

## Stakeholder Input Report

---

*This report briefly summarizes the outreach and engagement process that was conducted as an important component of developing a multi-pronged agricultural strategy for the Ventura County Ag Plan. This process included identifying a diverse set of stakeholders, collaborating with local organizations, conducting several stakeholder meetings and one-on-one interviews as well as working with local and regional experts to map the important data for the "Ventura County Gateway". Please see also Appendix A for the **Ventura County Ag Strategy - Outreach and Engagement Plan**.*

### I. Identify and Convene Project Partners and Local and Regional Experts, and Craft Community Engagement Plan

#### *Project Partners, Local Engagement Lead, and Local Conveners*

Shortly after kicking off the **Ventura County Agricultural Strategy** (VC Ag Strategy) project with County staff, on December 9, 2021, the Cultivate Team, with assistance from local leaders and advisors, selected a diverse set of leaders in the community to make up the "Project Partners" group which included selecting a "Local Engagement Lead" and "Local Conveners" to help with community outreach and hosting of stakeholder meetings. The team identified **John Krist (who was on the original SALC application working group)** as the Local Engagement Lead, and the **Ventura County Farm Bureau** and two influential community groups, **the Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCC) and the Ventura County Civic Alliance (VCCA)** were selected as the Local Conveners.

The Project Partners group included representatives from the County, community organizations, food and farming advocacy groups and local land trusts, as well as the stakeholders that had already been involved in the SALC application process. A kick off meeting with Project Partners in January of 2023 was completed in collaboration with the Local Conveners to accomplish the following goals:

- 1) Introduce the Consultant team, the timeline, and the process of the VC Ag Strategy to the Project Partners.*
- 2) Familiarize the Cultivate Team with the Project Partners and their activities.*

- 3) *Begin to identify local and regional experts and resources to further assist in identifying additional relevant stakeholders, synthesize data, help to create prioritization criteria, and evaluate models and policies.*
- 4) *Introduce the Local Engagement Lead, John Krist.*

The Project Partners agreed to schedule monthly meetings in which the Cultivate Team would solicit feedback on various tasks and update on the progress of the project. For some of these meetings, the Project Partners attended broader stakeholder meetings in lieu of the monthly meeting. The following meetings took place in 2022:

- *January 13*
- *February 10*
- *March 9 & 10 (Ag and Community Stakeholder meetings)*
- *April 6 & 2 (Ag and Community Stakeholder meetings)*
- *May 12*
- *June 9*
- *July 14*
- *August 18*
- *September 15*
- *October 20 (presentation of Draft Strategies and feedback)*
- *November 16 & 17 (Ag and Community Stakeholder meetings)*
- *December 15*

For each of these meetings, County staff (as part of the Project Partners group) joined the meetings allowing for a collaborative engagement process among the Cultivate Team and the community. This multi-stakeholder dialogue effectively informed this VC Ag Strategy at key milestones in its development process and activated conversations between government agencies and key stakeholders in the region.

**For the October 20 Project partners** meeting, the Cultivate Team distributed and presented an initial set of draft strategies for input. The Project Partners reviewed and provided feedback both in the meeting and via emails, resulting in a better understanding of the many tools and structures available and necessary for implementing a successful ag strategy in Ventura County. At the conclusion of the broader Stakeholder meetings in November (see below), the Cultivate Team worked with Project Partners and County staff to refine the set of draft strategies, get feedback on the Draft Strategic Plan, and outline a process for organizing around the adoption of the Strategic Plan and its implementation.

Due to the Covid pandemic, the Project Partners and County staff collaboration process was conducted remotely utilizing Zoom.

### *Local and Regional Experts*

The Cultivate Team designed the project to allow the team to gather learning and insights from one-one or small group conversation that would inform the Strategy's development throughout the process. The Cultivate Team identified these experts from the Project Partners recommendations or by seeking them out as needed to inform specialized research such as the Risk Assessment. The Local and Regional Experts are a diverse group of leaders in the agricultural, equity, water, climate, planning and policy and conservation fields. The Team relied used on these experts' local and subject area knowledge as well to inform the development of the Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Gateway and Risk Assessment, the Economic Analysis, the draft Strategies and Incentives Structure, and Education and Awareness Strategy.

### *Support Materials*

Appendix A: Community Engagement Plan and Timeline

Appendix B: Project Partners Kick-off Meeting Presentation Deck

Appendix C: Project Partners Meeting, Oct 20 - Draft Strategies Presentation Deck

Appendix D: Project Partners Contact List

## **II. Identify, Convene, and Engage Community and Agricultural Stakeholders**

### *Co-Conveners*

Early in the project, the Cultivate Team worked closely with the Project Partners and the Local Engagement Lead, John Krist, to identify key constituent groups to serve as a portal to community stakeholders. As noted above, The **Ventura County Farm Bureau, The Ventura County Civic Alliance (VCCA) and Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF)** executive directors offered their organizations to serve as "Co-Conveners" for stakeholder workshops and communications.

### *Stakeholder Workshops*

The Cultivate Team, with the assistance of the Farm Bureau, VCCA, and VCCF, the Project Partners, and John Krist, developed community stakeholder and agricultural community stakeholder lists of individuals thought to be leaders in their community around agriculture and broader community issues related to agriculture. For these stakeholders, the Cultivate Team conducted three sets of workshops: 1) a kick-off; 2) initial input, and 3) input on findings and draft strategies.

For each of the three workshops, the Cultivate Team conducted two sets of workshops, one for agricultural stakeholders and one for other community stakeholders (for a total of six workshops).

**Stakeholder Workshop #1 - March 9 & 10, 2022.** The first set of workshops on March 9 and 10, served as a community kick-off event. The objectives of this set of workshops were to introduce the project objectives and timelines, invite engagement in both discovery and refinement phases, and answer community questions about the SALC planning grant process.

**Stakeholder Workshop #2 - April 6 & 7, 2022.** The second set of workshops on April 6 and 7 served to inform participants of the status of the project, develop an understanding among participants on what the mapping risk assessment is, and introduce the initial findings of the work products. The objectives of this set of workshops was to gather input from the community stakeholders on the following questions:

- *What are the local issues of greatest concern that agriculture faces in the county?*
- *What are the market and price forces that are shaping agriculture in Ventura County?*
- *How is the community interacting with agricultural production, land use, and broader food system issues and what education and awareness is needed?*

The Cultivate Team analyzed the input gathered from Workshop #2 and organized it into themes and issue areas. This data was analyzed, along with the stakeholder input from the Risk and Opportunity assessment, and one-on-one interviews, and served to inform the set of draft strategies going forward.

**Stakeholder Workshop #3 - November 16 & 17, 2022.** For the third set of workshops on November 16 and 17, the Cultivate Team revised the first draft of strategies based on Project Partners' review and comments and shared and presented a second draft of strategies to stakeholders. Based on the input from this meeting, as well as ongoing input from Project Partners, one-on-one interviews, and County staff, the Cultivate Team revised the set of draft strategies and worked with Project Partners and County staff to integrate them into a Draft Strategic Plan.

*Support Materials:*

Appendix E: Community Stakeholder and Agricultural Community Stakeholder Contact Lists  
Appendix F: Stakeholder meeting, Nov 16/17 - revised Draft Strategies Presentation Deck

Appendix G: Stakeholder Input Findings April 6/7 Data Table

Appendix H: Stakeholder Input Notes November 16/17

### III. Local and Regional Expert Convenings and Interviews

The Cultivate Team carried out approximately 20 one-on-one phone or Zoom meetings to glean from local and regional experts' local and subject area knowledge to inform the development of the *Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Gateway and Risk Assessment*, the *Economic Analysis*, the *draft Strategies and Incentives Structure*, and *Education and Awareness Strategy*. This collaboration process and these connections proved invaluable to the development of various work products, both adding a local lens and allowing for various stakeholders in the community to take part in shaping the project.

### IV. Creation of the Ventura County SALC Project Gateway/Prioritization and Risk Assessment

The Cultivate Team utilized Project Partners meetings to solicit suggestions for raw inputs and other complementary data sets for development of the *Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Project Gateway*, an online map-based database to support stakeholders in evaluating and protecting agricultural values in the county. In addition, the Team conducted a webinar both as a tutorial and to solicit data as the Gateway was developed. A subset of the Project Partners as well as additional local subject matter experts convened over the course of four meetings to help develop criteria for identifying and prioritizing agricultural land for its best use given current conditions and future projections. This prioritization analysis aimed to provide practical insights into which agricultural lands were more likely to remain resilient and productive given future conditions (based on climate projection impacts, water stresses, and other factors) compared to the higher stressed agricultural lands. The Cultivate Team worked with the Project Partners subgroup to select 13 criteria to inform sub-basin conditions which can inform future investment priorities and other prioritization of agricultural lands, as articulated in the final *Map-based Agricultural Risk Assessment for Ventura County*.

### V. Creation of the Education and Awareness Strategy

Early in the project, the Cultivate Team formed an Education and Awareness Advisory Group, which met five times throughout the project and helped to identify existing agricultural education and awareness efforts in Ventura County and assess the needs and priorities of the community in promoting agriculture and building organization

structures to support those priorities. In addition, the Cultivate Team conducted numerous one-on-one meetings with local subject-matter experts to refine the initial assessment and develop a final *Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted and Agricultural Education and Awareness Strategy*.

*Support Materials:*

Appendix I: Education and Awareness Advisory Group Contact List

Appendix J: Education and Awareness Meeting Notes

## APPENDICES

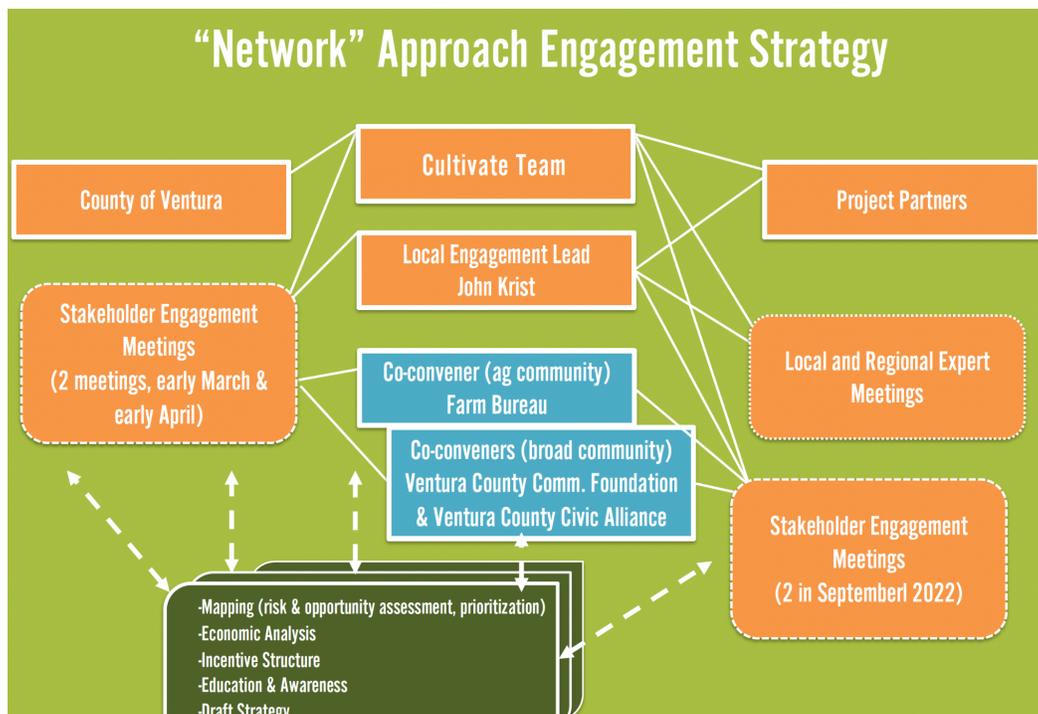
### Appendix A. Community Engagement Plan and Timeline

