

Sustainable Conservation opens Central Valley office

MODESTO

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At either end of the ceremonial scissors, Ashley Boren, Sustainable Conservation's executive director (left) and Ladi Asgill, project manager for Sustainable Conservation in Modesto (right), mark the official opening of the group's Central Valley office Thursday afternoon. Allen Dusalt, program director for Sustainable Conservation, stands on Mr. Asgill's right side. (CVBT photo)

- **Ladi Asgill to head Modesto office**
- **To support area farmers, ranchers**

Sustainable Conservation has opened an office in Modesto to support Central Valley farmers and dairy producers in practices that it considers both environmentally and economically sound.

The organization is expanding its work in biodiesel, biomethane and ethanol so that California agriculture can provide renewable energy for vehicles, businesses and homes.

"We see a powerful opportunity for California farmers and rural communities to realize economic and environmental benefits in the emerging biofuels industry," says Ladi Asgill, project manager for Sustainable Conservation in Modesto. "For example, California is by far the leading consumer of ethanol, yet most of that is produced from Midwestern corn. Other crops that grow more easily in California can be used to produce ethanol, and

Sustainable Conservation is working with scientists and farmers to develop these local sources.”

Ashley Boren, Sustainable Conservation’s executive director, says “this is a critical time for California agriculture” with development encroaching on farms, profitability being squeezed by rising energy and labor costs, government regulations posing more challenges, and environmental conditions needing attention.

Mr. Asgill, an agricultural economist, previously helped renewable energy companies and other Central Valley-based agribusinesses launch and solve strategic business challenges, and managed the permitting and financing of biogas generation facilities located at municipal landfills in California. As product manager with Harris Moran, an international vegetable seed company, he managed the introduction and commercialization of numerous vegetable varieties.

Sustainable Conservation describes itself as an independent nonprofit organization seeking to sustain the vitality of both the economy and the environment.