

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2022



PEOPLE ARE KEY

DIRECTOR MESSAGES



“Culture eats strategy for breakfast”

— Peter Drucker

Reflecting on recent years, when the only certainty was the uncertain and the rate of change felt light speed, the constant that I knew to be true was the dedication and commitment

of our Inspection Services Division (ISD) team. Each of you continued to demonstrate your commitment to our mission, to the department’s mission, and to agriculture and the state we serve. I reflect on this success and the resiliency of our workforce, and know this to be true: People make the place and people make the culture. The culture in Inspection Services is strong, as it has been for decades. And, as we know best in agriculture, care and attention must be given to the things that we want to nurture. The same care and attention is true when it comes to the culture we embody in the division. You will see themes of this emphasized throughout this updated ISD Strategic Direction.

The purpose of this publication is to communicate what goals are unique to us and how our division fits into the overall California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) mission. It’s the bedrock for decision-making and purposeful alignment. To begin, we present an updated ISD Mission, last revised in the mid-2000s. This update reflects our growth and development, particularly the Office of Farm to Fork expansion as its team members



Strategic planning is essential because it provides a sense of direction, brings the future into the present and allows us to be proactive and responsive to our stakeholders.

ISD employees are our division’s heartbeat, and it’s important for our team members to know how much they are heard and valued. Where this especially can be seen in this document is the word cloud on p. 9 in which the largest words — “personal,” “coaching,” “training” — are the

begin to work collectively across our division, department, state and nation. Our ISD Mission also acknowledges that at CDFA, we function in a space of “food and agriculture,” with recent tremendous growth in “food,” i.e., food systems, food access and food nutrition. We then present an updated ISD Vision and ISD Direction with specific goals, strategies and performance measures. Our foundational CDFA values, goals and agricultural vision also are reviewed. Ensuing is a description of division leadership’s months-long process to develop this document, illustrated by a cloud of words said most often across all collaborative meetings and quotes from division leadership. Finally, we highlight what successes were accomplished based on our previous strategic direction and surveys.

As a division that oversees nine advisory boards and two technical advisory subcommittees, our workforce and how we deliver services is essential, and our culture is the glue that binds us as a team. Agriculture is a dynamic system and our farmers and ranchers are facing numerous challenges. ISD staff is ready to take on the complexities of the food and agriculture system by delivering professional services, as outlined in this document, while investing in our people who make it happen.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Natalie Krout-Greenberg".

Natalie Krout-Greenberg, Director,
Division of Inspection Services

ones that were said the most by division leadership while discussing and creating this iteration of our important and guiding ISD Strategic Direction.

For stakeholders and staff, this publication clarifies the professional focus for all members of the Inspection Services Division.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carla B. Sanchez".

Carla Bocanegra-Sanchez, Assistant Director,
Division of Inspection Services

ISD MISSION



To provide professional services that support and contribute to a safe and quality food supply, environmentally sound agricultural practices, an equitable marketplace for California agriculture and increased access to healthy, California-grown food.

WHO WE ARE

We are the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Inspection Services Division (www.cdfa.ca.gov/is), which comprises three branches and one office:

INSPECTION AND COMPLIANCE BRANCH

We inspect fruits, vegetables and nuts to ensure quality, maturity, size, packaging and labeling meet industry quality expectations. We perform food safety inspections and verification audits to ensure good handling and agricultural practices.

FEED, FERTILIZER AND LIVESTOCK DRUGS REGULATORY SERVICES BRANCH

Our focus is to ensure a clean and wholesome supply of meat and milk, and to promote environmentally safe and agronomically sound use and handling of fertilizer materials. We help ensure fertilizer, animal feed and livestock drugs are safe and effective, as well as meet the quality and quantity guaranteed by the manufacturer.

CENTER FOR ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY BRANCH

We conduct chemical analyses in support of food and environmental safety in a state-of-the-art chemistry laboratory.

OFFICE OF FARM TO FORK

We are committed to helping all Californians access nutritious, California-grown food through advancing farm to school, increasing food access points in low-income areas and facilitating incentives to help nutrition benefit clients purchase more fresh produce.

