

CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL VISION



2016/2017

Setting a Course of Action for the
California State Board of Food and
Agriculture

Process design and facilitation, Nuffer, Smith, Tucker, Inc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2010, the California State Board of Food and Agriculture developed its first iteration of Ag Vision, under the guidance of America's Farmland Trust. An ambitious effort, the process involved input from multiple stakeholders over a 16 month period. The resulting plan called upon not only the State Board, but others within the industry to move the plan forward. Since then, two progress reports have been developed by America's Farmland Trust (in 2012 and 2016) showcasing progress made against the original 12 goal areas.

In this Ag Vision iteration, Nuffer, Smith, Tucker was engaged to guide the process. Stakeholder input was collected from a series of one-on-one interviews with key agricultural leaders and via an electronic survey of a broader stakeholder group. All of this input was used as the basis for discussion at a day and a half meeting on Sept. 15 and 16 with a stakeholder group carefully selected to give input on Ag Vision.

The aim of this iteration of the Ag Vision process was to revisit the original goal areas, prioritize them and develop realistic actions by the State Board during a 12-month period. Thus, this update is succinct, providing clear guidance for the State Board.

New additions to the 2016 iteration of Ag Vision include:

- Development of a “purpose” statement for California agriculture, which is designed to articulate agriculture’s contribution to society at large.
- The addition of one clear vision statement describes success at some point in the future; a destination the State Board and others in agriculture are working to achieve.
- The addition of two new goal areas that emphasize the need to create greater connections between farmers and the consuming public, as well as the need for agricultural entities to thrive.
- The development of an overarching, enabling strategy focusing on stakeholder engagement. This engagement was critical to the formation of the first version of Ag Vision and remains a priority moving forward.

The world of agriculture is changing fast – and those throughout the supply chain must adapt. To that end, this document is a roadmap for the 2017 calendar year for the State Board. It is the intention of the Board to monitor progress at its monthly meetings and revisit the recommended actions annually to develop new recommendations as appropriate.





Important Definitions:

Purpose: The end benefit to people or society.

Vision: A specific destination an entity is working toward.

Goals: Articulation of desired results.

Strategies: Areas of focus to achieve the vision.

Enabling strategy: That upon which success is built.

PURPOSE:

In today's increasingly distrustful environment, there are organizations and brands rising to the top, not only in terms of financial performance but also in terms of earning consumer trust. What's their "secret sauce?" Many believe success is tied to the notion of purpose – serving a higher order reason for being, beyond "making a buck."

As we embarked on creating this iteration of Ag Vision, a purpose statement was developed. In the context of Ag Vision, the purpose statement is designed to articulate the benefits of California agriculture to people or society at large.

Purpose-driven organizations – or in this case the entire agricultural sector in the golden state – can't be manufactured and must be rooted in authenticity. In our view, there could be no better segment suited for the highest order of purpose than agriculture. Food – healthy and sustainable food – is the foundation not only for health and wellness, but also for allowing people and societies at large to thrive. Add to that a growing food culture, and the opportunity is ripe for a purpose-driven agriculture.

Purpose Statement:
Making California a better place to live because of what we grow and how we grow it.

Rationale for support:

In developing the purpose statement, the State Board considered the benefits of California agriculture as uncovered through inputs into this plan (interviews, electronic survey, planning sessions, etc.). Those benefits are intricately woven into the purpose statement, with each piece of the statement rich with meaning. Consider this:

- California agriculture is "making California a better place to live" through its contributions to

the economy, landscape, food system and, importantly, way of life. Many we spoke with talked about the passionate, hard working farm families behind California agriculture and the role they play in their communities and beyond.

- "What we grow" speaks to the **diversity of California agriculture**. In fact, "diverse" is the term we heard most often in describing California agriculture. California is home to farming operations of all sizes, livestock and specialty crops, permanent and annual crops, and conventional and organic farms. This diversity is all part of the story of "what we grow." Also inherent in this is the idea that California farmers, ranchers and workers are doing more than producing food – they are producing the nourishment and fuel needed for both individuals and societies to advance.
- We also heard that California growers are on the **leading edge of innovation**, are setting the standard on environmental stewardship and take great care in how they grow, thus supporting the importance of the "how we grow it" part of the purpose statement. Also critical is the spirit of the farm families who grow and market California food and agricultural products.