#### Ventura County Sustainable Ag Conservation Strategy OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT PLAN - Draft Winter-Fall 2022

### 1.0 Outreach Overview

The Cultivate Team has designed a “network” approach to **obtain focused and meaningful community feedback** as well as to encourage community dialogue and “**ownership**” of the **Plan**. The outreach approach is based on three core principles:

- *Inclusion*: We work with Project Partners and community resources to ensure the Plan has broad, timely, and effective inclusion of community needs and perspectives both from individuals and organizations who regularly contribute to these kinds of planning processes as well as those who historically have not been engaged.
- *Focus*: We take an objectives-based approach to engagement, with each engagement opportunity designed to achieve a specific and achievable outcome in service to the creation of a plan that has broad support and community buy-in.
- *Creativity*: Community engagement is more than a series of meetings, it is an invitation to step into the complexity and nuance of problem solving in Ventura County today. The engagement strategy includes a broad range of input methods from individual interviews, to small group working sessions, to community workshops.



Below is a summary of the main outreach tasks:

### 1a. Convene Partners, ID Local & Regional Experts, Craft Community Engagement Plan

For this step, the Cultivate Team works with Project Partners to identify a group of Local and Regional Experts/Resources that will assist in identifying relevant stakeholders, synthesize data, help to create prioritization criteria, and evaluate models and policies. These Local and Regional Experts will be a diverse group of leaders in the agricultural, equity, climate, planning and policy and conservation/ ecosystem services fields. The Local and Regional Experts will inform the Strategy’s development throughout the process.

### 1b. Identify, Convene & Engage Stakeholders

The Cultivate Team, with assistance from the Project Partners will identify key constituent groups that can serve as a portal to community stakeholders. The Cultivate Team will engage with up to three key Co-Convenors (formerly “Constituent Groups”) to identify a Local Engagement Lead and community stakeholders to co-host workshops/listening sessions. The Co-convenors will include farming, and also represent a wide variety of community interests including farmworkers of underserved communities, environmental groups, equity and environmental justice, agricultural support businesses, funders, lenders, and other community-based organizations.

The Cultivate Team will hold two community stakeholder workshops/listening sessions with the broader community stakeholders to:

1. **Solicit input on Strategy goals and objectives**, gauge community concerns, and inventory key questions to consider in the risk and opportunities assessment, and
2. **Review mapping** and risk and opportunity assessment findings

### 1c. Identify, Convene, & Engage Ag Community

In addition to engagement with the broader set of community stakeholders in Task 1b, the Cultivate Team, with assistance from the Project Partners, community organizations, and Local and Regional Experts, will identify a diverse set of agricultural stakeholders to provide input specific to agricultural concerns that should be considered in the risk and opportunity assessment and the drafting of the Strategy. The Cultivate Team will facilitate two meetings with these stakeholders as well to complement the input in 1b.

### 1d. Hold Local/Regional Expert Convenings/Interviews

The Cultivate Team will coordinate and conduct conference calls, one-on-one interviews and/or small virtual meetings with Local and Regional Experts to solicit input, knowledge, and insights and technical knowledge on the variables that should be considered in the risk and opportunity assessment, economic analysis, education and awareness strategy, prioritization process and the drafting of the Strategy. The information gained from these convenings and interviews will ultimately inform the development and completion of the risk and opportunity assessment, the Economic Impact Study, Education and Awareness Strategy, mapping and ultimate preparation of the Strategy.

### 1e. Creation of Ventura Cty SALC Project Gateway

To support all outreach and engagement activities, the Cultivate Team will create a **Ventura County SALC Project Gateway** using Data Basin technology. This will allow for the efficient collection, organization, and review of all data and information relevant to the project deliverables. This proven web-based approach is particularly valuable with the need to either severely limit or completely avoid face-to-face meetings throughout the course of the project due to anticipated ongoing covid-19 restrictions. The proposed gateway improves project transparency and provides the means for participants to become meaningfully involved and informed on the project. Data Basin is highly intuitive and easy-to-use, and the Cultivate Team will provide introductory webinars for using this technology. Providing these webinars early in the process helps to establish a tone of inclusiveness and empowerment for participants while providing high scientific and technical quality.

### 1f. Prepare a Stakeholder Input Report

The Cultivate Team will document input from the above Tasks and synthesize findings into a Stakeholder Input Report that will inform the ultimate preparation of the Strategy.

## 2.0 Outreach Summary Plan

### I. Project Partner Monthly Meetings

*Outreach Objectives:*

- Identify issues and interests
- Identify local and regional experts to inform the work
- 
- Identify Co-Conveners and Local Engagement Lead
- Provide on-going input and feedback on Strategy, mapping, and data collection.

*When:* Monthly

*Who:* Project Partners and Local engagement lead

### II. Identification of Local Engagement Lead

*Outreach Objectives:*

- To utilize community resources in informing the Strategy so that the Strategy comes from the community.
- To make sure the right people are in the conversation and that we are as inclusive as possible
- To help us ask the right questions
- To help Identify Co-Conveners
- To act as a liaison to the community.

*When:* January 2022

*Who:* **John Krist** was recommended by the Partners Group, and he has accepted the role and is already active in working with the Cultivate Team and the community to identify co-conveners, local and regional experts as well as inputs to outreach efforts.

### III. Identification of Co-Conveners

*Objectives:*

- To utilize trusted community resources in informing and helping to lead outreach efforts, mapping and data collection and stakeholder inputs.
- To help us ask the right questions and make sure we are reaching constituent groups that have been historically underrepresented.
- To act as a liaison to the larger community, and help to raise awareness about the Project's goals.
- To host two convenings for the Ag Community, and Broader Community Groups.

*When:* January 2022

*Who:* **The Farm Bureau** has been selected as the **Ag Specific Community Convener**, and the **Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF)** and the **Ventura County Civic Alliance (VCCA)** have been selected as the **Broader Community Conveners**.

### IV. Winter/Spring Convenings 2022 - Introductory and Workshop #1 Meetings

*Outreach Objectives:*

- Introduce the project to the community and get people excited and engaged in discussing the future of Ventura ag.
- Inform the community about the opportunities of the SALC program and the overall goals of the program.
- Solicit input on Strategy goals and objectives, gauge community concerns, and frame up the conversation regarding the key questions the community wants answered.
- Get them familiar with the Gateway Mapping tool and how that will inform the process going forward.

*Meetings:*

- Introductory Meetings (2) for Ag Specific Community and Broader Community, Mid- March 2022. This meeting is to introduce the process, schedule, SALC and their role and responsibilities through the process.
- Workshop Meeting #1 (2) for Ag Specific Community and Broader Community, early April 2022. This meeting is to solicit input on Strategy goals and objectives, and early feedback on the Gateway mapping tool, as well as community concerns and the questions that need to be answered.

*Attendees:*

- Co-conveners (Hosts)
- John Krist (local engagement lead), County Planning, Ag Commissioner, Partners Group, selected Consultants (as needed).
- Community members identified by co-conveners, Partners and Consultant team.

*Design:*

- Introductory Meetings - Virtual Meetings on Zoom (60 minutes), presentation on the Ventura SALC project, interactive “warm up”
- Workshop Meeting #1 - Virtual Meetings on Zoom (90 minutes) with breakout rooms to solicit feedback and conversations around ag, threats, opportunities.

## **V. Fall Convenings 2022 - Workshop #2**

*Outreach Objectives:*

- Solicit input on:
  - Preliminary mapping and risk and opportunity assessment findings
  - Economic analysis
  - Education and awareness findings
  - Preliminary prioritization criteria
  - Preliminary strategies for inclusion in Ag Framework Plan.
  - Consensus on preliminary model(s) that the two Community Groups agree on

*Meetings:*

- Workshop #2 (2) for Ag Specific Community and Broader Community Groups, Fall 2022. This meeting is to solicit input on the draft findings of the risk and opportunity assessment, economic analyses and preliminary prioritization criteria.

*Attendees:*

- Co-conveners (Hosts)
- John Krist (local engagement lead), County Planning, Ag Commissioner, Partners Group, selected Consultants (as needed).
- Community members identified by co-conveners, Partners and Consultant team.

*Design:*

- 2 hours with 10 minute break
- Depending on Covid protocols, these meetings could be in person or virtual.

## **VI. Ventura County SALC Project Gateway**

*Outreach Objectives:*

- Provide an easy to use tool for the community to interact with and engage in inputs and feedback so that they “build” their own mapping tool and datasets.
- Provide a tool for the community to work together on building the needed mapping, leading to greater understanding between community groups.
- Inform the community about the risks and opportunities facing Ventura County.
- Solicit input on datasets and prioritization criteria.
- Finding consensus on preliminary risk and opportunity assessments.

*Meetings/Interviews:*

- Gateway Webinar to get stakeholders comfortable with the tool and to identify subgroups for the EEMS models
- Informal meetings and/or subsets of the two Community Groups (agriculture and non-ag community) to develop models that use available spatial data and information to generate agricultural risk and opportunity mapping for the County.

*When:*

- Webinar - Spring
- During the Spring and Summer 2022, the modeling team (CBI) will work with both Community Groups on gathering mapping data, assessing modeling criteria, and modeling outcomes.

**VII. One-on-one Outreach**

*Outreach Objectives:*

- Gather information and data from identified local and regional experts on the various efforts informing the Strategy, including:
  - Education and awareness strategy
  - SALC Project Gateway
  - Economic Analysis
  - Incentive Structure
  - Draft Strategy

*Interviews:*

- Informal interviews will be conducted by the Consultant team to gather mapping, economic and community data relevant to informing the drafting of the final strategy

*When:*

- During the Spring and Summer 2022, the Consultant team will work with the Local Engagement Lead, Project Partners and County to identify resources in the community to provide inputs to the Strategy.

