more. We’re always looking for ways to grow the highest quality fruit more sustainably,” Riddle said, and added “we hope that through this study we will help demonstrate that clean energy electric tractors can work as well as fossil fuel powered ones, and that before long electric tractors will be a common sight in vineyards all over wine country.”

The 80-acre Arroyo Lindo Vineyard in Sonoma County is the second vineyard demonstration site. Arroyo Lindo is certified sustainable through the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance.

The third demonstration site is The Mushroom Farm in Pescadero, a 250-acre farm dedicated to growing corn, beans, squash and alfalfa. Here the electric tractors will be used for mowing, disking, plowing and fertilization. All three sites are committed to providing data, including fuel/electricity consumption, charging times, maintenance information, hours of operation and user experience.

Solectrac is a California Benefit Corporation and a Certified B Corp. For more information, go to www.solectrac.com.

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