



Agricultural Education and Awareness Strategy Report

for the

Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Strategy Plan

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Introduction

The conservation of farmland 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 require public awareness, sense of connection and commitment to action.

As an element in the ***Securing Ventura County's Agricultural Future: A Strategic Plan for Community Resilience***, this report 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*. The 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.

Existing Agricultural Education and Awareness Efforts

Introduction

This section of the report describes existing agricultural education and awareness efforts – including organizations, initiatives, and programs - in terms of their types, extent, and impact. It is organized in seven main sections:

1. K-12 Food & Agriculture Education
2. Agriculture & Food Education in Community Colleges & Universities
3. Agricultural Research
4. Community Events, Education & Awareness
5. On-farm Education & Events
6. Food Security & Local Agriculture Awareness
7. Farmers' Markets & Local Agriculture Awareness

Each section highlights some of the leading organizations and initiatives. A more comprehensive listing of agricultural education and awareness organizations and initiatives is in Appendix B. The information in this section and in the full listing comes from secondary research, primarily websites, of the organizations and initiatives mentioned.

In 2012, Ventura County and the University of California Cooperative Extension conducted a survey of 40 programs and organizations that provide education to youth, adults, and community in the areas of agricultural literacy, nutrition, environmental, natural resources, and gardening in the County (Appendix A is a summary of the survey findings). While they found “evidence of agriculture education in the region”, they concluded that many efforts operated in isolation and recommended a network of educators or subcommittee to focus on communication, connecting stakeholders with available resources, and engaging underserved groups.

The UC Cooperative Extension and the Ventura County Office of Education are in the process of organizing a follow up survey for fall 2022. Once results are available, this analysis of existing agricultural education programs can be updated.

1. K-12 Food & Agriculture Education

Numerous organizations in Ventura County focus on educating K-12 students about agriculture and food systems. Some of the largest efforts are projects of Students for Eco-Education and Agriculture (SEEAG), Ventura County Farm to School, and the Oxnard Union High School District's Farm to School Program. All offer a variety of programs connecting youth to local food production, while indirectly also educating the community at large.

SEEAG is a nonprofit organization working to educate students and the greater community about the connection between farms, food, and nutrition. The organization takes K-12 students on farm visits to Petty Ranch where they participate in hands-on agriculture education activities. SEEAG also hosts events for the public, as described in Section 4 below.

Ventura County Farm to School (VCF2S) has a similar mission of connecting students, farmers, and food. The nonprofit helps to procure local and nutritious food for school meals. The farm to school program focuses specifically on healthy food procurement and agricultural education across Ventura County School districts. Examples of activities include cooking classes, nutrition education, and local food sourcing. Harvest of the month is VCF2S's primary nutrition education program in which a different locally grown piece of product is distributed to students across participating schools. Community events are also held to engage a broader audience.

Oxnard Union High School District Farm to School Program was founded by the Edible Schoolyard Project. The student-created programs include garden classrooms, kitchen classrooms, school cafeterias, and academic classroom initiatives for high school students. The goal of the program is to provide fresh, healthy, and local produce to high schoolers. Other K-12 educational programs include Food for Thought Ojai and Ag in the Classroom.

The impact of these K-12 programs for students, includes increased understanding about agriculture and food systems, basic knowledge about growing and cooking food, connections with local farms, and access to nutritious, locally grown produce in school cafeterias. SEEAG has impacted over 80,000 students since 2008, which is an average of over 1,000 students a month. VCF2S reaches over 50% of children in Ventura County throughout seven school districts using produce from ten local growers. Their Harvest of the Month program serves 10,000 students monthly. Oxnard Union High School District Farm to School Program serves 17,000 students in Oxnard and Camarillo within eight schools. The program has established eight school gardens, which have produced thousands of pounds of food annually for school cafeterias, and, before COVID, organized local farm fields trips for 200-500 students each year.

2. Agriculture & Food Education in Community Colleges & Universities

There are many opportunities - from Associate Degrees and transfer programs at the community college level to bachelor's degrees from 4-year universities and training programs at extension offices - for students to start a career path in agriculture or natural resources without having to leave Ventura County.

Of the five colleges and universities in the County, Ventura College has the most programs focused specifically on agriculture and food systems. It offers AA degrees in seven subject areas: Agriculture, Agriculture Business, Agriculture Field Supervisor, Agriculture Plant Science, Environmental Science, Food Safety, and Water Science. Each of these associate degrees can be used to transfer to a four-year college to attain a BA or BS in an agricultural field.

Oxnard College and Moorpark College are two other community colleges offering Environmental Science associate degrees. Cal State Channel Islands and California Lutheran University are four-year institutions offering environmental science degrees.

In addition to academic programs, training programs provide additional opportunities for adults to learn about science-based gardening and horticulture. For example, Ventura County UC Cooperative Extension offers a master gardener program.

3. Agricultural Research

In Ventura County, multiple organizations conduct applied and community agricultural research to provide knowledge to growers and support their sustainable and regenerative agriculture practices.

The Ventura County Resource Conservation District (VC RCD) is one of around 100 RCDs in California and is part of the California RCD Association. RCDs assist landowners in managing their natural resources sustainably and also support local conservation efforts more broadly. The VC RCD provides farmers and ranchers technical and financial assistance around healthy soils, fire prevention, pollinator habitats, irrigation efficiency and stormwater management. VCRCDD also conducts research to improve sustainability in agriculture and resource management.

The Center for Regenerative Agriculture (CRA) promotes organic agriculture that increases carbon content and soil health. The CRA aims to limit synthetic pesticide release and pollution as well as the degradation of arable lands. Projects provide education about sustainable growing strategies, permaculture design, native habitat creation and regeneration, tree planting and maintenance, community and urban forestry and organic certification. The CRA serves students, homeowners, ranchers, and farmers through outreach, community educational programs, farm tours, and K-12 school programs. CRA also offers an internship, composting programs, and workshops on the Soil Food Web.