**See separate attachments : Appendix B: Project Partners Kick-off Meeting Presentation Deck**

**Appendix C: Project Partners meeting, Oct 20 - Draft Strategies Presentation Deck**

## Appendix D. Project Partners Contact List

Project Partners			
Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Email
Rich	Atmore	RA Atmore and Sons/Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust	Rich@RAAtmore.com
Melissa	Baffa	Ventura Land Trust	melissa@venturalandtrust.org
Melinda	Beardsley	Beardsley and Son	melinda@beardsleyandson.com
Korinne	Bell	Agricultural Commissioner	korinne.bell@ventura.org
Ellen	Brokaw	Brokaw Ranch Co.	ellen@brokawnursery.com
Luis	Calderon	Reiter Affiliated Companies	Luis.Calderon@berry.net
Clay	Downing	Ventura County, Sustainability	elay.downing@ventura.org
Ted	Grether	Grether Farming	edward@gretherfarming.com
Melinda	Kelley	DoC	melinda.kelley@conservation.ca.gov
Shawn	Kelly	Santa Clara Riverlands Conservancy	skelly@santaclarariver.org
John	Krist	Farm Bureau of Ventura County	john@johnkrist.com
Jeffery	Lambert	Ventura County Community Foundation	jlambert@vccf.org
Louise	Lampara	Ventura County Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business (COLAB)	llampara@colabvc.org
Leslie	Leavens	Leavens Ranches LLC	leslie@leavensranches.com
Barbara	Maci-Ortiz	Labor attorney	b.macriortiz@verizon.net
Tom	Maloney	Ojai Valley Land Conservancy	tom@ovlc.org
David	Maron	Ventura County Civic Alliance	DavidM@MaronSoftware.com
Helen	McGrath	Flying M Ranch	flyingmranch805@gmail.com
Phil	McGrath	McGrath Family Farms	phil4mcgrathfarm@gmail.com
Maureen	McGuire	Farm Bureau of Ventura County	maureen@farmbureauvc.com
Maricela	Morales	Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)	maricela@causenow.org
Calleen	O'Neill	Ventura County Community Foundation	coneall@vccf.org
Calleen	Pardinas	Ventura County Community Foundation	cpardinas@vccf.org
Tracy	Perez	Ventura County market manager, Manpower staffing agency	tracy.perez@manpower.com
Paolo	Perrone	Trust for Public Land	paolo.perrone@tpl.org
Kim	Prillhart	Resource Management Agency	Kim.Prillhart@ventura.org
E.J.	Remson	The Nature Conservancy	eremson@tnc.org

Annemiek	Schilder	University of California	amschilder@ucanr.edu
Alejandra	Tellez	County of Ventura Sustainability Office	alejandra.tellez@ventura.org
Edgar	Terry	Terry Farms	edgar.terry@terryfarmsinc.com
William	Terry	Terry Farms	William@terryfarmsinc.com
Alec	Thille	Agricultural Commissioner	alec.thille@ventura.org
Rigoberto	Vargas	Ventura County Public Health	Rigoberto.Vargas@ventura.org
Monica	White	FOOD Share	MWhite@foodshare.com
Ed	Williams	Agricultural Commissioner	Ed.Williams@ventura.org
Lucas	Zucker	CAUSE	lucas@causenow.org
<del>Strikethrough</del> = person left position			

## Appendix E. Community and Agricultural Stakeholders Contact Lists

Community Stakeholders (non agriculture)			
Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Email
Dr. Gabino	Aguirre	(Various roles including consultant to VCCF)	drgabino@gmail.com
Letitia	Austin	Port of Hueneme Public and Government Relations Manager	LAustin@portofh.org
Talia	Barerra	Ventura County Farmworker Resource Program	talia.barrera@ventura.org
Marni	Brook	Women's Economic Ventures	mbrook@wevonline.org
Hugh	Coxe	Trust for Public Land	hugh.coxe@tpl.org
Jim	Danza	Friends of the Santa Clara River	danzajm@outlook.com
Kristin	Decas	Port of Hueneme	kdecas@portofh.org
Nick	Deitch	Mainstreet Architects	nick@mainstreetarchitects.com
Amanda	Fagan	Ventura County Transportation Commission	<a href="mailto:afagan@goventura.org">afagan@goventura.org</a>
Matthew	Fienup	director of Center for Economic Research and Forecasting at Cal Lutheran University	mfienu@callutheran.edu
Genevieve	Flores-Haro	MICOP	genevieve.flores-haro@mixteco.org
Tim	Gallagher	former VC Star publisher	tim@the2020network.com
Greg	Gillespie	Chair of the United Way board, Chancellor of the VC Community College District,	ggillespie@vcccd.edu
Yvonne	Gutierrez	Executive Director El Concilio	yvonne@elconciliofs.org
Andrea	Howry	Ventura County Branch Coordinator - Food Forward	andrea@foodforward.org
Kathleen	Mallory	City of Oxnard, Planning Manager, Chair of the Ventura City/County Planning Directors Association	Kathleen.Mallory@oxnard.org
Tom	Maloney	Ojai Valley Land Conservancy	tom@ovlc.org
Andrew	Palomares	Port of Hueneme	apalomares@portofh.org
Bernardo	Perez	Moorpark, east county rep	bperez@vcccd.edu
Stacy	Roscoe	Ventura County Civic Alliance	sroscoevta@aol.com
Karen	Schmidt	formerly SOAR	karenjschmidt@sbcglobal.net
Mike	Sedell	Retired Simi Valley city manager, current member of Museum of Ventura County board	mjsedell@yahoo.com
Alex	Size	Trust for Public Land	alex.size@tpl.org

Sandy	Smith	Sespe Consulting, former Ventura City Council member	ssmith@sespeconsulting.com
Bruce	Stenslie	Economic Development Collaborative	bruce@edcollaborative.com
Chris	Stephens	Ventura County Resource Management Agency director (retired)	chrisstephens244@gmail.com
Rigoberto	Vargas	County Public Health	rigoberto.vargas@ventura.org
Karen	Wetzel Schott	Ventura's Certified Farmers' Markets	info@vccfm.org
Monica	White	FOOD Share	mwhite@foodshare.com
Larry	Yee	UC Cooperative Extension county director (retired)	lkyee@ucdavis.edu
Lucas	Zucker	Central Coast Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)	lucas@causenow.org

### Agricultural Stakeholders

Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Email
Melinda	Beardsley Meyring	Beardsley and Son, supplier of fertilizers and other ag inputs	melinda@beardsleyandson.com
Jan	Berk	San Miguel Produce, vegetable grower/packer/shipper	Jan.berk@cutnclean.com
Bev	Bigger	VC Cattlemen's Association	brbigger@sbcglobal.net
Desirae	Braga	Ventura County Resource Conservation District	Desirae.Braga@vcrd.org
Bill	Camarillo	Agromin	bill@agromin.com
Russell	Chamberlin	Ted Chamberlin Ranch	chamberlinrussell@gmail.com
Brett	Chandler	Associates Insectary, integrated pest management co-op	info@associatesinsectary.com
Jim	Churchill	organic citrus grower, Ojai	tangerinesales@earthlink.net
Les	Clark	Local Wholesale produce distributor	les@theberryman.com
Maureen	Cottingham	CamLam Farms, Inc	Maureen@CamLamFarms.com
Scott	Deardorff	Deardorff Family Farms, multi-crop grower/packer/shipper	scott@deardorfffamilyfarms.com
Jan	Dietrick	Rincon Vitova Insectaries	jdietrick9@gmail.com
Sal	Dominguez	farm labor contractor	sal@totallaborforce.com
James	Dubois	Driscoll's berries	Fred@pyramidflowers.com
Scott	Dunbar	Ag real estate broker	vcranches@gmail.com
Jurgen	Gramckow	Southland Sod Farms	Jurgen@sod.com
Scott	Klittich	Otto and Sons Nursery	Scott@ottoandsons.net

John	Lamb	conventional citrus and avocado grower	john@camlamfarms.com
Hank	Laubacher Jr.	vegetable grower	hankjr@laubacherfarms.com
David	Martinez	Marz Farms, berries	dmarti@marzfarms.com
Ryan	Morgan	Ryan Morgan Livestock	ryanmorganlivestock@gmail.com
Tony	Ortiz	Joseph and Sons, flowers	tony@josephns.com
Danny	Pereira	Rio Farms, vegetable grower	dannypereira@riofarms.com
Eric	Reiter	Reiter Affiliated Companies, berries	EReiter@berry.net
Mark	Satterberg	Farm Credit West, ag finance	mark.satterberg@farmcreditwest.com
Will	Terry	Terry Farms, vegetable and hemp grower	william@terryfarmsinc.com
Craig	Underwood	Underwood Family Farms, multi-crop grower	craig@underwoodranches.com
Fred	Van Wingerden	Pyramid Flowers	fred@pyramidflowers.com
Jamie	Whiteford	Ventura County Resource Conservation District	Jamie.Whiteford@vcrd.org
Ron	Whitehurst	Rincon Vitova Insectaries	ron@rinconvitova.com

**See separate attachment: Appendix F: Stakeholder meeting, Nov 16/17 - Revised Draft Strategies Presentation Deck**

## Appendix G. Stakeholder Input Findings Data Table

### Ventura County Ag Strategy Stakeholder Outreach Workshop #2 - April 6 & 7, 2022

#### DRAFT Key takeaways:

- Water demands are growing from climate change impacts and population growth, but water availability is becoming more restricted. There is a need to manage expectations since what's been done in the past might not be possible in the future in terms of cost and availability.
- Climate change increases the complexity of farming. More knowledge is needed.
- The economics of farming has to be at the forefront of solutions.
- Generational business succession is a major challenge.
- Workforce quality of life (health, wages, housing, transportation) are key to the agricultural economy because agricultural operations depend on people. Workforce housing needs to be in proximity to urban services. There is a need to stabilize the workforce locally. Investing in the workforce, creating training and upward mobility is key.
- SOAR is inhibiting local investment in agriculture.
- There is a need to balance public perception and the needs of intensive farming operations, and develop solutions for the public and the farming community.
- There is a need for real local partnering - with farmers, agencies, nonprofits, city planning, etc. to identify mutual benefit opportunities.

