

Good morning. My name is Monika Roy and I am an undergraduate student at UC Berkeley studying Agroecology and Environmental Economics. Through my studies and extracurricular activities I've realized that I want to be a farmer. I plan on traveling around after graduating, working on different farms to get a feel of what kind of farming I want to do. However, I eventually see myself coming back to northern California and making a living by producing food.

Part of my vision for California agriculture by 2030 is to see many new and young people wanting to farm. I see two main challenges among many in achieving this vision. One is a lack of natural resource education, be it in kindergarten, high school, and college. Most youth aren't learning basic nutrition, gardening skills, how food gets to our plates and where waste goes. This lack of education only fuels a greater disconnection between us and the land. The other main challenge I see is for young farmers today trying to start their own farms. It is extremely hard to find land at a reasonable price these days, and hard to make a living on only a small amount of land. Also to mention: there isn't general support for young farmers – I always hear something like “Why would you want to be a farmer?!” or “You could make so much more money doing something else.”

Part of my vision is also to see more agricultural communities, especially within urban centers. Farmers markets are a great way for farmers to reconnect with each other and with community members. Urban farms and community gardens are a way for people to get hands-on experience gardening and for communities to be more food secure. In 2030 I hope the public perception of agriculture is more accepting. What I mean is that I hope people understand more how important agriculture is and how it functions in their lives.

A “must have” in an Ag vision for California is young farmers! Thank you.

Monika Roy

UC Berkeley Undergraduate