



2030 California Ag Vision

Topic: Sustainability

This buzzword has gained much strength over the past few years. Unfortunately, it means many things to many different people. The current ANSI draft standards lean heavily towards eventual 100% organic production methods.

God put humans at the top of the animal kingdom for a reason. He gave us the ability to think, not just react to situations. What that means to me is that we need to use our ability to make the world a healthier and safer place to live, but still provide a consistent flow of food and fiber for its inhabitants.

That also means using tools that advanced minds and technology can develop to insure that the flow of healthy food and fiber remains uninterrupted.

Chemical companies are providing those tools which are becoming more target oriented and environmentally friendly. For California to maintain our status as the top agricultural state in the Union, we must allow for conventional farming methods to continue. We certainly don't need to take a few million steps backwards and place a dead fish under every corn plant to enhance Walmart's sustainable sales program. CDFA needs to maintain a viable working relationship with conventional ag, as well as organic producers moving forward into the year 2030.

Topic: Health

As a subject of investigation in 2 separate food illness outbreaks, I have come to the conclusion that the FDA has a long way to go to match the ability of the CA Dept. of Public Health staff members. The FDA's inability

to understand farming operations renders them ineffective in dealing with these issues. Yet, professionalism and knowledge of the team members of the CDPH was obvious. Unfortunately, CA is still considerably behind states like Minnesota and Wisconsin in their ability to deal with food illness outbreaks. We have all seen what has happened to the tomato industry lately, and they're not even sure if tomatoes were the culprit now. Many states have been slow to report illnesses because their networking abilities within their own health system and CDC is ineffective. The inability to trace a product to its origin has almost destroyed 2 industries over the past 2 years and will continue unless all food growing and distribution systems are held accountable in developing a more effective tracking system.

The current LGMA food safety program is addressing these issues, but for all food sources to become safer, this protocol needs to be applied to any crop that can be consumed in its raw state.

Also the perception that small farmers who sell only to local and farmers' markets shouldn't have to follow LGMA food safety standards, should be reconsidered. I sympathize with these smaller farmers, but should buyers of those fresh local food items be subjected to a lesser standard of food safety protection? I see a consistent level of food safety standards from farm to fork being an important component of California agriculture in the year 2030.

Thank you,
Bob Martin
Gen. Mgr. Rio Farms