#### Community Stakeholder Input - April 6, 2022

<p><b>1. What are the local issues of greatest concern that agriculture faces in the county?</b></p> <p><b>2. What are the market and price forces that are shaping agriculture in Ventura County?</b></p> <p><b>3. How is the community interacting with agricultural production, land use, and broader food system issues and what education and awareness is needed?</b></p>		
<i>Issue Area</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Issue Overlap</i>
Market Pressures & Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentive ag operators to adopt new emerging practices while competing on global scale</li> <li>• Economic pressures of farming is on forefront for every farmer everywhere. Not as appealing to talk about but farmers need to be able to make a living. Increase in food prices isn't going to trickle down to farm. Farmer hyper consolidation needs focus or other goals will not be met.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living  Labor

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurship in ag is impossible these days. If farming was less risk, I would be farming, however the current climate makes it impossible to jump in, even if you have the know-how.</li> <li>• Cost of all materials is going up so line items in budgets are increasing. Min wage increasing. Hourly wage for row crops and orchards up. Direct marketing and wholesale there's volatility of price. Increases not trickling back down to farmer. Need to figure this out before we can invest in labor and practices. Need to look at so-called sustainability practices that may not be. Need to compensate for practices that are beneficial. Farmers getting squeezed out by absentee owners (CA issue).</li> <li>• Energy costs consume a much larger share.</li> <li>• Not necessarily supply chain driven cost increases. It's driven by demand and monetary and fiscal interventions.</li> <li>• Constraints around labor and water - what are the econ factors that are driving more labor and water intensive crops.</li> <li>• A lot of money leaving the county. How to keep more money locally? Tax structures, incentives</li> <li>• From public outreach and education - farmers don't get to set price to cover cost - if they don't cover costs, they go out of business.</li> </ul>	
<p>International                  (&amp; Domestic)                  Trade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would love to see the day ag could afford to pay a living wage to its labor force, but competition internationally and cheap food in general makes it very hard to compete.</li> <li>• Ag exports - producing enormous amounts of food for the globe. Integration of the global economy provides opportunity and risk.</li> <li>• The Port specializes in the niche markets of fresh fruits and other cargo.</li> <li>• Role of imports in driving prices. E.g. Argentine lemons</li> <li>• Imports from lower cost regions</li> </ul>	<p>Labor                   Market                  Pressures &amp;                  Costs</p>
<p>Water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groundwater is what we've relied on over the past century</li> <li>• Greenhouses on the plain - impacts infiltration</li> <li>• Where can there be state assistance for water infrastructure opportunities, e.g. desalinization not popular? Alternative financing for infrastructure and housing. Mandated but no funding. Federal bills might have good opportunities.</li> <li>• Water identified multiple times - to focus: regulatory drought AND natural drought via climate change. Increase in water needs due to evapotranspiration.</li> </ul>	<p>Infrastructure</p>

Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use compatibility with cities</li> <li>• Urban development within ag areas, consideration of how those ag issues impact land uses. How we plan for growth, intensify internally. How does this impact ag uses while providing for residents?</li> <li>• Assembly Bill 1773, Assembly Member Jim Patterson's measure that would appropriate \$40 million from the state General Fund for allocation to counties for purposes of backfilling lost property taxes due to Williamson Act, or Land Conservation Act, contracts. Ventura County has a long history of strongly supporting the Williamson Act as a means of protecting and maintaining our precious agricultural resources.</li> <li>• Pressures of urban growth and interface. SOAR in Ventura city is different than other areas. Importance of understanding that ag is a business and manage the urban interface accordingly. Lack of ability to do infill.</li> <li>• SOAR as LU regulation limits tools like conservation easements, esp for farmers looking ahead. SOAR needs work to ensure perpetual solution.</li> </ul>	Right to Farm
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad air quality days from fires</li> <li>• Wind, drought, and extreme heat days becoming more frequent and consistent</li> <li>• Row cropping more vulnerable to drought, practices that rely on labor more vulnerable</li> <li>• The limits of mapping tools-- Thomas Fire hit the tree crop areas hardest and that's what you'd see in a fire risk map, but more labor-intensive row crops in the Oxnard Plain get hit on the worker side with smoke</li> <li>• Need to look at chemical treatments, single crop economies, need to diversify so we can fit in with scarce water resources, climate change, diminishing biodiversity</li> <li>• Climate change related to water supply and managing expectations. What we've done in the past might not be possible - cost and availability. Urban runoff capture - join effort with county to capture.</li> </ul>	Water Infrastructure Labor Economic Pressures
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruptions that were every few years (e.g. excessive flooding) that stop ag from doing what it needs to do</li> <li>• Intensive rainfall - need to rethink stormwater infrastructure</li> </ul>	Water
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stabilizing farm labor workforce locally, competition from within and outside of CA. Need to provide for their sustainability or they'll go elsewhere. They are just trying to survive.</li> <li>• Investing in workforce, creating training, upward mobility, including political investment with access to services farmworkers need.</li> <li>• Labor and labor safety - increasing heat affect workers. Need more shade and cooling places.</li> </ul>	Climate Cost of Living

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More hoop houses also create hotter conditions for workers</li> <li>• Health issues for farm workers - water quality. Need a common voice for farmworkers.</li> <li>• Robotics - where are we headed with that?</li> <li>• Labor shortage; working conditions; how to make it more appealing to work in ag.</li> <li>• Immigration reform</li> <li>• How to make jobs better, better compensated</li> </ul>	
Next Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harder to get young people to get into ag, technology is more seductive but long term when value of home prices is so high farmers are ready to sell and not worry about next generation</li> <li>• Generational business succession is a major challenge.</li> <li>• FarmLink work - keeping ag land ag land and viable. Programs like that provide funding, facilitation, succession planning, resources for families and land owners, and upward mobility. Diversify ownership of ag land that we have.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living
Cost of Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing - lack of workforce housing going back of decades. Home prices went up 30% in last ---. Compare incomes and housing prices, affordability is significant issue for decade to come.</li> <li>• The market isn't building housing even close to affordable for farmworkers, publicly-subsidized housing mostly excludes farmworkers due to immigration status, and inclusionary housing units rarely hit the extremely and very low income levels farmworkers are at, so what we're left with is mostly overcrowding multiple families in substandard older apartments</li> <li>• Need better quality of life for farmworkers. Housing affordability if key, and financial assistance.</li> </ul>	Workforce
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmworker housing - ensuring it's allowed in most appropriate places, not too far from city services.</li> <li>• Farmworker Housing is critical!</li> <li>• Cities need to take more leadership on farmworker housing, shouldn't be falling on the county to build housing out in the fields</li> </ul>	Workforce Cost of Living
Right to Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balancing public perspective and farmers' ability to farm. Have to grow high value crops that are labor and pesticide intensive. Very difficult to balance what helps the farmers and makes people happy.</li> <li>• Underscores the importance of the public outreach component of the SALC project.</li> </ul>	Community

Community & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for real local partnering - with farmers, agencies, nonprofits, city planning, etc. Where are there mutual benefit opportunities?</li> <li>• How can Port be a partner and service?</li> <li>• Work together to create solutions that are possible. Needs to be taught and demonstrated. Creating community that learns and adapts.</li> <li>• We can't forget the role VC plays in providing food for the entire continent. We provide healthy fruits and vegetables. We need more fruit and vegetables nationally to address food access issues, VC is a major part of the solution as producer of these products. VC has an important role to play in food security.</li> <li>• Education about ag and its importance and value, that kids carry for life.</li> <li>• Mid and high school - how many enter into ag as career</li> <li>• Public side - ongoing conversation around pesticide usage. opportunity now to connect with the regulatory framework. Conversations happening now.</li> <li>• How do you define and measure agricultural literacy among members of the general public, which seems to be an important objective of ag education and outreach programs.</li> <li>• Information that's accurate, public facing, scientific. Public to understand ag, more than just beautiful but what the ag community does to address issues.</li> <li>• Regional grown products program - consumer education. What makes it matter to people whether they're buying local. What's the decision point? Education or marketing campaign. How to make it meaningful to people to trust and buy from local ag.</li> <li>• Oxnard College - education and food and service programs to help families. How do we make jobs attractive that the college could emphasize more within career center? Pres. Sanchez is reaching out on this regularly.</li> <li>• Economic mobility within the ag industry. For families, kids becoming farmers would be a metric of failure to some families. How to change the opportunities? How to get women and indigenous farmworkers represented in upper levels of operations?</li> <li>• Important to characterize how ag has changed by the decade. Data may show less change than is actually happening on the ground that have real impact on how ag operates.</li> </ul>	<p>Right to Farm</p> <p>Trade</p> <p>Workforce</p>
Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for safe routes for imported ag from the ports to coolers/ripening rooms and to highways might be a good point in terms of SALC mapping.</li> </ul>	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need good metrics for measuring success so we're accomplishing things that we hope they will.</li> </ul>	

## Agricultural Community Stakeholder Input - April 7, 2022

<b>1. What are the local issues of greatest concern that agriculture faces in the county?</b> <b>2. What are the market and price forces that are shaping agriculture in Ventura County?</b> <b>3. How is the community interacting with agricultural production, land use, and broader food system issues and what education and awareness is needed?</b>		
<i>Issue Area</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Issue Overlap</i>
Market Pressures & Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost keep going up and prices go down. Cost increases include pest management. Huge concern is pest disease for lemon growers.</li> <li>• Water costs going up. 200-300 per acre foot replenishment fee will come</li> <li>• Economics have to be at forefront of solutions.</li> <li>• Land rents - how high can they go and allow ag to be economically viable.</li> <li>• Grower-shipper relationship - VC is small client to them. Need right crops from VC or they might leave.</li> <li>• What market forces should we be thinking about as we design incentives and programs through SALC?</li> <li>• Cost of compliances. More regulation is higher cost for legal and HR. Lack of empathy from regulators for the farmers.</li> <li>• Farming doesn't pencil out - land, infrastructure, land prep, inputs. Understanding the big levers that allow farmers to put more time into innovation and adapt is the long term solution. Esp for medium size farms, risk tolerance and time is limited.</li> <li>• Ag operators are business operators and are incentivized to do things in their economic interests. Remove obstacles to successful economic decisions and provide tools to farmers find those obstacles.</li> </ul>	Water  Pests
International (& Domestic) Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argentine lemons - revenues have some down. Avocado from Mexico can burry VC's smaller market.</li> <li>• Global competition - have to learn to operate. And SJV is no longer to cold so lemon acreage increasing and encroaching on VC lemon market.</li> </ul>	Market pressures
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface, ground, competition for water - ag, environmental resources, etc...a lot of needs and not a lot to go around. Related to land use.</li> <li>• Oxnard Plain, salt water intrusion.</li> <li>• Cost of desalinization. City of Ventura, focus on potable resuse. Not sure of status regionally on desal.</li> </ul>	Land use  Climate  Infrastructure
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development pressure and housing. Lack of affordable housing and preserving open space and ag. How does ag community feel</li> </ul>	