ISD VISION

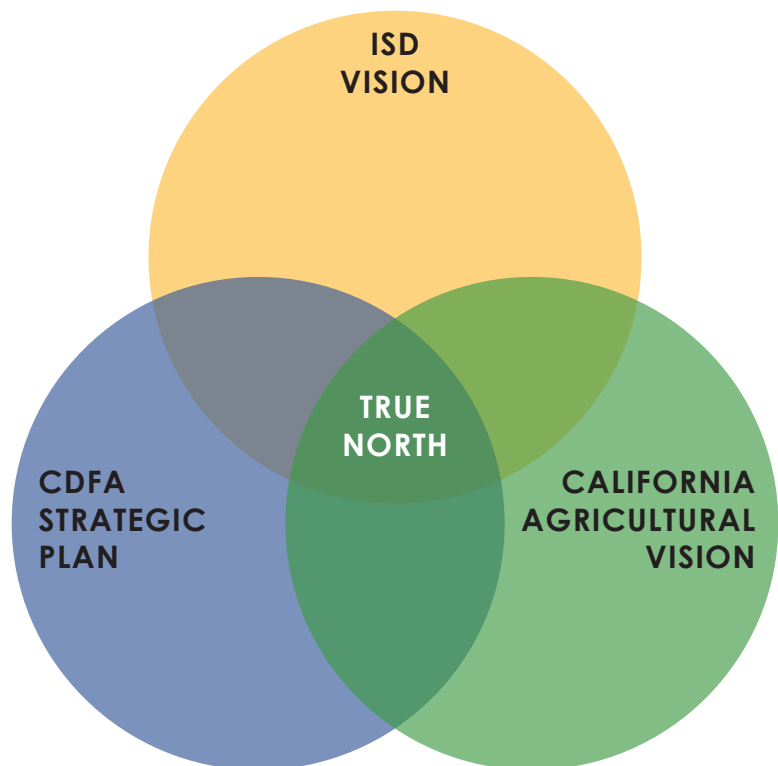


- Create a lasting, thriving division by providing **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** and meaningful careers in the delivery of services to our stakeholders.
- Provide open and transparent **COMMUNICATION** with all stakeholders, internal and external.
- **MAXIMIZE RESOURCES AND SERVICES** through collaboration, innovation and process improvements.

ISD TRUE NORTH

“Whether performing daily activities or establishing long-term work goals, True North represents the most straightforward direction we should pursue to fulfill our mission.”

— Natalie Krout-Greenberg
ISD Director



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Invest in Employee Development

STRATEGY: Pilot a coaching program for staff.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Number of attendees and program evaluation.

GOAL: Foster Development of Administrative Foundational Skill Sets

STRATEGY: Identify project-based opportunities for cross training led by subject matter experts.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Establish a division-wide administrative structural road map.



COMMUNICATION

GOAL: Division Engagement

STRATEGY: Conduct an annual employee satisfaction survey.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Review survey data and share outcomes with the ISD team.

GOAL: Division Education

STRATEGY: Conduct quarterly brown bag sessions to bring awareness of branch/program activities across the division.

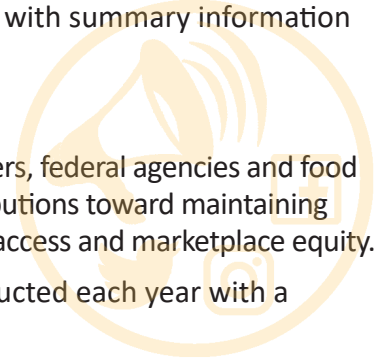
PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Four brown bag sessions conducted each year with summary information shared through the division communication channels.



GOAL: Showcase ISD Program Contributions

STRATEGY: Convene periodic meetings with advisory boards, Ag commissioners, federal agencies and food access groups to maintain strong partnerships and showcase program contributions toward maintaining California's safe and environmentally sound food supply while ensuring food access and marketplace equity.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Quantify the number of outreach efforts conducted each year with a summary shared in Quarterly Quips and the division annual report.



MAXIMIZE RESOURCES AND SERVICES

GOAL: Lead and Strengthen ISD Reputation for Innovation

STRATEGY: Leverage technology and new ways of doing business.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Conduct internal and external surveys to assess and define business needs.

GOAL: Optimize Services for California Farmers and Ranchers

STRATEGY: Connect California's farmers and ranchers to the division's suite of professional services.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Branch program reports and evaluations that also are published in the annual report.



CDFA CORE VALUES



INTEGRITY

We are truthful and trustworthy, and we operate in a fair and ethical manner.

TRANSPARENCY

We conduct all our operations in an open manner.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are responsible to ourselves and others for our actions and decisions.

DIVERSITY

We are committed to maintaining a diverse workforce.

THOUGHTFUL COMMUNICATION

We listen and share information openly and honestly with the goal of mutual understanding.

RESPECT

We treat everyone with courtesy, dignity and consideration.

CREATIVITY

We believe in fostering a creative environment.

BALANCE

We strive to maintain effective partnerships so that our decisions are fair to all our stakeholders.

CDFA STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- 1 Promote and Protect:** Promote and protect the diverse local and global marketability of the California agricultural brand which represents superior quality, value and safety.
- 2 Maximize Resources:** Optimize resources through collaboration, innovation and process improvements.
- 3 Engagement and Education:** Connect rural and urban communities by supporting and participating in educational programs that emphasize a mutual appreciation of the value of diverse food and agricultural production systems.
- 4 Customer Service:** Improve regulatory efficiency through proactive coordination with stakeholders.
- 5 Invest in Employee Development:** Invest in employee development and succession planning efforts.

