



June 30, 2008

Secretary Kawamura, Al Montna, Dave Wehner, and other members of  
The State Board of Food and Agriculture:

Thank you for coming to Oxnard, and most of all, thank you for your time, effort,  
and expertise in putting together this long term plan for California Agriculture.

My vision for California Agriculture for 2030 –

Let's start by looking back to where we have been. Here in Ventura County, lima  
beans, walnuts, and sugar beets dominated in the early 1900's. Then came  
vegetables and citrus. Now we have thousands of acres of strawberries,  
avocados, sod, raspberries, and hot houses, with citrus and vegetables on the  
decline. Why is this? It has to do with costs, revenue, and competition. Unless  
revenues exceed costs most of the time, we are not sustainable!

Looking ahead, California Agriculture will be competing with more people, for  
less water. This is the number one challenge for California Agriculture, since the  
solution is a long term process. We need more storage, and a more efficient,  
environmentally friendly system, of transferring water. In other words, we need  
a system that can't be shut down due to environmental issues and politics. If we  
can go to the moon, I am certain we can keep the smelt out of the pumps. The  
labor issues could be fixed easily, and quickly, with some vision, and common  
sense. Leave the emotions at home.

Today, California is a leader in the world in food production, but at least in the  
products with which I am familiar, avocados and asparagus, there are a lot of  
highly educated, well financed, aggressive, state of the art competition, coming  
out of South America. Their production has higher yields, lower costs, and most  
of all, they have a government that actually wants them to flourish. Very unlike  
here.

Just look at the State Legislature bills submitted every year that have a direct  
impact on California Agriculture. In most cases, the people voting, have no idea  
on what they are voting.

Bottom line, in order to get an efficient and sufficient water system; a workable,  
and fair guest worker program; and Legislators that understand the business; we  
need a public relations plan that tells our story – how much we contribute to the

economy, how we are stewards of the land, that we are the ultimate environmentalists, how our business pulls CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere, and how we provide safe, healthy, and nutritious food, right here at home. We don't want to be like the oil industry, where they have been run out of town, and now the populous is asking – what happened?

We have a great story to tell, but we are getting outmaneuvered, in addition to being severely outnumbered! We need to play offense!

Thank you for your time, and good luck!

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Barnard  
President / CEO