	<p>about SOAR. Land trust side, gives seat at the table to slow down development pressure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have to have infill if we don't want to develop on ag and open space.</li> <li>• SOAR context: land uses are very limited given the realities of SOAR</li> <li>• SOAR - whether land itself stays in farming when landowners sell, don't know.</li> <li>• SOAR: At what point can we not do it? For marginal growers that inherited land and not serious about farming, those will get picked off over time.</li> <li>• Land use policies like SOAR that may have achieved preservation but shifting economics from local to not local owners. Need to invest in issues with skin in the game, including pests and workers wages.</li> <li>• Zoning minimums. 10 acres is farmable.</li> <li>• If ag becomes economically unsustainable SOAR would go away. Please need to understand this.</li> </ul>	
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's driving the avoidance of addressing global warming? What a SALC project might need to do to address challenges? We need more education.</li> <li>• Find the right crops to sequester carbon</li> <li>• Global warming - fear for the future. Can't keep ignoring water, housing, ... We need to look at the 30k foot level with any solutions we need to address.</li> <li>• Climate change also affects pest and disease. Need predictability. Increasing complexity - more knowledge is needed.</li> </ul>	Community Pests
Infrastructure		
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm labor community got us through the pandemic without a blip</li> <li>• H2A workers wages, housing and transportation cost are big</li> <li>• Labor piece: need to advocate for them b/c completely dependent on them.</li> </ul>	
Next Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next generation planning. What happens when families are talking about their next generation taking over?</li> <li>• Easiest thing to do is sometimes to just sel</li> <li>• For some, difficult to imagine future in farming. Number of actual farms in the county will decrease.</li> <li>• Multi generation farms selling to investment company. Not a family farm anymore.</li> </ul>	
Cost of Living		
Housing		
Right to Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balancing public perception between intensive growing needs and solutions for the public. What's the next crop that can solve problems? Farmers in VC are progressive and resilient.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General disconnect between loving the look of ag and dealing with the realities of ag. e.g. orange trees years ago had smell of chicken manure...would not happen today. Hemp example that would not happen today b/c of general intolerance of farming from public.</li> <li>● Intolerance of pesticides. Want to save citrus and mandatory spraying. This is a daily education at ag commissioners office. VC doesn't see gross negligence from pesticide use from ag.</li> </ul>	
Community & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disentangle but also reframe - opportunities for public to empathize and support</li> <li>● Education on how we operate (e.g. land fill, waste water treatment plant, etc.) with the right kind of communication.</li> <li>● Unified vision for the regulators allows them to be hands out - have community oriented solution. Give BoS information to give to staff to support farmers without barriers.</li> <li>● Education and awareness - what is needed here?</li> <li>● As land trust - people are disconnected from the way the world works. Striving to improve that land trust properties are city or county and people feel entitled even though it's private property. Struggle with education around proper use of social space. [non ag perspective]</li> <li>● Farmer as antagonist, that they don't care, the corporate farm... It's a business, way of life, legacy, and trying to grow food.</li> <li>● Pride in healthy fruits and vegetables that VC provides to the continent/nation. Tie to food security - don't make it harder to grow healthy produce.</li> <li>● Role that supermarkets can play to find local produced food</li> </ul>	
Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mapping tool helped industrial hemp production with a political problem, risk mitigation, buffers, overlay with suitable ground, proximity to schools and urban areas.</li> </ul>	
Other/Farming as a business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Everything we do should first and foremost have an environmental lens.</li> <li>● Giving farmers information that can help them build business strategically (water, regs, climate, etc)</li> <li>● What would give farmers greater ability to adapt?</li> <li>● Diversity in revenue streams is really important. Direct marketing should be a strong component.</li> </ul>	

## Appendix H: Stakeholder Input Notes November 16/17

### VC Ag Strategy - Draft Strategies Presentation and Discussion November 16 and 17 Notes

#### November 16 - Community Stakeholder Meeting

00:50:15 Serena Unger: Everyone- I will be taking notes here in the chat as we discuss. Please feel free to add to or correct my notes.

00:51:48 Serena Unger: How will databasin get integrated into the report?

00:52:48 Serena Unger: A Risk Assessment Report will inform the work going forward to understand the unique stresses of each sub basin. It's a live resource for the community as the work moves forward.

00:53:47 Serena Unger: It will also provide the data for any future funding around the work. Community will be able to access it and be able to generate new information as priorities shift or change.

00:57:01 Serena Unger: Excited about establishing urban rural connection. A lot of programs and everyone's working on their own so helpful to have that coordinated. Land acquisition and making farm economics at the front. Will help CSU on new academic programming and address issues in their education.

00:59:29 Serena Unger: In terms of future viability of ag need land, water and sun and also people - workers and owners. Have an aging problem and a succession problem which isn't mentioned. Also needs more on farmworker housing, health, and education.

01:00:09 Serena Unger: Should we call out the human element more explicitly?

01:00:48 Serena Unger: People fits into resilient future, ag economy.

01:00:58 Serena Unger: Labor and management are economic

01:05:46 Serena Unger: How far down do you expect to run potential incentives around repurposing? Williamson Act, ... How can we create a series of incentives to see the appeal.

01:05:48 Serena Unger:

<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/grant-programs/Documents/grant/2022%20MLRP%20Project%20Summaries.pdf>

01:08:00 Serena Unger: Economic tipping point... One goal is to return to ag use in the future if needed. Could thinking be low water crop, go back into other more intensive water use - structured

01:10:02 Serena Unger: Dept of Conservation repurposing grant. GSPs are looking for funding for incentivized fallowing.

01:10:57 Serena Unger: Cornerstone 1 and 2 resonate. 4 is a given. 1 and 2 speak to on the ground needs. Need to incorporate farm workers into them.

01:11:27 Serena Unger: Succession plans that involve employees, foremen. Intriguing.

01:12:36 Serena Unger: Importance of research at UCCE, esp with repurposing. What do we need to do research on for new crops and soil health?

01:13:35 Serena Unger: How difficult it is for growers to navigate all incentive programs. Would they need an educator? Or an economics educator to hammer out different options and

economic ramifications.

01:15:29 Serena Unger:GSA, Fox Canyon, include land fallowing at least in near term to reduce water alliance while additional projects are developed. Budget is \$5 million a year to pay people not to farm.

01:17:32 Serena Unger:A lot of politicians asking about land repurposing from Sac. Need to come up with local plan based on science not politics.

01:19:30 Serena Unger:What's needed from Farm to School? Would love to see the program grow. Grant writing help is needed for farmers.

01:20:59 Serena Unger:Grant writing. Have talked about farm bureau providing that service and navigate. Could funds help the farm bureau take this role?

01:22:48 Serena Unger:Lideres Campesinas: Transition from farmworker to farmer, esp those living in shadows and poverty. Women and men.

01:24:49 Serena Unger:Sustainable ag education degree. Work in supporting farmers. The importance of farmworkers. Small farmers looking for available land. Connecting farmers to school and healthy food retail, esp in rural communities where there is poverty.

01:28:31 Serena Unger:Farm Bureau as role in ombudsman - conversations with UCCE and Ag Comm. missed \$500k for farmworkers upscaling. Lack infrastructure to go after the funds. There's opportunity there. Could be FB but process for expanding process. Cal Luth provides infrastructure for non profits . Need in VC to build capacity to help farmers access grants, to admin grants and program oversight. Where does this fit in the strategies?

01:37:01 Serena Unger:District idea: in SLO coalition, 24 months

01:43:06 Irene, Lideres Campesinas: I also forgot to mention we are recipients of a new grant via Robertwood Johnson and our work plan in collaboration with CAUSE includes surveys with farmworkers and experts in Ag .

01:43:27 Anna Jackson, VC Farm to School: thank you!

01:43:28 Serena Unger:That's great, Irene!

### **November 17 - Agricultural Community Stakeholder Meeting**

00:33:44 Serena Unger:Hi everyone - I'm going to take notes here in the chat to capture everyone's comments. Feel free to add to or correct my notes.

00:34:21 Serena Unger:Land repurposing would be wise to lead by local farmers and not Sac politicians.

00:35:51 Serena Unger:Comments from yesterday. Timeline for MBLR program soon. Have flexibility of being able to go in and out of production. Concerned about funds available.

00:36:18 Serena Unger:\$40 million available in 2023 for 4 \$10 m block grants.

00:39:56 Serena Unger:Question: Who comes up with criteria for who's eligible for direct payments?

00:40:57 Amie MacPhee:

<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/grant-programs/Documents/grant/2022%20MLRP%20Project%20Summaries.pdf>

00:41:03 Serena Unger:GSAs and RCDs would be good to talk to

00:43:48 Joseph McIntyre: FYI eligible applicants for the program are: Eligible regional block grant applicants are: (1) Groundwater Sustainability Agencies ("GSAs"), (2) federally recognized California Native American tribes, (3) non-federally recognized California Native American tribes on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission; (4) public agencies; (5) nonprofit groups with 501(c) status; and (7) Watermasters implementing an approved groundwater sustainability plan or approved alternate plan

00:48:16 Serena Unger:Overlays scare - problems with scenic, wildlife overlays. application has noble beginning but often is a thorn. Becomes subject to the interpretation of who's behind the desk at the time.

00:48:52 Serena Unger:Concern with a thing as big as an overlay needs sufficient stakeholder input.

00:51:25 Serena Unger:Comments from Kim Prillhart, shared that county was starting to take steps at streamlining. Rather than specific overlay zone, why not just occur for all farm operation in AE in ag in OS since county has already zoned these for where ag can occur. We need to look bigger to promote ag as a whole and expand for all ag.

00:53:44 Serena Unger:Overlay aside, concepts in Cornerstone 2 intriguing. Creating a liaisons but where it's housed needs more thought. Economic program with access to capital, farmworker housing piece.... Agree that geographic specific overlay - smaller producers have parcels in different places. Wouldn't get support. We need more farmers involved in this conversation.

00:55:46 Serena Unger:So many other good options as a lead strategy. access to land, farmworker housing, job training, Farmlink and Alba doing great work around access to land with BICOP, to see that kind of investment in VC. Ombudsman, to navigate all agencies.

00:58:57 Serena Unger:FB is a network. Asked county managers about an overlay. Originally, for some didn't like then liked it. Can we talk to Yolo farmers about it?

01:04:31 Joseph McIntyre: Sonoma Co Ag + Open Space:  
<https://www.sonomaopenspace.org>

01:07:46 Lucas Zucker: Fascinating history

01:11:10 Serena Unger:Sonoma Ag and Open space is doubling down on land access to farmers

01:13:47 Serena Unger:Undecided about the Resiliency District. for last SOAR, ag stakeholders tried to revise it and wasn't successful. Tools need to exist in VC, conservation easements and Williamson Act reassessment, TDRs, ...need resources in VC. TNC in only entity for production farmers.. Often doesn't happen because market value isn't achieved. Gun shy of thought of running a campaign. But could be convinced....

01:15:00 Serena Unger:Open space district would have board of directors. Supervisors haven't been friendly to ag accept when they needed it for SOAR. How to control BoS on where they go with this?

01:15:52 Serena Unger:Community in Sonoma constantly wrangling with it.

01:16:47 Serena Unger:Shouldn't be about OS - SALC is about ag land preservation.

01:21:00 Serena Unger:What's most interesting...the potential for reordering of politics around this. Dynamic has been envi and ag on two different sides. Ag has fair critique about looking at open space. This puts \$ from the public to what they say they want. Public needs to

pay for what they want. Have the envi and ag community work together. Could be political breakthrough.

01:24:01 Serena Unger: Governance of it is really important. Who's holding the easements is aligned with ag. Envi stakeholders interfacing on runoff, water quality standards, etc. Zero impact groups navigating that in unchartered waters. So governance is not just façade for fallowing and habitat. Ecosystem services are opportunity but important to understand VC.

01:31:03 Philip McGrath: I'm for the idea of a strong land conservation funding program, just still not sure if the community would support it when SOAR is here for another 30 years. It's reassuring to hear John's coverage of the idea in 2004. I would only hope it would be the same today, but it is so expensive here today. Not sure if the community is ready for more taxes. In my farming career, I have been approached by 2 different offers from non profits for land conservation. Unfortunately, the values were too low.