The Rodale Institute California Organic Center located on McGrath Family Farm in Camarillo was created to serve farmers in Ventura County by addressing challenges, conducting regionally significant research, and serving as a hub for education and extension. The Rodale Institute aims to reject the monoculture, low biodiversity model that is currently prominent in the region. Goals of the center include conducting regionally focused research trials regarding climate, soil, crops, pest, and weed management, to increase the number of organic farms and acreage in the region, to support farmers with training that improve yields, profitability, and soil health without synthetic chemicals, and to provide an educational and research hub for local agricultural stakeholders interested in organic methods.

Other organizations that support applied and community agricultural research in Ventura County include the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE).

4. Community Events, Education & Awareness

From the County Fair to wine tastings and locally driven farm tours, many initiatives invite both locals and visitors to connect with and learn about agriculture in Ventura County.

The Ventura County Fair is the largest agriculture-related event in the County. The 12-day long fair is held in the 63-acre Ventura Fairgrounds and features rides, games, food, an agricultural show, animals, and concerts. In 2019, there were 302,783 fair attendees, just a little below the 5-year average attendance of 311,583 people. In 2019, nearly 16,000 county residents entered Fair competitions and \$1.6 million were raised for youth at the Junior Livestock Auction. In the past ten years, over \$15.7 million has been raised from this Auction. The fair had 35 corporate sponsors and 14 media sponsors. In 2018, 67.7% of attendees were from Ventura County, with the majority of visitors coming from Los Angeles (14.1%) and Santa Barbara (7.1%) counties. Of those that visited from outside of the area, 28.9% reported staying at a hotel.

Ventura County Farm Day is another agriculture-focused community event with over 6,000 visitors annually. The free event is hosted by SEEAG and educates people about the connection between their food, local farms, and agriculture through farm and local food business tours. Typically, over 20 farms open their doors to the public for a [self-guided tour](#) and over 30 locations are featured.

Another community event focused on agriculture is the Ventura County Ag Week. This week-long celebration of local agriculture is produced by Totally Local VC, an organization dedicated to supporting local agriculture and businesses. The goal of Ag Week is to help educate and connect local students to agriculture and to honor local farmers and ranchers. The event showcases the economic importance that agriculture plays in the community, the diverse agricultural jobs available, and the steps involved from field to fork. The celebration consists of numerous events involving a diverse group of food and agriculture organizations and businesses. In 2020, events included the Excellence in Agriculture Awards Luncheon, Ventura Chef Association Tasting Event, Meet-the-Farmer-and-Rancher Mixer Night, Student Tours and Classroom Talks, Career Exploration Day, and History of Oxnard Farming: BBQ & Music. Proceeds from this event are directed towards the Totally Local VC Agricultural Education Foundation that funds culinary arts programs in local high schools and colleges.

Other community agricultural events include the Oxnard Insect Festival, California Strawberry Festival, Oxnard Salsa Festival, Taste of Local, Field to Fork, Ojai Wine Festival, Casa Pacifica Angels Wine, Food & Brew Festival, Farm to Fork Dinner Series, Ventura County Spring Wine Walk and Street Fair, Ventura County Winter Wine Walk, and House Farm Workers.

5. On-Farm Education & Events

Many farms in Ventura County host on-site events, contributing to the agritourism appeal of the county and offering a diversity of opportunities including on-farm training programs, farmstays, event space, volunteer positions, and specialized tours. This section describes a few of the many farms listed in Appendix B that host on-farm education programs and events.

McGrath Family Farms is a collaborative of small certified organic farms and farmers that grow healthy produce for surrounding communities. Participating farms include: Carranza Family Farm, a 10-acre operation growing organic seasonal fruits, salad greens, and flowers; Exit Central Farm, a four-acre operation managed by trained young farmers; and Baby Root Farm, a 20-acre farm and network of two dozen farmers. The McGrath collaborative offers a Regenerative Farm Experience Program on mission-based production agriculture, a Farm Manager Tour, Farm Owner Tour, and school tours on the farm.

Underwood Family Farms has two locations, Somis and Moorpark, which host popular pick-your-own days in season throughout the week and are home to animal centers and farm markets. Underwood Family Farms also host seasonal events such as Tomatomania, Fall Harvest, Springtime on the Farm, and Christmas Trees on the Farm in addition to a kids farm camp as well as educational farm tours. Additional offerings include a fresh produce pick-up and delivery service though produce from the farms is also available at local farmers markets. Events at Underwood Family Farms engage participating families in local agriculture through immersing them in life on the farm.

Oats and Ivy Farm is a small farm focusing mainly on goats and natural and organic farming practices. The farm is home to over 70 animals including Nigerian Dwarf dairy goats, chickens, ducks, turkeys, dogs, and cats. Oats and Ivy aims to be self-sufficient while benefiting the community. The farm plants rotational crops year-round to provide for farm residents, both animals and people. Permanent plants include guavas, passionfruit vines, and olives. The farm offers workshops and a farm stay that includes a tour and a full farm educational experience. Workshops are held on topics such as goat care, covering milking, kid rearing, bottle feeding, health and nutrition, and general maintenance.

6. Food Security & Local Agriculture Awareness

Multiple organizations promote food security in Ventura County by distributing food and fresh produce to people in need across various levels from nonprofits to community colleges to partnerships with local government

Food Forward is a nonprofit organization that brings fresh surplus food to those experiencing food insecurity across eight counties in Southern California and tribal lands in Arizona and New Mexico. Food forward impacts communities by creating a healthier environment, greater

economic resilience, and more equitable communities. Since 2009, Food Forward has redistributed over 228 million pounds of food.

