

To Whom It May Concern,

California is blessed with the world's most diverse and productive farmland. Consequently, California is in a position of superiority as compared to other agricultural regions. Yet, there are still significant risks to the long term viability of California's agricultural industry. The market is changing. Shipping costs are pushing the limits of basic economics when deciding whether to ship product to the east coast. Fertilizer costs have multiplied over the past 2-3 years. Food safety programs have been mandated, also increasing the costs of production. Environmental concerns are more of an issue than ever. In order for California agriculture to compete in an ever-changing and increasingly global market, it must be able to quickly adapt to new opportunities and threats that present themselves.

In my experience there is one threat to agriculture's ability to react that stands above the rest: the lack of understanding by the general public of production agriculture. The results of this lack of understanding cause, among other things, political stagnation. It is imperative that we avoid political stalemates because this is exactly what inhibits the ability of industry to react. My opinion is that the agricultural industry has done a poor job of educating the public on the importance of the agricultural industry to the state and the major threats to it.

The vision for California Agriculture must include a consolidated constituency, regardless of one's political views, that embraces agriculture. I believe that once we as a state are committed to agriculture, there are no obstacles that couldn't be overcome. In order to achieve this goal, I believe that resources must be allocated to:

- Educational programs (such as *Monterey County Ag Education*) especially aimed at urban communities.
- A comprehensive PR campaign aimed at educating the public on basic Agricultural issues.

Sincerely,

**Paul Johnson**

J&L Farms - Vineyard Manager