How 'purpose' can be used:

No matter where we go, those in agriculture are talking about the need to "tell our story." We believe that rather than "tell," we should engage those with a stake in the success or failure of California agriculture in conversations about the sector. Listen to them, acknowledge and respect their concerns, share best practices and progress regarding their concerns, share what's possible what's not possible and why, and commit to a philosophy of transparency and continuous improvement. Sharing the purpose of California agriculture is often a good place to start such a conversation. **The more we can articulate and engage stakeholders in a common purpose, the more successful we will be in earning public support.** To that end, everyone in agriculture has the ability to help advance the industry by talking about our purpose – and doing so often.

VISION:

A vision statement should represent the destination an entity is working toward. In the context of Ag Vision, the vision statement below is designed to keep focus on the long-term success of California agriculture and articulate agriculture's benefit to a larger stakeholder group. The vision should be used to guide all actions of the State Board, e.g. all activities supported by the board should support the vision and goals outlined here.

Vision statement

Californians take pride in their innovative, thriving California farmers and ranchers for their contributions to a healthy population and planet.

Characteristics of a good vision statement

- It's the unifying point in a strategic plan
- It's inspirational
- It's clear and compelling
- It's a huge challenge requiring extraordinary effort and a little luck

Goals:

1. **Better health and wellbeing:** meeting the nutrition and culinary needs of California's diverse population and consumers across the country and around the world.
2. **A healthier planet:** improving the health of the natural resources upon which California and food production depend.
3. **Thriving communities:** food production and processing are drivers of sustainable California economic growth.

4. **Connections between farmers and the consuming public:** citizens are agriculture and food literate, understanding and appreciating what it takes to bring food and fiber to market, and the people behind California agriculture.
5. **A diverse set of agriculture entities are thriving:** ensuring agriculture has the land, water, human capital, and access to the resources and legislative support it needs to remain profitable and competitive in the 21st century.

Enabling Strategy: Building Relationships with Stakeholders

While the priorities outlined in this plan and associated actions provide a framework for the State Board of Food and Agriculture, achieving the vision as outlined and communicating the purpose as outlined cannot be done by any one entity on its own. In fact, to truly achieve the Ag Vision, multiple stakeholders need to be working together for collective success. This need for engagement and relationship-building was the most widely-discussed theme at the Ag Vision planning meetings.

Thus, the State Board will seek to develop or foster further relationships with the following stakeholders:

- Public policy regulators
- Industry (producers, processors, packers and related industry members)
- Labor groups
- NGOs
- Food influencers
- Universities
- Institutional buyers
- Educators and youth
- Others

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Recommendations:

- **Education/Advocacy:** The Board will convene meetings/site visits with regulatory and elected officials to better inform them on agricultural water use, environmental interaction and economic impacts, including negative impacts on rural communities when water is unavailable. Showcase ag water innovation and on-farm solutions.
- **Advise:** Continue to inform the Administration and regulatory officials on the impact of water policy on California agriculture. Provide the opportunity for a public forum on key issues and solutions, success stories and opportunities for collaboration.
- **Support/Encourage:** Support a significant role for the agricultural community in addressing clean drinking water in rural communities.
- **Recommend/Advocate:** Recommend an assessment of water needs in the state (including scenario planning with contingency suggestions) and seek university research partners.

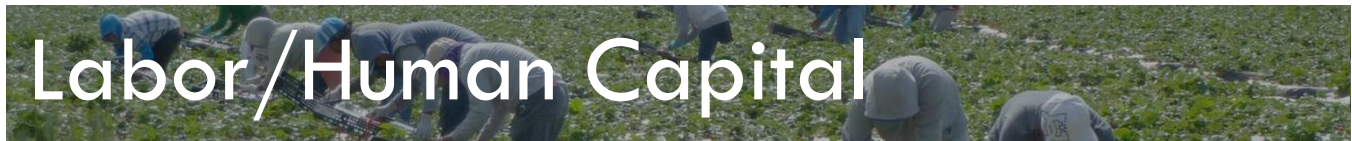
Champions: Don Cameron, Donald Bransford, Bryce Lundberg and Ashley Boren



