Securing Ventura County’s Agricultural Future

Draft Strategies for Community Resilience

Project Partners Meeting
October 20, 2022
Meeting Objective

Solicit input on:

Four Lead Draft Strategies

• Are these strategies appropriate for Ventura County?

• Are these strategies ones you would be willing to champion?

• What are we missing?

• What should be changed?
Agenda

- Introduce Four Cornerstones
- Introduce Draft Lead Strategies
- Solicit input on each Strategy
- Review next steps & schedule
Four Cornerstones

01 Support the Growth of a Robust Agricultural Economy
- Support, sustain and diversify the agricultural economy of Ventura County.
- Lay out specific tools, strategies and actions for investment in the regional food system.
- Identify and secure funding and financing strategies from local community organizations, County, State and Federal governments.

02 Ensure a Viable Agricultural Land Base
- Identify a blend of incentives, policies, land use tools, and an organizational framework that supports investment and the security of the agricultural land base.
- Streamline permitting and encourage the use of sustainable agricultural practices.

03 Secure a Resilient Future for Agriculture
- Facilitate sustainable and regenerative farming and ranching practices.
- Explore strategic land repurposing, restoration of habitats, and protection and enhancement of water resources to meet regional economic, environmental, and social needs.

04 Catalyze Community Co-Stewardship of Agriculture
- Craft a multifaceted Rural-Urban Connections strategy that fosters co-stewardship of a vibrant agriculture sector as a foundation for health, well-being resilience, and a diverse economy.
Cornerstone 1
Support the Growth of a Robust Agricultural Economy

What we heard...
-The economics of farming has to be at the forefront of solutions.
-Build on SOAR goal to promote the economic viability of agricultural lands by assisting agricultural producers and establishing zoning policies that support long term investments in agriculture.

Lead Strategy:

Establish an Ag Enterprise Overlay.

Why this strategy?
To accommodate and support the business development of ag operations in selected foundational areas through targeted streamlining, financial incentives, and specialized marketing efforts.
Cornerstone 2
Ensure a Viable Agricultural Land Base

What we heard...
- Conservation easements are an additional tool that are complementary to SOAR especially for farmers looking ahead...
- Generational business succession is a major challenge.

Lead Strategy:
Create a “Resiliency District” focused on acquisition of lands that are critical.

Why this strategy?
Develop the administrative and fiscal structure to:
1) Support a long-range comprehensive plan to prioritize investment and land conservation.
2) Establish a long term funding stream to facilitate incentives and investments in ag lands.
Cornerstone 3
Secure a Resilient Future for Agriculture

What we heard...
What’s been done in the past might not be possible in the future in terms of cost and availability of water.

Lead Strategy:
Develop a land repurposing plan and program

Why this strategy?
To support a gradual shift from irrigated lands to other non-irrigated uses with financial incentive payments that compensate landowners for reduced pumping in exchange for the provision of other environmental services.
Cornerstone 4
Catalyze Community Co-Stewardship of Agriculture

What we heard...

- 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.

Lead Strategy:
Establish a Rural-Urban Connectivity Program at UCCE

Why this strategy?
To create an operational structure and secure the resources necessary to provide a collaborative framework for coordinating, supporting and enhancing existing public education and awareness.
Questions

• Are these strategies appropriate for Ventura County?

• Are these strategies ones you would be willing to champion?

• What are we missing?

• What should be changed?
Next Steps

- **Refine Strategies Based on Project Partner Inputs**
  - **November 16**
    - Non-Ag Community
    - 10:00-11:30
  - **November 17**
    - Ag Community
    - 10:00-11:30

- **Community Stakeholder Meetings for Input on Strategies**
  - **November 16**
    - Non-Ag Community
    - 10:00-11:30

- **Draft Strategy Document**
  - **December 2022**
    - Refining strategies, crafting incentives to address priority areas