01:36:05 Serena Unger: Ag education - Ensure that it's science based and covers all farming not just organic.

01:36:19 Serena Unger: Treasure our Farms program

01:38:54 Serena Unger: Cornerstone 4 do in conjunction with other cornerstones. UCCE to be convener for efforts...education programs. All skills are aging out, not just farmers. PR piece. Can be done in an economically efficient way.

01:39:28 Serena Unger: Cornerstone 2, have labels like VC Grown. For public to recognize the value and connect.

01:42:11 Philip McGrath: I have given thousands of tours to all ages and adults from around the world. The interest in Ag Education in VC is unbelievable. We are 55 north of LA. The research institutions, whether organic or conventional, we have here is the best. This concept is very important!

## Appendix I. Education and Awareness Working Group Contact List

Education and Awareness Advisory Group			
Name	Name Last	Affiliation	Email
Ruben	Alarcon	Cal State Channel Islands agriculture program,	ruben.alarcon@csuci.edu
Patricia	Duffy	Workforce Development Board of Ventura County	patricia.duffy@ventura.org
Dorothy	Farias	Ventura College agriculture program	dfarias@vcccd.edu
Matthew	Fienup	Center for Economic Research and Forecasting California Lutheran University	Mfienup@callutheran.edu
Alex	Flores	Santa Paula Unified School District	aflores@santapaulaunified.org
Anna	Jackson	Ventura County Farm to School Collaborative	anna.jackson@vcfarmtoschool.org
Laurie	Lary	Ventura County Office of Education	LLary@vcoe.org
Mary	Maranville	Students for Eco Education and Agriculture (SEEAG)	mary@seeag.org
Phil	McGrath	McGrath Family Farms	phil4mcgrathfarm@gmail.com
Kat	Merrick	Totally Local VC	totallylocalvc@gmail.com
Sue	Poland	California Women in Agriculture (CWA)	suepoland@sbcglobal.net
Annemiek	Schilder	UC Cooperative Extension/Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center	amschilder@ucanr.edu
Monica	White	Food Share	MWhite@foodshare.com

## Appendix J: Education and Awareness Meeting Notes

### VC SACP Strategy

#### Ag Education and Awareness Strategy meeting

#### Meeting # 4: Sept 8, 4 pm - 5 pm

**Participants:** Annemiek Schilder, Dorothy Farias, Laurie Lary, Patricia Duffy, Ruben Alarcon

#### Meeting purpose

Review the draft Ag Education & Awareness Strategy for the Ventura County Sustainable Ag Conservation Plan, to refine the strategies for the formal agriculture education element.

#### Agenda

- Check in (5 mins)
- Overview of the draft Ag Education & Awareness Strategy (below) (5 mins)
- Discussion about the strategies for the formal agriculture education element (30 mins)
- Discussion about any models that might be useful to reference and briefly describe

---

#### VC SACP Strategy:

#### Ag Education and Awareness Report

Sept 8 draft

#### Section 1. Introduction

The conservation and economic viability of agriculture goes well beyond the purview of direct stakeholders, including farmers, ranchers, farm workers, landowners, processors, distributors, direct-market outlets, agricultural support businesses, funders, lenders, and community organizations focused on agricultural issues. A robust agricultural economy and permanent protection of agricultural resources requires public awareness, sense of connection and commitment to action.

This report is an integral element in the overall *Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Planning Strategy*. It documents existing agricultural education and awareness efforts in Ventura County, analyzes relevant best practices and models and outlines an *Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted and Agricultural Education and Awareness Strategy*. This report is intended to inform practitioners and stakeholders about the critical role of education and awareness in sustaining the County's agricultural resources, and to be a roadmap for action.

#### Section 2. Existing Agricultural Education and Awareness Efforts

Final versions In process: Program spreadsheet; Overview of programs;

#### Section 3. Precedents, Best Practices & Models

#### Section 4. Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted Education and Awareness Strategy

**EDUCATION AND AWARENESS STRATEGY** - *Crafting an Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted Education and Awareness Strategy that fosters co-stewardship of a vibrant agriculture sector as a foundation for community health, well-being and identity, as well as essential for climate change resilience and a diverse, equitable economy.*

## OBJECTIVES

1. Promote activities that help the general public feel benefited by, connected with, invested in and proud of the conservation, resilience and prosperity of Ventura County agriculture.
2. Through coordinated, formal and informal agricultural literacy and agricultural education programs at K-12 educational institutions and on farms, develop school childrens' foundational knowledge about agriculture in general and a deep understanding about Ventura County agriculture in particular.
3. Facilitate young people's exploration and pursuit of diverse careers related to a dynamic, vital, sustainable agriculture with an emphasis on career opportunities within Ventura County.
4. Create the operational structures and secure the resources necessary to provide a framework for coordinating, supporting and enhancing existing public education and awareness efforts.
5. Establish a stakeholder roundtable, similar in structure and purpose to the Ag Futures Alliance (which became inactive a decade ago), to help the community bridge the rural-urban divide by conducting periodic facilitated workshops to surface, discuss and address issues and/or conflicts.

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The primary strategy for fulfilling the objectives above will be to create a new program, tentatively called the **Rural-Urban Connections (RUCs) Program**. The concept is for the program to be located within the UCCE Ventura County Office, but co-developed with other leading Ventura County agricultural education organizations for common benefit. The program is also intended to be a pilot for UCCE offices in other counties that have similar goals for coordinating, supporting and enhancing their public education and awareness efforts. Below is a high-level outline for this proposed program: structure, goals, activities, metrics of success and implementation plan.

### ***Rural-Urban Connections Program - Purpose/ Need Statement***

The purpose of this program is to foster coordination of existing entities and their activities, strengthen their collective impact and help increase needed financial resources for current and new initiatives. The hoped-for outcome is a political and cultural environment that supports public co-stewardship of a vibrant and resilient agriculture in the County. The risks of continuing business as usual include public apathy, misinformation or lack of information, and existing organizations competing for resources.

### **Rural-Urban Connections Program - Structure**

The general purpose of UCCE is to develop with UCANR: science-based information about agriculture, youth development, family and consumer sciences, and natural resources, and deliver that information to local audiences. UCCE operates at the intersection of and in partnership with farm and non-farm communities. It strives to create healthy communities, healthy food systems, a healthy environment, and healthy Californians.

The dynamic Ventura County UCCE Office is an ideal location to pilot the RUCS program. It currently has a staff of over 20 people and is growing. It will soon be hiring an Academic Coordinator in Science Communication as well as educators in areas such as food preservation and food waste reduction, workforce development, and climate resilience. It already also plays a connecting, convening and coordinating role and can be a liaison between UCCE programs and programs of other partners.

The RUCs program will be incorporated into the current UCCE structure.

- Program lead will report to the County Director
- Program lead will work closely with existing and emerging [UCCE staff](#), who will also engage with the RUCs program as part of their work plans.
- Program will be supported by the existing UCCE Advisory Board of leading agricultural education organizations
- Program will have guided by an Executive Committee of UCCE staff and a subcommittee of the Advisory Board

The RUCs program will also be innovative within the current UCCE structure.

- Activities that are beyond the capacity of RUCs program and UCCE staff, will be supported by contractors and project funding (e.g. development of grant proposals on behalf of multiple partners; development of wayside signage; conference organization consultant)

### **Rural-Urban Connections Program Strategy Goals**

**Goal 1.** Create the operational structures and secure the resources necessary to provide a collaborative framework for coordinating, supporting and enhancing existing public education and awareness efforts

**Goal 2.** Promote activities that help the general public feel benefited by, connected with, invested in and proud of the conservation, resilience and prosperity of Ventura County agriculture.

**Goal 3.** Support development of school childrens' foundational knowledge about agriculture in general and a deep understanding about Ventura County agriculture in particular

**Goal 4.** Facilitate young people's exploration and pursuit of diverse careers related to a dynamic, vital, sustainable agriculture with an emphasis on career opportunities within Ventura County

### **Rural-Urban Connections Program Strategy Goals with Objectives and Activities**

**Goal 1.** Create the operational structures and secure the resources necessary to provide a collaborative framework for coordinating, supporting and enhancing existing public education and awareness efforts

**Objective 1.1.** UCCE staff and the UCCE Advisory Board, with input from additional stakeholders, will develop a three-year plan for the RUCs program collaborative framework, including identification of activities, a budget, funding sources, and any additional needed operational structures (such as subcommittees)

Activities:

- With UCCE as the backbone organization, the RUCs program manager will identify partner organizations and engage with this network to establish the key elements of a collective impact model for: with a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities and continuous communication

- In collaboration with the partner network, develop and promote a portal with a searchable database of organizations and events, job board, resources, etc.
- Establish metrics of for all objectives below

**Goal 2.** Promote activities that help the general public feel benefited by, connected with, invested in and proud of the conservation, resilience and prosperity of Ventura County agriculture.

**Objective 2.1.** UCCE staff and the UCCE Advisory Board will establish a Stakeholder Roundtable, similar in structure and purpose to the Ag Futures Alliance to help the community bridge the rural-urban divide by conducting periodic facilitated workshops to surface, discuss and address issues and/or conflicts

Activities:

- RUCs program manager will organize this Roundtable and facilitate regular meetings

**Objective 2.1.** UCCE and stakeholders will identify a process for developing and disseminating collective messaging

Activities:

- Could potentially be supported by dedicated project funding and contractors
- Could include ag awareness campaigns with messaging around specific timely issues
- Could include creation of wayside signage program (including digital)
- Co-stewardship could be key theme

**Goal 3.** Support development of school childrens' foundational knowledge about agriculture in general and a deep understanding about Ventura County agriculture in particular

**Objective 3.1.** Help coordinate and enhance formal and informal agricultural literacy and agricultural education programs at K-12 educational institutions and on farms

Activities:

- Conduct a bi-annual survey of formal and informal programs, including tracking perceived program gaps
- Develop a plan for addressing programs gaps
- Disseminate the survey results and a plan for addressing programs gaps
- Develop, facilitate and help fund a network of ag educators; including identifying a key points of contact, especially in the high schools
- Organize an annual ag education conference
- Track and enhance connections between K-12 and colleges
- Organize training sessions for teachers and counselors
- Facilitate coordination with non-profit organizations, such as SEEAG, and collaboration with formal education programs
- Track and help support school garden demonstration sites
- Develop and foster arts programs and activities that are related to agriculture activities, landscapes and traditions

**Goal 4.** Facilitate young people's exploration and pursuit of diverse careers related to a dynamic, vital, sustainable agriculture with an emphasis on career opportunities within Ventura County

**Objective 4.1** Develop more high school classes offered by Community Colleges in coordination with new Internships and practical job training opportunities

**Objective 4.2** Develop new work-based learning programs in partnership with employers

**Objective 4.3** Provide engaging information that prompts students to become informed about and explore these careers (could be modeled on the [www.100plusjobs.org](http://www.100plusjobs.org))

**Objective 4.4** Provide career training for ag workforce (at all levels) in the County

### Rural-Urban Connections Program - Metrics of Success

#### High level/initial

- Buy-in from, and ongoing engagement of, all existing ag education and awareness programs in the County
- Championed/supported by UCANR and other UCCE County Offices, as a pilot
- Development of a detailed strategic action plan
- Program funding to get started, including funds for some orgs participating in the Advisory Council

#### Ongoing

- More funding (and less competition for funding) for existing ag education and awareness programs
- School kids ag literacy levels, including knowledge of VC agriculture
- More students feeling positive about ag and ag careers
- Buy in from the school district administrators and from the Ventura County Office of Education around farm-to-school programs
- Levels of public engagement and public knowledge, including expansion of audiences
- Ag education students remaining in the County for their education and returning for careers
- Enrollment numbers in programs and courses; number of students moving from HS to a CC to a 4-year ag program; matriculation data
- Ag-related jobs/careers: types, numbers, and salaries
- Numbers of people pursuing ag-related careers
- Career ladder pathways both from field level jobs and from school education programs: types and numbers
- Labor data (e.g. over and under employment in various ag sector jobs; wage data, etc.)