Food Share Ventura County is another organization addressing food insecurity in the region and is part of the Feeding America Network. Food Share has three warehouses in Oxnard with a combined size of 46,000 square feet receiving about 36,000 pounds of food daily. Every year, nearly 19 million pounds of food are distributed providing 16 million meals to people in Ventura County through hunger programs and 190 pantry and agency partners. Food Share serves as Ventura County's regional food bank and provides for 140,000 food insecure people every month with the help of hundreds of volunteers. With every \$10 donation, the organization is able to provide 30 meals.

Ventura Community College also provides a food pantry for students to access food for free. The mission of the Food Pantry is to minimize students' stress from food insecurity in order to help them pursue their education as well as build awareness about food insecurity and reduce the negative stigma of visiting a food pantry. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ventura College Food Pantry has provided a drive thru food pantry and food bags for pick up in the basic needs office.

7. Farmers' Markets & Local Agriculture Awareness

Farmers' markets in Ventura County provide a venue for direct farmer-to-consumer sales, while also facilitating direct connections between community members and local farmers, which in turn increase public awareness about local producers, their products and agriculture issues more broadly. Nine Certified Farmers Markets (CFMs) operate across the County with many hosting events featuring music and beverage tastings. In accordance with state law for CFMs, all participating agricultural vendors raise, gather, grow, catch, or otherwise produce the products they sell and are certified by their county Agricultural Commissioner.

The Ventura County Certified Farmers Markets Association (VCCFMA) hosts four farmers' markets across the County: Downtown Ventura, Thousand Oaks, Midtown Ventura, and Santa Clarita. These markets offer produce, eggs, honey, meat, flowers, plants, and baked goods directly from local farmers, and also welcome prepared food vendors who bake, cook, or produce their items for sale. The Midtown Market on Wednesday's hosts 21 vendors, the Thousand Oaks Market on Thursday's hosts 31 vendors, the Downtown Ventura Market on Saturday hosts 35 vendors, and the Santa Clarita Market hosts 32 vendors. These markets welcomes SNAP and EBT customers, making locally produced goods accessible to a wider audience.

The Camarillo Certified Farmers Market is operated by volunteers and raises funding for the grief & bereavement programs at Livingston's Grief & Bereavement Center. Annually, about 400 family members are provided individual and family grief and bereavement counseling to

help them heal from losing a loved one. In 2018, over \$1 million was raised, equivalent to 7% of gross sales donated by farmers and 10% of gross sales by non-farmers, to support funding for the bereavement counseling programs. The Market hosts 24 agricultural vendors, 18 food vendors, 27 artisan vendors, and six musical groups.

The Downtown Oxnard Farmers Market is held every Thursday. A new program called Sweets this Week was established to engage and promote licensed home-based/Cottage Food Operators at the market. The Market is year-round and receives an average of 400 customers per week with peak attendance during the summer months at 700 customers per week. Annual sales are over \$350,000 and weekly sales are about \$7,000. Individual vendor sales range from \$80 -\$1,200 per market, depending on the product type and time of year. Current objectives of the market are to grow the customer base in Oxnard and Port Hueneme and increase baked goods offerings.

Other farmers markets in Ventura County include the Channel Islands Harbor Farmers Market, the Ojai Certified Farmers Market, and the Santa Paula Certified Farmers Market.

Precedents, Best Practices, Models

Overview

The Precedents, Best Practices and Models section builds on the previous Existing Agricultural Education and Awareness Efforts section, by providing examples about how such efforts can be coordinated to be greater than the sum of their parts. It also serves to inform the following section which outlines goals, objectives, strategies, and actions for developing a *Multifaceted Education and Awareness Strategy*.

The section first describes the important precedent of the Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance and then describes the collective impact model as an approach to coordinate and enhance agricultural education and awareness efforts. The concluding part of this section describes examples of regional-scale models that include a focus on agricultural education and awareness in the context of advancing sustainable agriculture and food systems more broadly.

Precedent of the Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance

In 2005, the Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance — a coalition established by growers and other community members in 1999 to address some of the critical challenges facing farming in Ventura County — published a white paper calling for a new approach to bridging the rural-urban divide. Titled “A Community of Good Stewards: Building Sustainable Agriculture in Ventura County,” it proposed a new ethic of shared stewardship to ensure a future for local agriculture.

“Members of the Ag Futures Alliance believe the long-term sustainability of Ventura County agriculture depends on the willingness of all sectors of the community to behave in ways that reinforce the industry’s viability and to avoid behaving in ways that will harm it,” the paper states. “For farming to remain a healthy component of the local economy, culture and society, the industry is obliged to respect the ecological integrity of its resource base and to operate in harmony with the broader community. And just as farmers must act as good stewards of the land to remain viable, so are members of the community obliged to act as good stewards of the agricultural industry if they wish to enjoy the benefits it provides. These include local economic stability, the aesthetic values of a rich and diverse landscape, and a healthy and affordable food supply.”

In the 17 years since that paper was published, only halting progress has been made toward realizing its vision. One of the objectives of the Ventura County SALC Education and Awareness Strategy will be to propose mechanisms and programs to revitalize dialogue between urban and agricultural stakeholders, with the goal of developing a shared sense of community responsibility for ensuring the long-term viability of farming and ranching.

Collective Impact Model as a Best Practice

The concept of ‘shared stewardship’ discussed above, is aligned with the concept and model of collective impact, in that both highlight the importance of collaborative action around a common purpose. The collective impact model has been used - both in full and in part - to organize multi-partner county- and state-level efforts around strengthening agriculture sustainability.