CA AGRICULTURAL VISION



PURPOSE STATEMENT

Making California a better place to live because of what we grow and how we grow it.

VISION STATEMENT

Californians take pride in their innovative, thriving California farmers and ranchers for their contributions to a healthy population and planet.

GOALS

- 1 Better Health and Well-Being:** Meeting the nutrition and culinary needs of California's diverse population and consumers across the country and around the world.
- 2 A Healthier Planet:** Improving the health of the natural resources upon which California and food production depend.
- 3 Thriving Communities:** Food production and processing are drivers of sustainable California economic-growth.
- 4 Connection Between Farmers and the Consuming Public:** Citizens are agriculture and food literate, understanding and appreciating what it takes to bring food and fiber to market, and the people behind California agriculture.
- 5 A Diverse Set of Agriculture Entities are Thriving:** Ensuring agriculture has the land, water, human capital and access to the resources and legislative support it needs to remain profitable and competitive in the 21st century.

— California Agricultural Vision,
Developed by the California State Board of Food & Agriculture



CREATION OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Inspection Services Division Leadership Team held a series of meetings to discuss the division's trajectory, what was working well and what needed more work. It was a chance for the Leadership Team to contemplate staff feedback, industry input from ISD advisory boards, and decide what high-level objectives all staff members could look toward. Also discussed was what things could be presented to sister CDFA divisions as what is driving Inspection Services.

The word cloud on p. 9 shows what words were most prominent in these conversations. The following Leadership Team quotes express why strategic planning is important.

“Strategic planning provides the framework, core values and purpose to help us know that the meaningful work we labor so hard on aligns with the division’s and department’s expectation. It works as our compass.”

— Elysia Fong, Supervisor,
Office of Farm to Fork

“Strategic planning provides a road map and is a valuable tool to track progress and set goals, which assist in making day-to-day decisions, while planning for the future. These planning opportunities not only ensure that our industry is adequately served, but also allows for the evaluation of potential upward mobility opportunities. Every team member within FFLDRS brings a unique skill set and is greatly valued.”

— Amadou Ba, Branch Chief,
Feed, Fertilizer and Livestock
Drugs Regulatory Services



ISD STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT



“The ISD Strategic Direction is like a compass. It sets up a sense of direction and puts us on a meaningful path. It allows us to be proactive and deliberate with our efforts, rather than reacting to the busy and ever-changing world. This way, we always stay on track.”

— Barzin Moradi, Branch Chief,
Center for Analytical Chemistry

"Our branch will face many changes in the coming years. New programs will need support, others may leave and current ones may grow in size or be reduced. To successfully accept those challenges, our workforce must be flexible and prepared. Inspection Services helps ensure this preparation by providing strategic direction. This guidance is not created in a bubble, but rather through a collaborative process allowing for branch input to ensure our concerns are being met. Tools such as surveys and internal working groups are important components that will assist both the branch and division in maintaining stability and sustainability well into the future. The administrative team understands the value of each employee and strives to ensure staff input is incorporated into creating a vision that is successful for all."

— Steve Patton, Branch Chief,
Inspection and Compliance

HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESSES FROM 2019-2022

As we look toward the future, we also contemplate how we fulfilled previous goals. Following are items accomplished as a result of the 2019-2022 ISD Strategic Direction and in response to department-wide surveys.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



- Staff duties were reallocated, including updating duty statements and classifications to better ensure industry needs were being met.
- Upward mobility opportunities were created.
- Many training and development opportunities were offered to help staff in gaining skills, cross-training, leadership and being appointed to new positions.
- New interdisciplinary teams were formed.
- The Center for Analytical Chemistry offered staff 23 unique training opportunities (technical and soft skills).
- An ISD Workforce Development Roadmap was created.



TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS



- Shipping Point Inspection upgraded its internal accounting system, allowing electronic submission of certificates, and is transitioning to handheld data collectors to automate inspections.
- The Center for Analytical Chemistry upgraded and/or employed 36 new technology instruments and software.
- ISD shifted to electronic storage for program documents and improved access for staff through cloud-based data sharing.
- The FFLDRS ExtraView database is being customized to incorporate a sophisticated laboratory analysis reporting system and to allow for customers to pay by e-check, in addition to credit cards.
- The California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program was transferred to a grant management portal.

COMMUNICATION



- Posted 150 blogs to a new ISD Blog and gained 862 social media followers through 236 Twitter, 361 Facebook and 233 Instagram posts.
- ISD website traffic increased 22% between 2020 and 2021.
- Many advisory board meetings, public meetings, outreach events, conferences, demonstrations and more were held and appreciated.
- The Quarterly Feed Update was initiated to inform the industry of program accomplishments, new laws and regulations, and more.
- Program news was communicated through e-mail subscription lists.
- The CA Farm to School Network helped create and release Planting the Seed: Farm to School Roadmap for Success.



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

DIVISION OF INSPECTION SERVICES

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