### Rural-Urban Connections Program - Implementation plan [to be developed]

- High-level, 3-year strategic action plan outline
- High-level 3-year budget including potential revenue sources.

### Notes

- SK:
  - There will be a number of elements to the final product
  - What we have here will be woven into the broader report

#### - Section 4:

- Sk: We need an anchor institution/key actor
  - Rural urban connections program
  - Primary goal is to strengthen collective impact
- Best format to expedite feedback

- LL: Start with a google doc so we can take some time to look at it and then circle back
- What model would be best for collaboration between all involved institutions?
- LL: CATA (Cal ag and teachers association) has representatives around the state
- DF: Cal Ag in the Classroom, FFA: for students
  - CATA creates a bridge to community colleges
- LL: does this structure support diverging groups or specific groups?
  - SK: roundtable looks at most difficult issues and some could be translated through public education or school piece
    - Could underlie a campaign for a countywide action
    - Should be used to look at challenges and create a dynamic forum with diverse stakeholders
  - LL: Rural Urban Connection could make sense to people at a high level but it might not make sense to other people (ex: in a school setting)
    - AK: We should come up with another name
- PD: Contact Talia for resources for farmers
- LL: Can we share the concept?
  - SK: Concept can be shared but not this document

**VC SACP Strategy**  
**Ag Education and Awareness Strategy meeting**  
**Meeting # 3B: July 20, 1 pm - 1:45 pm**

**Participants: Annemiek, Amie, Sibella**

- Farm to fork event tomorrow for VC housing
- Developing political and social climate needed for the continuation of ag

Context:

- UCCE hiring other coordinators: food waste, youth, climate, science educator
- Does makes sense
- UCCE lives at the intersection of farm and non-farm communities; seems like an extension of UCANR mission
- UCCE and FB were born at the same time and raised in the same cradle
- Lessons learned: we did not identify the owner of this work

UCCE

- Could be a program of UCCE
- UCCE as a connecting and coordinating role
- Both institutional and public
- Can you get funding and work together on grants
- Develop a dream program, very fleshed out and thought through
- What are the goals that support the overall program
- Pulling from the Ag Futures Alliance round table; in its heyday played a really important role; this is the advisory group for this program; **PLAY THE FACILITATION ROLE FOR THAT PROCESS; why did it stop?**
  - Representative and invite only
  - Lots credible ag representation
  - Been done successfully before (Use as a model)
  - **JOHN WILL PUT TOGETHER SOME LANGUAGE AROUND THIS**
- Need to communicate what the focus is; and what is not the focus; needs to be grounded in ag landscape

**VC SACP Strategy**  
**Ag Education and Awareness Strategy meeting**  
**Meeting # 3A: July 12, 1 pm - 1:45 pm**

**Participants: Annemiek, Amie, John Krist, Sibella**

Overview

- Document existing efforts
- Identify models
- Develop a strategy

Purpose of meeting:

- Refine strategy format so we can best identify models and develop the strategy
- Have some good lessons learned: needs an owner of strategies; this strategy needs a home

Ideas:

- UCCE can do education; can not do advocacy
- Science educator academic coordinator and/or community educational specialist
  - Many educators: master food preserver, farm worker issues, going to the public and farmers, farm advisors have their own groups; we are pretty well connected
  - Position could support partners
  - Leveraging existing and adding new partners
  - Already are some examples of coordinating roles
- Can UCCE be the glue?
- Also needs to be funds for the partners
- We have the county general plan 2040 (there is some funding for this); have the Thelma Hansen fund;
- could fund a pilot idea for a position and partnership support
- Options for long-term funding for resiliency.
- Also a survey for whether folks are connected
- Building off of SOAR and the concept of valuing ag
  - Need to be able to invest in a new ag

Ag Summit in October

Action items:

- UCCE sits with this
- Thinks about what this **program/position** might look like: mission, goals, activities
- SK will start with input from UCCE vision and org chart
- Others need to feed invested and be set to attract investments and lead proposals
- To meet next week:
- Follow up email:

- Thanks so much for your time and ideas on our call this afternoon. Annemiek - it is great news that you think it is worthwhile to explore the idea of a program/position at UCCE that focuses on urban-rural connectivity. As next steps Annemiek will send me the UCCE County vision and org chart and I will draft a high level draft outline for the goals and activities of this program/position.

Next week, we three will plan to meet and will also invite John Krist to join us, in a meeting to refine this outline so we can then present it to the broader Advisory Group for their input, sometime in the next month.

## Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Planning Strategy Ag Education and Awareness Strategy Advisory Group Meeting # 3: June 7, 2 pm - 3 pm

**Ag Education and Awareness Strategy Advisory Group:** [Ruben Alarcon](#), Cal State Channel Islands agriculture program; [Dorothy Farias](#), Ventura College Agriculture program; [Alex Flores](#), Agriculture Teacher/FFA Advisor/Academy Coordinator at Santa Paula High School; [Anna Jackson](#), Ventura County Farm to School Collaborative; [John Krist](#), local outreach lead for the Ventura County Sustainable Ag Conservation Strategy; [Mary Maranville](#), Students for Eco Education and Agriculture (SEEAG); [David Maron](#), [Ventura County Civic Alliance](#), Vice Chair and State of the Region Committee Chair; Maron Computer Services; [Kat Merrick](#), Totally Local VC; [Annemiek Schilder](#), UC Cooperative Extension

Participants in the June 7 meeting: Dorothy, Anna, John, David, Annemiek; Laurie Lary, VC Office of Education; Patricia Duffy, VC Workforce Development Board (both Laurie and Patricia will join the advisory group)

(could not make the meeting: Holly Nolan-Chavez, CCC Regional Director, Agriculture, Water, & Environmental Technology; Debra West, Project Coordinator for VC STEM Network)

**Purpose of the Meeting:** to review framing, ideas, needs and opportunities for the Ag Education/Institutions element in particular. The other element is general public: marketing, connecting, branding.

### AGENDA

1. Brief introductions
2. Background resources:
  - a. [Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Planning Strategy Overview](#)
  - b. Ag Education & Awareness Strategy element: [Overview and current status](#)
  - c. [Revised List of initiatives and organizations](#)
3. Discuss and amplify on, the Ag Education element (see summary notes from Apr 22 meeting, page 4 below)
  - a. Goals
  - b. Needs and gaps
  - c. Ideas to fill gaps
  - d. Potential models and best practices

### ACTION ITEMS (from June 7 meeting)

- Create a survey to identify existing K-12 (- 16) school and informal programs that directly focus on, or indirectly address, the many elements of agricultural education. Annemiek will create a first draft for review, with the aim of finalizing it by the end of June.
- Laurie will take a lead in distributing the survey to VCOE curriculum administrators

- Survey results will inform an ag education summit being planned for fall 2022, and the ag education strategy being developed for this grant

## Apr 22, 2022 Mtg # 2 Summary Notes - Ag Ed & Awareness Strategy Adv Comm Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Planning Strategy

**Participants:** Ruben Alarcon, Cal State Channel Islands agriculture program; Dorothy Farias, Ventura College Agriculture program; Alex Flores, Agriculture Teacher/FFA Advisor/Academy Coordinator at Santa Paula High School; Anna Jackson, Ventura County Farm to School Collaborative; John Krist, local outreach lead for the Ventura County Sustainable Ag Conservation Strategy; Mary Maranville, Students for Eco Education and Agriculture (SEEAG); David Maron, Ventura County Civic Alliance, Vice Chair and State of the Region Committee Chair; Maron Computer Services; Kat Merrick, Totally Local VC; Annemiek Schilder, UC Cooperative Extension/Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center, [amschilder@ucanr.edu](mailto:amschilder@ucanr.edu)

### AGENDA, April 22, 2022

1. Brief introductions ([bios](#) if any are needed)
2. [Overview of where we are in the process](#) (PPT)
3. [Revised List of initiatives and organizations](#)
4. Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted Education and Awareness Strategy - Summary of brainstorm from March 2 meeting
5. Discuss goals needs, opportunities and models for the Marketing/Connecting/ Branding track and the K - 14 (16) Agricultural Education and Literacy track

### NEXT STEPS

- Organize a meeting around [Ag Education](#) to refine goals and needs and to discuss shorter term actions, potential models and longer-term strategies. Invite Adv, Group and also: Laurie Lary-Arnold (VCOE), Executive Director, Career Education, Ventura County Office of Education; Holly Nolan-Chavez, CA Community Colleges, **Regional Director**, Agriculture, Water, & Environmental Technology; Anthony Marenco, K12 Strong Workforce Program (SWP) Pathway Coordinator; Patricia Duffy, Workforce Development Board, Ventura County
- For [General public: awareness, marketing, connecting, branding](#), SAGE will draft an outline of models and best practices that might be helpful.

