Over the last ten years California FarmLink has assisted beginning farmers, retiring farmers and landowners throughout the state with:

- a land linking program
- technical assistance in business planning, farm finance, land tenure and succession planning
- an Individual Development Account (IDA) program
- a small farm loan fund.

We currently have five staff (FTE) in three regional offices. Our database includes 750 aspiring farmers who are seeking land or technical assistance and 185 landowners with an opportunity for a lease, crop share, partnership or farm purchase.

We have grown rapidly in the last five years adding the loan program and IDA program. There is increasing interest among aspiring farmers in receiving land linking, business and financial assistance. We have had to develop more efficient ways to link landowners with aspiring farmers in order to handle the volume of inquiries. Because making successful links is so challenging, funders are less likely to fund land linking work than technical assistance workshops.

Development of a good referral list and collaboration with attorneys, accountants, lenders and realtors has been essential to expand our capacity. We subsidize farmers to work with these professionals. We have been innovative in working with realtors to identify the best farm properties for sale in a given region. We then work with aspiring farmers and landowners on creative financing strategies.

We use County Assessor’s databases to do outreach to landowners using direct mail. The mailings introduce landowners to our programs and invite them to Mixer events where they meet local aspiring farmers. We have been experimenting with a “linking season” for our work on farmland leases, when farmers are less busy producing and marketing. During this time we conduct tours of land opportunities for groups of aspiring farmers.

We are always improving our sample crop share and cash lease agreements to share with farmers and landowners. We are increasing outreach and collaboration with land trusts to provide potential buyers for easement properties, lease models, equity building models and innovative easement language.

- Our “Farmer’s Guide to Securing Land” includes models and case-studies of innovative land tenure strategies such as: cash lease from a governmental entity, fee title purchase using sweat equity, use of easements in purchasing farmland, transfer of farming rights.
- www.californiafarmlink.org has links to useful resources for aspiring farmers and landowners