Collective Impact (CI) is a theory of change developed on the concept of coordinating efforts across organizations around a clearly defined goal to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large scale. When multiple strategies and initiatives are operating, the work is centered on ensuring the initiatives are mutually reinforcing. Though individual organizations may work together with staff, boards, and volunteers to further a goal, collective impact begins when a region or community agrees to a set of shared goals and evaluates how each organization can shift and align their priorities to meet the shared goal.

The Collective Impact Model (known also as CIM) is also used as a tool to explicitly help frame and operationalize the coordination of efforts across organizations. The CIM has five pillars (or elements):

1. *Common agenda.* Partners coming together to collectively define a problem and create a shared vision to solve it.
2. *Shared measurement.* Tracking progress in the same way, allowing for continuous learning and accountability.
3. *Mutually reinforcing activities.* Integrating the participants’ many different activities to maximize the end result.
4. *Continuous communications.* Building trust and strengthening relationships.
5. *Strong backbone entity.* Responsible for convening, organizing, and helping resource the collective.

The models below are described in terms of the Collective Impact Model elements as well as other factors. Some of the models (e.g., Vermont Farm to Plate) were developed explicitly using the CIM. Others use elements of the approach. Following the models descriptions section, there is a brief section describing other projects that also offer some lessons learned and or examples of best practices around one of the five CIM pillars.

Given the multiplicity and diversity of Ventura County’s existing agricultural education and awareness efforts discussed in the previous section, the collective impact model could help inform the development of a coherent and multi-faceted strategy that coordinates and enhances many of the separate efforts.

Models of Regional-scale Agricultural Sustainability and/or Food Systems Initiatives

The following three models describe county and regional-scale comprehensive agricultural sustainability and/or food systems planning and implementation initiatives that include a focus on agricultural education and awareness.

Vermont Farm to Plate

Mission and Description. The Farm to Plate Network is responsible for collectively implementing the 15 Strategic Goals of Vermont's 2021-2030 food system plan, as well as advancing organizational goals of members. The Network is made up of farms, food production businesses, specialty food producers, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, funders, capital providers, and government personnel.

Function/structure as a coalition/backbone institution. Vermont Farm to Plate is a project of the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF), *funded by the Vermont State Legislature and its [Farm-to-Plate Investment Program](#)*, with additional project-based funding. Priority Strategy Teams (PSTs), Topic Exchanges, and Communities of Practice convene to work on high impact projects to relocalize the food system that no one organization can do alone, as well as assess gaps, opportunities, and trends and monitor progress towards reaching Vermont's Strategic Goals.

Common agenda. [Strategic plan](#). The 2021-2030 Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan contains a vision for Vermont's food system in 2030 with 15 strategic goals across four categories: Sustainable Economic Development, Environmental Sustainability, Healthy Local Food for all Vermonters, and Racial Equity. The contents of the Plan were shaped by farmers, food entrepreneurs and workers, government personnel and elected officials, nonprofit organizations, technical and business assistance providers, educators, researchers, capital providers, and Vermont food consumers.

Shared measurement. [Data outcomes](#). Each of the 15 statewide food system strategic goals contains a set of objectives, the measurable improvements that represent progress and can be tracked over time.

Mutually reinforcing activities. [2022 Vermont Community Leadership Summit](#)

Continuous communications. [Primary calendar of events](#) for all network members

Colorado Food Systems Coalition

Description and Mission. The Colorado Food Systems Coalition is a group of several organizations that work to strengthen healthy food access for all Coloradans while supporting Colorado agriculture, communities, and economies.

Function/structure as coalition/backbone institutions.

- [Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council \(COFSAC\)](#). A Governor-appointed Council that works to advance recommendations in support of the overall mission.
- [Colorado Food Policy Network](#). Composed of many local food coalitions that collectively work to promote healthy, community-based economically viable food systems in Colorado that ensure all residents have access to affordable, nutritious food.
- [Mapping and Reporting Tool](#). Administered by Colorado State University.

Common agenda. [Colorado Blueprint of Food and Agriculture](#) key assets, emerging issues, and shared priorities for future investments in food and agriculture around the state.

Shared measurement. [Colorado Food Systems Mapping & Reporting](#). Food systems data made available to all Coloradans to aid in new initiative development and planning. [Public attitude survey](#) tracks public understanding and perceptions around agriculture in the state.

Mutually reinforcing activities. [CO Food Summit](#) is a major annual convening

Continuous communications. The [Coalition website](#).

Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS)

Mission and Description. Launched in 2007, RUCS is a project of the [Sacramento Council of Governments](#) (SACOG). RUCS acts as the region's economic and sustainability strategy focused on rural areas, complementary to the [Blueprint](#), the region's overall growth strategy. The program works to enhance the viability of the rural economy and resilience of the vital natural resources that drive it through the application of cutting-edge analytical tools.

Function/structure as a coalition/backbone institution. [SACOG](#) is where local government leaders in the six county Sacramento region come together to advance the goals of economic prosperity, connected communities, and vibrant places. SACOG works with its 28 member cities and counties to solve challenges that are too big for any one jurisdiction to solve on its own. Funded through SACOG, RUCS looks at the region's growth and sustainability objectives from a rural perspective, recognizing the value of rural communities, forests, and agricultural lands as critical to the economy, environmental health, quality of life, and the region's future.

Common agenda. [Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan](#), [RUCS Overview](#).

Shared measurement. RUCS offers a platform for proactive rural planning, enabling stakeholders to forecast and prepare for possible futures, and incorporate that work with similar planning conducted for urban areas. RUCS tools allow policymakers to strategically plan for the future and ensure compliance with regulatory targets. Examples: [Farmland Analysis](#), [Local Food System Assessment for Yolo and Sacramento County Delta Communities](#), [Food System Multipliers](#); [Food and Agriculture Cluster and Workforce Needs Assessment](#).

