

My name is Janet Kister. My husband and I own and operate a nursery in San Diego County growing ornamental plants that we ship throughout the US. We farm on 25 acres and have 75 employees. I sincerely appreciate the Secretary and the State Ag Board working to develop a strategic plan to ensure farming not only survives, but thrives into the future.

At our nursery we have created our own plan to grow and prosper into the future. We will be reviewing our marketing efforts including enhanced packaging and exploring third party sustainability certification, developing and adding new varieties based upon market demand, expanding our customer base, adding value added to our line and working on efficiency in every aspect of the business. These are all things we can do for ourselves. It is the broader issues that we as individuals have no control over that we desperately need help on: Will we have enough water, can we survive an actionable pest quarantine, where will we find a reliable and affordable labor supply in the future and how do we function under increased urban pressures?

So with that in mind and in a perfect world, my vision for agriculture in 2030 would include:

- Highly efficient farms that utilize California's favorable climate and microclimates to produce a wide range of high quality crops throughout the year
- Farmers having all the necessary resources available at an affordable price to produce their crops. I.e water, labor, energy
- Pest exclusion and eradication programs that are truly effective, fully funded and enjoy public support
- The corresponding technology and research completed in advance to accomplish all of the above
- Regulations crafted with industry input that are fair, effective and financially feasible
- An influx of educated, young farmers who will continue to keep California agriculture on the leading edge
- A public who is aware of and supports having agriculture in California, recognizes the value of local farms and has complete confidence in the safety of California grown product

Obviously, there are many challenges to achieving the above vision such as:

There seems to be a lack of political will to fix the state's water supply, with many feeling we can conserve our way out of this. We cannot. And we cannot survive without sufficient water.

An ineffective national policy on employing an immigrant workforce to backfill our aging workforce, and again, a lack of political will to solve this problem.

The number of new actionable pests entering the state each year is dramatically increasing with fewer dollars to deal with them. And I'm still not convinced that CBP is serious about looking for bugs at the federal ports. Fruit fly vs drugs and terrorists. Additionally, public support for the ensuing eradication efforts appears to be diminishing.

The concern that the progression of the environmental movement gets to the point where many of agriculture's chemical tools are banned without effective replacements in place.

New and more onerous regulations that demand an inordinate amount of management time and money to be in compliance, that at the same time reduce available resources used to grow our businesses.

However I believe the biggest challenge of all centers on public perception of farming. If we do not have buy-in from the California public to continue to farm, with all of its accompanying challenges, it doesn't matter what goals are set to fulfill the vision. When the public perceives an impact on them personally, real or not, they will drive policy on issues from immigrations laws and pesticide use to land use and water that may be anti-agriculture. It is incumbent on us to re-establish the farming connection with the public.

Finally, I respectfully request you add flowers into the policy title so as to read food, fiber, flowers and fuel, thereby acknowledging the contribution of the 2nd largest commodity of the California ag economy. At \$3.6 billion farm-gate value in 2006, nursery and ornamental plants shows no sign of slowing down. The long-term outlook for our segment is very bright.

Thank-you again for holding these listening sessions and hearing our concerns.

A few ideas that may spark other ideas that may actually work!

- A dedicated water supply for agriculture – possibly infrastructure to deliver reclaimed, non-potable water that is safe to use on food crops.
- Public relations program on pest exclusion that is received by every visitor prior to entering the state.
- Real exclusion at our ports of entry. Visitors would have one chance to voluntarily dispose of non-permitted fruits, vegetables and plants. Anything discovered at the subsequent checkpoint would be levied an automatic fine to be used to fund eradication efforts.
- Or maybe just some sort of fee that visitors pay to fund the exclusion and eradication programs.
- Farmers have ingenious solutions for solving challenges on the farm. What about a grant program to fund some of this technology?
- We could use more good farm advisors for university/industry partnerships to develop creative solutions on issues such as energy generation on the farm, water use and savings or other technology to help use our resources more efficiently.

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