

Four Questions, Four Answers:

1. What is your vision for California agriculture by 2030?

Not good. Why? Greed has clouded our long range thinking capacity. As more lawns get planted the pollution created is overwhelming. Almost every house has a lawn. Lawns require water, fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides, mowing, edging, raking, waste management and yet we continue to replace producing agriculture with this social cancer all based on a stale mindset.

From the '30s-'70s lawns were the norm and worked, in that homeowner's took care of them individually. However, as with most things in a dysfunctional culture, the luxury evolved into a necessity. People began hiring other people to maintain their lawns and yards and the overwhelming, incessant pollution became the norm. Then greed showed its ugly head and farmers began selling land to developers to develop millions of houses and corresponding shopping centers. The pollution, human and chemical, is unthinkable all for the sake of greed.

The evolution of this concept hit its stride in Orange County which became the norm for the industrialized world. Today every small-minded community wants to look like Orange County not realizing or ignoring the fact that the Orange County model doesn't work and there is no going back. It has evolved into a human, barren ant hill. The epidemic of Orange County has become ubiquitous and the result is creating global warming and corresponding demise of the planet as we know it at an unstoppable pace. The American Dream is now on a path to becoming the American and World Toilet.

This statewide issue needs to be addressed **now** by forward thinking boards of supervisors, city councils and planning departments. Send the suburban developers to other states to pollute them, retrain them to develop cities not suburbs or get into a less socially burdensome activity.

Along with the aforementioned farming practices need to be refined to better use the resources available, especially water, while trending toward organic farming. Not only does our economy need to make this shift, it needs the tools to make this shift and that, in itself, can be a powerful economic force.

2. What will be the biggest challenge in achieving that vision?

Quit building houses and the cars necessary to drive to and from them!

3. In 2030 how has public perception of agriculture changed?

When it's too late, the public and their incompetent, small-minded leaders in the central San Joaquin Valley will realize it was a huge mistake to build out the valley with houses and shopping centers at the expense of some of the most arable land on the planet. Agricultural land will only become more valuable with time. This valley is a source of money from all over the planet and what do our local leaders do, sacrifice it for what in their minds is fast, easy money. They will rue the day. Has any city ever turned a profit? No! That's why developers sell them. So what do our "leaders" do, busy themselves with the destruction of our most valuable asset in deference to accumulating a gross liability. Are these people just ignorant or do they really lack the insight and vision to truly lead?

Californians are realizing the value of the specialty crops this valley is capable of producing that bring outside money to the entire state. They are acknowledging the value of organically grown meat, dairy and produce commodities that Whole Foods Market, Trader Joe's and local farmer's markets are providing. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is another example of organic farming practices that are thriving and growing.

4. What is a "must have" in an Ag Vision for California?

Intelligent leadership at the city, county, state and federal level. Unfortunately America is bereft of the aforementioned commodity. As the leader of the free world we have set the premier example of how to breed incompetence. We are the epitome of how not to develop a culture. Our infrastructure and social institutions are coming apart at the seams and we spend trillions of dollars satisfying the will of incompetent leaders. Visionless, unscrupulous, self-serving, arrogant people are at the helm in our country. We breed poorly prepared, pandering manipulators and the public is too apathetic to do anything about it.

Intelligent, new, educated leadership would go a long way toward leading us out of our current dilemma. Stodgy, good-old-boy mentality doesn't work anymore, it is outdated and dysfunctional.

Solutions:

Begin the process of designing and building a mass transit system for the State of California that would be state-of-the-art for the planet. Build a bullet train from Sacramento to San Diego that would pick up San Francisco. To make that system work vertical cities would have to be built which would preclude further usurpation of agricultural land for unsustainable suburbia.

Now is an opportune time to place a moratorium on any further loss of agricultural lands for the benefit of fast-money, opportunistic developers that dazzle and buy local

politicians for self gain. To allow these suburban developers to continue as they are is foolhardy and senseless. Educate the city leaders to not be subservient to a short term, developer driven economy.

Make a real city out of Fresno to serve the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) by developing high rise, quality condominiums downtown and set the pace for all the satellite villages/cities in the SJV. Interconnect them all with Fresno with local public, light rail transportation lines. Establish Fresno as the cultural center of the SJV by creating at least one internationally acclaimed, state-of-the-art museum and library downtown. Make downtown Fresno so attractive and vibrant that it would, in time, compete with venues in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Fresno would sport nationally competitive football, basketball, baseball, hockey, golf, etc. venues. Downtown Fresno would be so vibrant all the empty nesters would flock to live downtown to partake of all the entertainment available. Their homes with lawns would be recycled to serve the younger set that wish to tend lawns for their children. Any empty nester that is maintaining a lawn is brain dead. If Fresno took on the challenge of becoming the leading LEED city in the country empty nesters could cut their living expenses dramatically. Most of their needs would be satisfied locally without having to drive. The time and money used to support cars and lawns would be spent on healthcare, travel, estate building, etc.

As Fresno is being built as a city, not another dysfunctional suburb, it would behoove the federal government to concurrently begin the process of designing a bullet train from Los Angeles to New York City with connectors along the way to major cities across the country using the California system as a model.

All the aforementioned would put Americans back to work rebuilding their deteriorating cities and transportation systems. It would take us off foreign oil. It would upgrade our social institutions because vibrant people will not settle for substandard education, medical treatment, a corrupt legal system, etc. America would become the world icon it once was. Our economy would thrive and we would once again have the respect of all nations. Warmongering would become outdated. It would be much more advantageous to make customers and tourists out of our "enemies" rather than killing them. Our youth will hopefully relinquish drugs, which serve as an escape from a system that doesn't work, and participate in the rebuilding of their country. When is the Washington, D.C. "brain trust" going to grow up?

I could go on but I think you get the idea. What will you do with it?

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