Mutually reinforcing activities. [Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan](#)

Continuous communications. A series of initiatives and studies (e.g. [Agriculture & Habitat Working Landscapes Pilot Study](#)).

Other Best Practices and Models of Note

In addition to the models outlined above, there are many others which could also help inform the emerging Ventura County agricultural and awareness strategy. These include regional efforts such as [Food Solutions New England](#) and [Farm to Institution, New England \(FINE\)](#) and robust metro-region food policy councils, such as the [Toronto Food Policy Council](#).

Finally, below are some examples of a few other projects that also offer some lessons learned and/ or examples of best practices around one of the five CIM pillars.

Shared measurement. The [Bay Area Food Futures Roadmap](#) includes a ‘scorecard’ system to describe multiple parameters and establish baseline metrics across the sectors of the food supply chain.

Mutually reinforcing activities. The [Sonoma County Farm Trails](#) is an interactive map and resource guide that connects the public to Sonoma County farmers, ranchers, producers, and purveyors to ensure the economic viability of local agriculture and instill an appreciation of ag as a vital part of the Sonoma community. The website and resource, [100plusjobs](#), invites students and jobs seekers to explore jobs that feed people and sustain the planet and provides links to training programs.

Function/structure as coalition/backbone institutions. [Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Plan](#). This highly acclaimed plan set the standard for subsequent SALC planning grants, in terms of organization, process, presentation and follow up implementation. However, the one set of strategies that have lagged behind other Plan strategies in terms of implementation is the *Branding, Education and Awareness Strategy*. This focus area identified two key objectives for ensuring that the regions’ working lands are not only preserved but understood, identifiable, and valued: (1) Develop and launch a Santa Clara Valley agriculture campaign with regional brand identity and (2) Build a local constituency that is informed about and supportive of

regional agriculture through public outreach, engagement, and education. The lesson learned is that regardless of how timely and interconnected agriculture education strategies are, without a champion or responsible agency in charge of implementation, it can be a challenge to get such strategies off the ground.

Implementation Plan for a Multifaceted Education and Awareness Strategy

The high level implementation plan outlined below reflects input from stakeholders directly involved in agricultural education and awareness efforts in Ventura County. Many of these stakeholders are also partners or community workshops participants supporting the development of the broader Ventura County Sustainable Agriculture Conservation Strategy of which this work is a part.

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 local community feel benefited by, connected with, invested in and proud of the conservation, resilience, and prosperity of Ventura County's working lands.
2. Through coordinated, formal, and informal agricultural literacy and agricultural education programs at K-12 educational institutions and on farms, develop school children's' 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, preliminarily 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 catalyze co-stewardship of agriculture by fostering coordination of existing entities and their activities, strengthening their collective impact and helping to increase needed financial resources for current and new initiatives. The hoped-for outcome is a political and cultural environment that supports 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 and envisions the following:

- 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 be 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 children's' 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, such as the feasibility of developing Resiliency District
- Could include creation of wayside signage program (including digital)
- Co-stewardship could be key theme
- Agricultural branding

Goal 3. Support development of school children's' 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 point 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)

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 – Needed first steps towards an Implementation Plan

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

Appendix A - Summary of Results of 2012 Agriculture Education Survey

Summary of Results

2012 Ventura County Agriculture Education Survey conducted by Ventura County and UCCE

Ventura County is a top agricultural producer in the United States and plays an important role in national and global food security. Yet, agriculture on the ag-urban interface faces many challenges, including a largely urbanized population that needs to be invested in the continuation of agriculture, if it is to remain viable—Rose Hayden-Smith

Purpose:

- To document agriculture and agriculture related education programs currently offered in the County of Ventura that target youth and adult audiences and summarize data for the purpose of assessing impacts and identifying gaps.
- To provide a guide for future requests of Hansen funding in the area of Agriculture Education.
- To create a network for stakeholders providing education for exchange of ideas and collaboration.

Procedure:

The project was started in May 2012 by identifying and researching 40 programs and organizations throughout Ventura County that seek to educate youth, adults, and community in the areas of agricultural literacy, nutrition, environmental, natural resources, and gardening. The ANR Portal System was used to develop an online, email, and record survey responses. For the purpose of the survey, programs were asked to identify their target group based on the following eight age categories: Pre-K, K-3rd grade, 4th-5th grade, Middle School (6-8th grade), High School, College, Adults, and Families. To increase response rate, surveys were conducted by phone or personal interview, as needed. A Google Map of Ventura County was created to chart program throughout the county. Survey was concluded September 2012.

The occurrence of agricultural literacy, nutrition, environmental, natural resources, and gardening education is evident in Ventura County.

- 40 programs/organizations were researched
- 32 programs/organizations were surveyed and information included in survey
 - 78% responded to survey
 - 22% did not respond but included in survey. These programs/organizations are viable. Information obtained from their websites.

Summary of Results

Program/Organization distribution:

- City—3
- County—2
- School Districts—7
- Community College/University—5
- Non-Profit Organizations—10
- Agribusiness/tourism—4
- Other—1

Age Group Served:

75% report serving more than one age category.

Ranked highest to lowest

1. K-3rd grade
2. 4th-5th grade
3. Adult
4. High School
5. Middle School and Families
6. Pre-K
7. After School
8. College/University

Education Focus:

- 65.6% report offering education in more than one topic area (Ag literacy, Nutrition, Environmental, Gardening)
- 31.2% concentrate on one specific area
- 3.13% are not offering any education at the moment but the potential is so great that they were included in the survey (Ventura County Farmers Markets)

Science based curriculum—59% of the programs/organizations report using science-based curriculum.

Conclusion:

There is evidence of agriculture education throughout Ventura County. While many of these programs/organizations partner or support each other, many work in isolation. Creating a network of educators could enhance the good work that is already in place. Currently, AFA is in the process of creating an education subcommittee focused on improving communication and connecting stakeholders to resources available in the county and expanding education to age groups that are underserved.