Recommendations:

- **Education/Advocacy:** The Board will convene meetings/site visits with regulatory and elected officials and other stakeholders to enhance understanding of the regulations affecting farmers and ranchers, and the efficacy of the existing regulatory system. In doing so, the Board will partner with third-party entities with a shared interest in updating the regulatory system for agriculture and/or protecting the health of people and the environment.
- **Support/Encourage:** The Board will catalyze action toward an alternate path to regulatory compliance for farms and ranches that prepare a *whole farm plan*, which ensures an individual farming operation meets minimum standards across multiple regulations and delivers optimal environmental benefits. Such an approach would allow farms and ranches to quantify benefits above and beyond the minimum requirements, register those benefits and stimulate environmental markets. The Board will bring together stakeholders, including businesses, nonprofit organizations, charitable foundations, farm associations, academia and government to launch a limited number of pilot projects that test the efficacy of such an approach.
- **Recommend/Advocate:** The Board will recommend to the Administration, the Legislature and academia the need for a study to be conducted addressing the regulatory environment related to California farmers and the efficacy of those regulations in delivering environmental benefits. Specifically, the study should aim to create a database of regulations with an eye toward identifying conflicting laws/requirements. Based on the assessment, issues should be ranked in terms of solvability and provide recommendations on solution sets to the issues identified.

Champions: Eric Holst, Ashley Boren, Ben Drake and Donald Bransford



Recommendations:

- **Education/Advocacy:** The Board will continue to highlight agricultural labor/human capital needs within the agricultural sector and advocate for state/federal solutions to immigration reform. The Board will further work to safeguard the application of H2A and improve and expand the application of the federal program in California.
- **Recommend/Advocate:** The Board will recommend to the Administration, the Legislature and academia the need for a study to be conducted addressing the impact of recent legislation on the agricultural workforce, along with the impacts of mechanization, automation and the agricultural workforce on the California economy.
- **Support/Encourage:** The Board will encourage the training required to equip the next generation of farm workers in the field and throughout the packing and processing chain. This includes the adoption of internships and apprenticeships, and exploring creative ideas for land use planning to allow for beginning farmers

Champions: Martha Montoya, Helene Dillard and Mary Holz-Clause



Recommendations:

- **Education/Advocacy:** The Board will continue to advocate for federal and state financial incentives for farmers and ranchers to further promote resource conservation and stewardship practices.
- **Support/Encourage:** The Board will encourage Sustainable Groundwater Management and the Healthy Soils Initiative through meetings/site visits to recognize the vital role that agriculture has within communities and how farms and ranches can be a solution to climate change through stewardship and resource conservation.
- **Education/Advocacy:** The Board will continue to advocate on the importance of agriculture within climate change discussions and policy.
- **Support/Encourage:** The Board will encourage voluntary agreements supporting habitat and endangered species among various stakeholders and showcase examples of success.

Champions: Nancy Casady, Don Cameron, Bryce Lundberg, Bennett Drake and Joy Sterling

Outreach & Communications

Recommendations:

- **Support/Encourage:** The Board will collaborate and build on relationships with institutional and other foodservice buyers and retail as conduits of information about farmers to the consuming public.
- **Education/Advocacy:** The Board will work with CA Grown to incorporate farming messages in the CA Grown brand and outreach, highlighting agriculture's contributions to healthy people, planet and communities in new and creative ways.
- **Advise:** The Board will continue to advocate and advise the Secretary on how to improve access to safe, healthy food for all Californians, including supporting efforts dedicated to connecting farmers and ranchers with food banks throughout the state.

NOTE: Additional strategies suggested include:

- ❑ *Cultivate partnerships and collaborate with the State Legislature, DWR, Fish & Wildlife, NOAA, State Attorney General, CPUC, nonprofit organizations and other influencers with the goal of developing allies to improve trust and inspire pride.*
- ❑ *Promote monthly Board meetings and directly engage/challenge the public to take an active role in supporting the Board's efforts.*

Champions: Craig McNamara, Joy Sterling, Mike Gallo, Sue Sigler and Teresa Siles