

CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL VISION FOR 2030

On behalf of the members of the Ventura County Chapter of California Women for Agriculture, we are presenting our vision for the future of California agriculture.

Here are some things we hope to see happening in California agriculture in 2030:

- Widespread consumer and government support of family farms.
- A majority of consumers buying and eating locally.
- More Farmer's Markets and CSA's (Community Supported Agriculture).
- Gardens and salad bars will be standard in schools, hospitals, and other institutions.
- Less burdensome government regulation of farms.
- Industry-wide practices implemented by the farming community to ensure food safety.
- A stable, steady, labor supply.
- Preservation of prime agricultural land by conservation easements and local development restrictions.
- Availability of water at a reasonable price.
- An improved and more consistent invasive pest detection and exclusion system.
- No one in California going hungry, ever.

The biggest challenge in achieving this vision is lack of public and government support. Very few people today have a direct connection to a farm. Their perception of a farmer may be old fashioned and outdated. Urban children do not know where their food comes from. People often take for granted the abundant supply of food that is readily available to them year-round. While they appreciate the beauty of the farm landscape, they forget that that is a farmer's family business, and that their support is essential to that farmer's success. Government entities must stop the endless regulation of farming and the wrangling over immigration. Farmers have long been seen as good stewards of the land, and do not need constant government oversight of their activities. Debate over the legality or morality of illegal immigration will undoubtedly continue, but government must assure farmers of a reliable supply of labor. Government must see that water sources and supplies are protected and preserved for agriculture in California. Local governments must strictly limit development of prime farmland. Government must stand up to minority groups with their own agenda and counter their anti-agriculture theories with sound science. Government must make protection and promotion of agriculture a priority.

In 2030, public perception of agriculture will be extremely positive. Agriculture will be key in the "Going Green" movement; Californians will be more educated about where their food comes from, and most everyone will buy and eat locally. Californians will be healthier and fitter as more fresh fruits and vegetables are incorporated into everyone's diet. Farmers, using the latest technology, will be more productive and will achieve higher yields while using best management practices on their land. The contribution made by agriculture to our state will be higher than ever, providing a safe, abundant, affordable food supply and thousands of jobs throughout the state.

The "must have" in an Ag Vision for California is BALANCE. California must balance its desire for growth and development with its need for a safe and locally-produced food supply. California must balance competing interests who would impose unfair restrictions on farms with implementing fair and reasonable legal requirements. California must balance support of large, corporate farms with support of small, family farms. California must balance support of traditional, conventional farms with support of sustainable, organic farms. California must balance the needs of fish with the needs of people when deciding where to allocate water resources. California must balance its desire to trade with and support economies of other states and nations with its primary responsibility to provide for the needs of its own citizens. California's support of agriculture is crucial to the long-term prosperity of our state. Remember:

NO FARMS, NO FOOD!