Appendix B - Existing Agriculture and Education Awareness Efforts

Ventura County, Existing Agricultural Education and Awareness Efforts			
Name	Description	Key Activities	Impact
K-12 Food & Agriculture Education			
SEEAG	SEEAG educates students and the greater community about the farm origins of local food as well as the contribution of agriculture to nutritional well-being.	Farm Lab Academy, Ventura County Child Wellness Initiative, Santa Barbara County Child Wellness Initiative, STEAM Career Pathways in Agriculture, Farm Day	- 80,000 students and community members engaged since 2008 - Goal of reaching 2,500 students/year
Food for Thought (FFT)	FFT leads five inter-related programs: 1) nutrition education, 2) garden-based learning, 3) agricultural literacy through farm field trips, and 4) advocating for fresh, local, seasonal produce in all school meals. The fifth and newest component, the "5Rs" (reduce, reuse, recycle, rot and rethink!) focuses on minimizing the ecological footprint of the OUSD by minimizing landfill waste, reducing use of toxic chemicals, efforts to conserve energy and water and paper and other resources.	School Food, Nutrition Education, Garden-Based Learning, Green and Healthy Schools, Agricultural Literacy	- 10 farms contributing produce - 10,000 students engaged monthly across participating school districts
Ventura County Farm to School	Ventura County Farm to School supports schools in developing healthy, local food procurement practices, and implement agricultural, nutrition, whole food cooking, and garden and farm-based education. The organization creates a connection between students, the farmers who grow their food, and the food that they eat.	Program Development and Implementation, Training of Farm to School Champions, School Farms & Gardens, Farm to School Institutionalization, Local Food Hub	- 50% of schoolchildren in Ventura County reached - 7 school districts participating
Agriculture & Food Education in Community Colleges & Universities			
Cal State Channel Islands	In California State University Channel Islands' (CSUCI) Environmental Science & Resource Management (ESRM) Program, students gain a solid understanding of the environment from both scientific and human perspectives, learn from talented, dedicated faculty, and start making a difference through intensive academic, field-based research and volunteer opportunities.	AA, AS-T, or Certificate in Environmental Science	- 52 Enviro. Science B.S degrees, FY 20-21 - 136 Enviro. Science majors, Fall 2022
California Lutheran University	The California Lutheran University's degree in environmental science is designed to provide students with the tools to critically examine environmental issues from a variety of perspectives. Beyond the required foundational science courses, the program provides a broad range of science and humanities courses to select from, allowing students to tailor the program to their interests. The curriculum emphasizes experiential learning, which provides them with opportunities to actively engage in research.	BS in Environmental Science	- 8 Undergrad Enviro. Sci majors - 7 Enviro. Science B.S. degree awarded, FY 20-21
Moorpark College	The Environmental Science Program at Moorpark College is dedicated to the success of all its students. They offer the opportunity to excel in Environmental Science by providing the latest information in both the lecture and laboratory settings in conjunction with emerging green technology. A comprehensive set of undergraduate courses fulfill the general education and transfer requirements of students through day, evening, and late-start offerings. Students may obtain an AA in Environmental Studies, an AS in Environmental Science, and a Certificate of Technology.	AA or AS in Environmental Science	- 4 AA/AS Environmental Studies/Science degrees, FY 20-21 - 28 Animal/Livestock Husbandry and Production degrees, FY20-21 - 41 Animal/Livestock Husbandry and Production certificates, FY 20-21
Oxnard College	Oxnard College now offers the Associate of Science for Transfer (AS-T) in Environmental Science. Environmental Science and Resource Management (ESRM) courses offer students the opportunity to learn how to protect their community from hazards, monitor and restore the natural environment, and educate others.	AS-T Program in Environmental Science	

Agriculture & Food Education in Community Colleges & Universities (cont'd)			
Name	Description	Key Activities	Impact
UCANR	Master Gardeners receive up to 80 hours of horticultural instruction from the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) in Ventura County, landscape and nursery professionals, and experienced Master Gardeners. They are trained in gardening topics ranging from basic botany and plant pathology, to integrated pest management and irrigation techniques. In exchange for this training, Master Gardeners agree to complete 50 hours of apprenticeship and volunteer work to become certified.	Master Gardener Program	- 9 demonstration gardens in Ventura County - 35 students in each incoming class
Ventura College	The Ventura College Agriculture program seeks to prepare students for future careers within the agriculture industry through hands-on experiential learning and curriculum designed to engage students in all aspects of agriculture, from the field to the fork. The program allows students to earn an Associates degree (AS) or Certificates of Achievement (COA) in 7 topic areas: Agriculture, Agriculture Business, Agriculture Field Supervisor, Agriculture Plant Science, Environmental Science, Food Safety, and Water Science	Agriculture Program B.A., B.S., or Certificate	- 3 specialized agriculture degrees, FY 20-21
Agricultural Research			
Center for Regenerative Agriculture	The Center for Regenerative Agriculture promotes all aspects of organic farming which build soils, limit synthetic pesticide release and curtail pollution and degradation of arable lands. Model projects educate students, homeowners, ranchers and farmers about sustainable food growing strategies, permaculture design, native habitat creation and regeneration, tree planting and maintenance, community and urban forestry and organic certification.	Community composting, Tree planting, Seed saving, Thomas Fire Regeneration, Worm bins, Volunteering, Internships, Master classes	
Rodale Institute California Organic Center	The Rodale Institute California Organic Center is located on McGrath Farm in Ventura, California and serves farmers by solving challenges, conducting regional research, and serving as a hub for education & educational extension.	Farmer training, Veteran farmer training, Farming Systems Trial, Vegetable Systems Trial, Watershed Impact Trial, Industrial Hemp Trial, Crop livestock integration, Pastured pork	- 266 farmers supported in transitioning 11,963 acres to organic - 9 beginning farmers trained in organic farming, 3 immediately starting farming careers - 10 military vets in Farmer Training Program - 4,500 participants in hybrid events - 500 students in virtual learning
UCANR	UCCE operates under the division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) to support local agriculture and food systems.	Cooperative Extension Farm, 4-H, Nutrition, Consumer Sciences Advisors	
Community Events, Education & Awareness			
The Abundant Table	The Abundant Table is a non-profit, organic certified farm and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and women-led worker collective in Ventura County California that seeks to transform the food system towards justice, liberation, and increased health for all people, while caring for the land and all who tend the land. The organization incorporates sustainable growing practices and creates greater access to sustainably grown foods for all Ventura County residents. Immersive and educational experiences are offered on and off the field.	Solidarity Shares Farm tours, Farm to School, Farm to Faith	- \$30,000 in donations for Solidarity Shares for Farmworkers program - 40 farmworker families supported with bi-weekly CSA boxes
Casa Pacifica Angels Wine, Food & Brew Festival	The Casa Pacifica Angels Wine, Food & Brew Festival features food and wine samples to raise money for the Casa Pacifica nonprofit.	The Yummie Dinner, Yummie Culinary Competition, Online Silent Auction, Brew Fest	- Voted Best Charity Event and Best Food & Drink Festival by VC Reporter since 2012
Edible Ojai and Ventura County	Edible Ojai & Ventura County is a magazine and website that encourages people to eat and purchase more locally grown and produced foods.		- 90 communities publishing magazine - Winner of James Beard Award for Publication of the Year