### SUMMARY NOTES, April 22, 2022 Meeting

#### Categories of efforts to consider for models research and final strategy:

1. Educational institutions:
  - a. K-8 ag literacy
  - b. High School through college ag education and ag career pathways
2. General public: awareness, marketing, connecting, branding

**Educational Institutions:** Specific needs and gaps around K-8 ag literacy; High School through college ag education and ag career pathways

### Goals

- Keep the ag workforce (at all levels) in the County
- Create collective messaging across the board
- Measures of success: enrollment numbers in programs and courses; number of students moving from HS to a CC to a 4-year ag program; matriculation data; labor data to some extent (over and under employment in various ag sector jobs; wage data, etc.)
- Creation of a framework: work we are doing is valuable; need to better connect the puzzle pieces

### Needs and gaps

- Need to get buy in from the school district administrators and from the Ventura County Office of Education
- Need more secure sources of funding
- Better messaging on good careers in ag that pay a good wage; focus on the other bits of ag (e.g. ag tech)
- Important to show where garden work connects with standards based curriculum
- Channel island and higher level institutions are not connected to high school, middle, elementary schools
- There is not a four-year college ag program in the County for interested HS students to feed into
- Kids who are interested in ag leave the country and don't come back
- Need to get all educators together
- Information gaps about what is going on currently; who is doing what
- Need to show that the CTE can do a transfer track; can supplement with certificates
- Students think that courses at Ventura College are not the same as a Cal State even though they are
- Public apathy is a risk factor
- VC farm to school operates in just a couple of cities; we are mostly in Oxnard (hi-need); we would like to expand to more districts (1000 Oaks, Simi Valley, etc);

### Ideas to fill gaps

- Upcoming farm to school grant; could include career ed; this is a touchy subject; needs support across the board; track for regional partnership; want to establish a food hub - partnership with Phil McGrath
- Needs more support and buy in from Cty leadership; Maybe map the programs and the teachers: ag literacy (K-6/12), ag career pathways (Gr 7 - 12); and identify opportunities for partnerships and collaborations
- Make a network of ag educators to build connections between K-12 and colleges (maybe keep ag workforce in VC); once this is established -

- talk to all of the ag educators from the highschoools or just have one as a point of contact
- we could have training sessions for teachers and counselors;
- have an annual ag summit
- Talk with Laurie Lary (ne Arnold) (head of VC office of education) about workforce grants because she oversees their execution. (She is also a VC college advisory board member.)
- Build an interactive website about this as a dynamic resource

#### Potential models and best practices

- Look at innovative programs in other counties

#### **General public: awareness building, marketing, connecting, branding**

##### Goals

- Create collective messaging across the board
- Coordination and promotion of activities across the board
- Create a supportive political and cultural environment
- Measures of success: more funding (and less competition for funding); buy-in from all participants in the county
- Create a framework for action

##### Needs and gaps

- Public apathy is a risk factor
- Need to push info from this project into schools but also reach different audiences
- Residents need to be better educated (e.g. to understand pesticide use)

##### Ideas to fill gaps

- Create a master calendar of activities
- A general awareness campaign for the av resident; trying to get residents to support officials

#### Potential models and best practices

- What is going on in Sonoma Cty - remarkable land conservation program
  - Parallel county to VC
- Look at Santa Clara's ag education and awareness program
- Look into collective impact models

**Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Planning Strategy  
Ag Education and Awareness Strategy  
Advisory Group  
Meeting # 1: March 2, 11 am - noon**

**Participants:** Ruben Alarcon, Cal State Channel Islands agriculture program; Dorothy Farias. Ventura College agriculture program; Alex Flores, Santa Paula Unified School District; Anna Jackson, Ventura County Farm to School Collaborative; Mary Maranville, Students for Eco Education and Agriculture (SEEAG); Kat Merrick, Totally Local VC; Annemiek Schilder, UC Cooperative Extension

**AGENDA**

1. Brief introductions ([bios](#) if any are needed) (5 mins)
2. Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Planning Strategy context (5 mins)
3. [Ag Education and Awareness Strategy scope](#) and timeline (10 mins)
  - a. Q & A
4. [Initial list of initiatives and organizations](#) (20 mins)
  - a. What/who is missing?
  - b. What is extraneous?
  - c. Best way to organize?
  - d. Most helpful form of analysis?
5. Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted Education and Awareness Strategy (10)
  - a. Potential goals
  - b. Potential elements
6. Models and best practices to research (based on brainstorm about the implementation plan) (10 mins)
  - a. Discussion and recommendations
7. Next steps
  - a. [Anecdotal and other information to complement Ventura economics research](#) (request for comment by March 15)
  - b. Comment on preliminary research for models and best practices to be completed by March 25. Zoom meeting or response via email? in late March/early April
  - c. Other?

**NOTES**

### Notes summarized in Follow-up email:

It was a pleasure to meet with you yesterday - several of you for the first time - to discuss the Ag Education and Awareness component of the Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Planning Strategy. Thanks for all your resourcefulness.

To follow up:

- Thanks for your suggestions of groups/folks to add to this Advisory Group: VC chefs association; FFA - Alex Flores; CWA - local contact(?): Ag in the Classroom - local contact (?). Monica White, FoodShare. Please send contact information for these folks - and for others - and I will reach out to them.
- Here is the updated list of [Ag Educ & Awareness orgs & initiatives](#). Please continue to add suggestions and information. I added a category - On-farm Ag Education and Events - and added a few listings.
- In our brief brainstorm about goals for and elements of the Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted Education and Awareness Strategy, to be developed over the coming months, I heard your main interests so far as being:
  - A cohesive marketing outreach (bi-lingual) campaign
  - Connecting what we are doing in different districts and areas to better coordinate and expand our work
  - Need to better integrate K-6, middle school (especially), high school ag literacy with higher education programs and ag industry
  - a dynamic, interactive listing of initiatives, orgs and resources
  - Meeting planned with all of the orgs in higher ed for ag and high schools; look at gaps etc.; for career pathways

I will reach out again in a few weeks to share the draft report of existing Ag Education and Awareness and to propose a list of a few models from other regions, for your comments and additions.

### UPDATE IN RESPONSES TO THAT EMAIL

#### **Fr John**

Alex Flores: [aflores@santapaulaunified.org](mailto:aflores@santapaulaunified.org)

Monica White: [MWhite@foodshare.com](mailto:MWhite@foodshare.com)

#### **Fr Kat**

It was very nice to cyber meet you. Here is the contact for Alex Flores <[aflores@santapaulaunified.org](mailto:aflores@santapaulaunified.org)>, CWA- Sue Poland <[suepoland@sbcglobal.net](mailto:suepoland@sbcglobal.net)>, Food Share- Monica White <[MWhite@foodshare.com](mailto:MWhite@foodshare.com)>. I have reached out to the chiefs Association to see who the current contact is for the association. Once I get the contact I will forward it to you.

I also wanted to provide the info on my organization and our events. I apologize if it's too much info but wanted to make sure you had a picture of what we do.

#### Totally Local VC Agricultural Education Foundation

Totally Local VC is a collaborative initiative focused on promoting the importance and success of our local agriculture. We are dedicated to educating our youth and community members on the important role agriculture and Ag related businesses play in the success of not only our county but the world and the many links each of us has to agriculture.

#### Ag Related Events created and hosted by Totally Local VC

Ventura County Ag Week - We are in our 5th year

Totally Local VC's Farm to Fork Dinner Series - 2-3 dinners hosted a year - for the past 14 years

Totally Local VC's Taste of Local - Highlighting Farmers, Ag related businesses, chefs and purveyors - for 4 years

Student Farm/Culinary Tours - hosted 16 years

Ag in a Bag (new this year)

Note: Our outreach program - The Local Love Project worked directly with chefs, Ag related businesses and Farmers to help during the Thomas Fire (and recovery) as well as the past two years doing COVID relief.

Here are the numbers for the past two years on our locally produced and donated produce for our food boxes. I will pull together some of the poundage numbers as well.

#### Bulk Pick Ups

Working with 21 food banks/outreach distribution organizations.

Providing bulk pick up of produce items weekly

Serving 3,200 Households Weekly

#### Direct Delivery

Working in partnership with 21 organizations delivering food/produce boxes and home essential bags to homebound individuals i.e Disabled, elderly, quarantined health risk - Total of households 955 Weekly

Boxes of produce/food and bags 955

#### Farm workers

We have partnered with organizations - providing food boxes as well as home essential items.

These bags also contain census information, Covid-19 safety tips, the list of all current food banks and outreach as well as info on 211. Informational items providing are bilingual

Working in partnership with direct delivery partners we are providing produce/food boxes being delivered directly to the fields.

Farm worker food distribution total: 1,550 boxes weekly

Distribution to Schools

[This is Bulk Pick up](#)

We are now delivering produce directly to several of the schools in the county. Two schools are currently doing pick ups of produce items.

- Santa Paula
- Oxnard
- Ventura

Produce is boxes by the schools and distributed to families in the school lunch program.

Total School program household estimated at over - 2,600 weekly

Local Love Pop Up Distribution and partnering Pop Up Distribution

Pre-Packed Bags and Boxes Produce and Home Essential Items For Distribution By Local Love

- 4 Pop Ups once weekly
- 5 partnering food distribution Pop ups

Total number households served weekly 1,000

Total number households served -

- 9,305 one week period
- 37,220 one month period

Produce provided to World Central Kitchen for Medical **Staff Meals**

**· Serviced to date - 19 Chefs Restaurants**

How is community and connectivity impacting production and land use? Where are the conflict points? The synergy points?

How is the community interacting with ag production and land use, and broader food systems issues? What are the needs around ag education and awareness? What is working well?

## NOTES

### INTRO

1. Project is to address issues around unprecedented challenges because of SGMA etc
2. Risks, opportunities, etc.
3. Key part is bringing in the importance of ag

[Initial list of initiatives and organizations](#) (20 mins)

What/who is missing?

- VC chefs association. (Kat)
- Also share the lists of stakeholders (to get feedback)
- FFA - Alex Flores (Kat,
- CWA (CA

- AG in the Classroom VC (Kat)

What is extraneous?

Best way to organize?

Most helpful form of analysis?

#### School Food Education

- Totally VC
- Farm to school (teachers on special assignment; see Rio school district, like a 10 acres farm)
- Add revenues to schools
- COVID - disaster relief (KAT) for farmers and farm workers; yes quantify this; very important for resilience, especially since hospitality was closed down, also major education (KAT)

#### Community Applied Ag Research and TA

- RCD (Ventura County office)
- NRCS (Ventura County office)
- UCCE (Ventura County office)
- Center for regen ag - Community research - Ojai

#### Food Security

- Get information about what was shared
- UCCE collected food from farms
- All the food banks (Get from food Forward - ask Kat)
- Monica White is a partners - Foodshare ED
- Also group doing food access for Oxnard
- Ventura College - food pantry for students - also partners with CalFresh
- CAL State Channel islands also has a pantry for students
- Feed the front line (does weekly food)
- VC Farm Workers Foundation distributes food to farm worker
- Farm worker resource program (program within Ventura County municipality)

#### Farmers and Growers

- John - providing of growers of ag tourism
- VC has a marketplace that has become a hub to access lower priced food

#### Events

- Oxnard Insect festival - City of Oxnard
- Strawberry Festival - City Ox
- Salsa event - Ox
- Taste of local - TCv

- Chairs for charity - tCV
- Farm workers event field to fork
- Ojai wine festival

Categories that are missing

- Community education (eg ag-related series)
- 

Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted Education and Awareness Strategy (10)

- a. Potential goals
- b. Potential elements

A cohesive marketing outreach (bi-lingual) campaign (Kat)

Connecting what we are doing in different districts; goal is to expand our work

Need to connect what we are doing with our higher education programs and ag industry

A resource list of who we all are (we would like to have something like that our our site)

Meeting planned with all of the orgs in higher ed for ag and high schools; look at gaps etc.; for career pathways;

Educate from field to fork and field to career

Connecting higher education w highschool and middle school; also highschool farms and district for creation of research;

List of resources: curriculums

Take HS students; put them in a bus and take kids to farms; and involved colleges

Ag in the classroom comes in and needs to be more wide-spread

VCC does dual enrollment with high schools

There is a break at middle schools

Goals:

AgMuseum - ag in a bag