Community Events, Education & Awareness (cont'd)			
Name	Description	Key Activities	Impact
Totally Local VC	Totally Local VC is a collaborative initiative that promotes the importance and success of local agriculture and business. The organization also educates youth and general community members on the role business and agriculture plays in the success of communities and how they connect to their daily lives.	Farm to Fork Dinner Series, Local Love Project, High school farm talks, College culinary program talk series, Radio show, Ventura County Ag Week, Totally Local VC Agricultural Education Foundation	- 60 local producers and vendors hired for Dinner Series - \$88,600 generated by Ag Education Workshop annually
Ventura County Ag Week	Ag Week is a week full of ag related events featuring ag organizations. The week highlights the economic importance of agriculture and the diversity of careers within agriculture.	Excellence in Ag Awards Luncheon, Ventura chef tasting event, Meet-the-Farmer-and-Rancher Mixer, Student tours, Classroom talks, Career Exploration Day, History of Oxnard Farming	- 14 Chef and Purveyor participants in 2020
Ventura County Fair	The Ventura County Fair is the largest agricultural-related event in the County. The 12 day long fair is held in the 63 acre Ventura Fairgrounds and features rides, games, food, an agricultural show, animals, and concerts.	Agricultural Show, Rides, Games, Food, Animals, Concerts, Fundraisers	- \$1.6 million raised for youth at 2019 Junior Livestock Auction - 15.7 million raised by auction over the last 10 years - 14,664 entries in 2019 fair competitions - 35 corporate sponsors - 14 media sponsors - 5-year average fair attendance: 311,583
Ventura County Farm Day	The Ventura County Farm Day provides free agricultural tours and activities hosted at over 20 different local farms, ranches, and agricultural organizations. Visitors guide themselves by car to the sites that they choose to visit.	Farm visits, Food establishment visits	- 20 farms and 30+ locations participating - 6,000+ visitors each year
Ventura Spring Wine Walk and Street fair	The Ventura County Spring Wine Walk and Street Fair features tastings of local wine and a free to enter street fair.	Street fair, Beverage sampling	- 40+ tasting locations with free admission
Ventura Winter Wine Walk	The Ventura County Winter Wine Walk features tastings of local wine and a free to enter holiday street fair.	Holiday street fair, Wine tasting	- 80+ tasting locations
On-farm Education & Events			
Apricot Lane Farms	Apricot Lane Farms focuses on seeing and utilizing the interconnectedness of nature to help build soil health, maximize biodiversity, and regeneratively grow the most nutrient-dense food possible. They offer farm tours and an apprenticeship program.	Farm tours, Apprentice program, Farm school, Farm afterschool program	- 4 candidates in 6-month apprenticeship program - 4 farmers markets attended
Farmivore	Farmivore is based at McGrath Family Farm in Camarillo and offers organic produce online, along with produce from other local farms.		- 15 farmers partnered
Farmer and the Cook	Farmer and the Cook is a farm to table restaurant, market, and farm that offers volunteer opportunities.	Volunteer opportunities	- 4 new organic farmers in the area formerly worked for this farm
Gerry Ranch	Gerry Ranch is a working farm growing lemons, avocados and blueberries that also offers itself as an event space.		
McGrath Family Farm	McGrath Family Farmers is a collaborative of small certified organic farms and farmers that grow healthy produce for surrounding communities as well as training and supporting the next generation of regenerative farmers. They strive to always further their education as growers and share their knowledge of regenerative farming with others.	Regenerative Farm Experience Program, Farm Manager Tour, Farm Owner Tour, School Tour	- 5,000 acres of regenerative farming
Oats & Ivy Farm	Oats & Ivy Farm works towards natural and organic farming practices. The farm is home to Nigerian Dwarf dairy goats, chickens, ducks, turkeys, dogs, and cats. The farm also does farmstay experiences.	Goat Workshop, Milk Maids, Farm tours, Baby Goat Yoga	

On-farm Education & Events (cont'd)			
Name	Description	Key Activities	Impact
Ojai Olive Oil Company	Ojai Olive Oil Company is a farm that offers olive oil tastings and teaches visitors about olive oil in the tasting rooms. Staff answer questions about the history of olive oil, growing olives, and olive oil production.	Tree sales, Consulting	- 40+ awards and mentions by many including CA Olive Oil Council, Ventura County Fair, CA State Fair
Old Creek Ranch & Winery	Old Creek Ranch & Winery features a wide selection of wines, wine tastings, a wine club, picnic grounds, live music and event venue. It is a vineyard and ranch.	Wine donations	
One Acre Farm	One Acre Farm grows organic blueberries and hosts pick-your-own days.		
Plan B Wine Cellars	Plan B Wine Cellars is a working winery and tasting room. The venue features Second Sunday Suppers and monthly events with live music, local food trucks and ocean breezes.		
Poco Farm	Poco Farm hosts visitors that explore the impact of food and fiber systems through hands-on experiences and collaborative learning using animals, plants, insects, soil, air, and water. Teachers encourage students to think critically and feel deeply about food, culture and the true cost of different agricultural systems.	Exploratory Farm Tour, Deep-Diving Tour & Chore, Curricula, Homesteading skills classes, Animal husbandry workshops, Afterschool program	- 1 high school farmers market - 21 elementary school community gardens
Rio Gozo Farm	Rio Gozo Farm provides high quality organic produce to local restaurants. They grow herbs, flowers, and vegetables and offer volunteer opportunities	Volunteer opportunities	
Sow A Heart Farm	Sow a Heart Farm grows sustainable food for restaurants and extended southern California friends, family, and food lovers. The farm promotes regenerative agriculture and cultivate new ways of thinking of food. The farm also hosts events and celebrations.	Farm Tours, School tours, Volunteer opportunities	- 30 volunteer capacity - 1-10 volunteers 2x per month
Underwood Family Farms	A sustainable farm and farm stand where families come to pick their own fruits and vegetables	Educational farm tours, Virtual tours, Farmers market stands, Animal Center, Fall Festival	- 25 year running - 21 local ag attractions - 14 markets attended in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties
Food Security & Local Agriculture Awareness			
Healthy Ventura County	The Partnership for a Healthy Ventura County is a network that includes representatives from Ventura County Public Health, community organizations, direct health service providers, food security organizations, schools, local area businesses, and government agencies. The networks shares resources and promotes policies and services to further the health of Ventura County.	Healthy at School, Healthy at Home and in Your Neighborhood, Health Champion Awards, West Ventura HEAL Zone, A Partnership for Health	- 80 regional partnerships
Food Forward	Food Forward is a nonprofit organization bringing surplus fruits and vegetables to people experiencing food insecurity in Southern California and tribal lands in Arizona and New Mexico.	Backyard Harvest, Farmers market recovery, Wholesale produce recovery	- 49,157 metric tons of CO2 equivalent prevented since 2009 - \$271 million in recovered produce - 62.5 million lbs produce redistributed in 2020 - 200 varieties of produce to millions of people every year
Food Share Ventura County	As a member of Feeding America and the California Association of Food Banks, Food Share staff and volunteers distribute food through pantry and program partners. As Ventura County's regional food bank, Food Share provides food for over 75,000 hungry friends and neighbors monthly.	Senior programs, Community Market, Kids' Farmers' Market, Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Grant Program	- 26 million pounds of food redistributed - 140,000 food insecure served monthly - 190 agency partners and pantries - 30 meals provided with \$10
Slow Foods Ventura County	Slow Food Ventura County supports and promotes local, sustainable food and food traditions and advocates for equitable food access across the county.	School gardens, Slow Meat, Chefs Alliance, Ark of Taste, Presidia, Slow Food Youth Network	

Farmers' Markets & Local Agriculture Awareness			
Name	Description	Key Activities	Impact
Camarillo Certified Farmers Market	The Camarillo Certified Farmers Market provides an opportunity for farmers and food vendors to sell their products directly to the public.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 24 farm vendors - 45 food and other vendors - \$1 million raised for grief counseling
Channel Islands Harbor Farmers Market	The Channel Islands Harbor Farmer's Market is a waterfront market held every Sunday. Farmers and vendors sell goods directly too the public and live entertainment is featured.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30+ farm vendors
Downtown Oxnard Farmer's Market	Downtown Oxnard Farmer's Market is a venue to buy locally grown farm products such as fruits, flowers, veggies, eggs, nuts, and honey as well as artisanal crafts and prepared foods.	Sweets this Week, Weekly Giveaways, Bands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 19 farm vendors - 15 food and other vendors - 400 customers/week off-season and 700 customers/week summer - >\$350,000 annual sales
Ojai Certified farmers market	The Ojai Certified Farmers Market provides a platform for farmers and local food vendors to sell produce, prepared foods, meat, seafood, dairy products, oils, and artisan crafts directly to the public.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 27 produce vendors - 29 food and other vendors
Santa Paula Certified Farmers Market	The Santa Paula Certified Farmers market is a venue to buy healthy local produce and products, including organics, while supporting local merchants and farmers. It also offers an opportunity to gather with family, neighbors and friends in an outdoor venue with food vendors, beer and wine tasting, and music.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 produce vendors - 17 food and other vendors
Ventura County Certified Farmers Markets	Ventura County Certified Farmers Markets feature farmers that raise, gather, grow, catch or otherwise produce the products they sell which are certified by their county Agricultural Commissioner. All products at the market are original goods created, grown, or raised by the vendors.	Downtown Ventura, Midtown Ventura, Thousand Oaks, Santa Clarita	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 21 vendors at Midtown Ventura - 31 vendors at Thousand Oaks - 35 vendors at Downtown Ventura - 32 vendors at Santa Clarita