

Farming Near Schools: A Community Based Approach for Protecting Children



Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance
Issue Paper No. 1
February 2002

Ag Futures Alliance -- A Different Approach

(Source: AFA Formation Final Report, February 2001)

A coalition named the Ag Futures Alliance (AFA) was formed by agriculturalists in late 1999 to address some of the more critical challenges facing agriculture in Ventura County. The initial purpose of AFA was to create a framework for implementing actions to ensure the existence and enhancement of agriculture in Ventura County in perpetuity.

Recognizing a need for broad-based public commitment to and participation in the AFA, participants agreed that Ventura County agriculture must make the environmental and health concerns of non-farming residents a top priority. The alliance invited representatives from a variety of social and environmental concerns to participate, and with few exceptions the offer was accepted.

It became clear to AFA participants that the first step must be to create meaningful two-way communication. The second step would be to build trust and the third step would be to discover win-win solutions based on mutual respect and appreciation. It was during the third step that that AFA formed the Subcommittee on Schools and Pesticides.

During nine meetings over a five-month period the subcommittee came to consensus on the Statement of Purpose and Intent, a description of the challenges, a set of principles to guide decision making and a series of recommended actions for addressing the challenges.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the following people and organizations who participated in the subcommittee: Charles Weis, PhD, County Superintendent of Schools; Susan Johnson, Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office; Rex Laird, Ventura County Farm Bureau; Larry Yee, UC Cooperative Extension; Cesar Hernandez, California Rural Legal Assistance; Lori Schiraga, Environmental Defense Center; Lynda Uvari, Community and Children's Advocates Against Pesticide Poisoning; Jake Blehm, Pacific Agri-Business Alliance; Peggy Buckles, Countywide PTA; Rob Corley, school planning consultant; and Claudia Jensen, MD, a parent.

Thanks to the following people who helped to write this paper: Rex Laird, Lori Schiraga, Susan Johnson, Larry Yee and Rob Corley. Thanks to Doug Adrianson for editing.

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Executive Summary

Today as for the past 100 years, agriculture is a cornerstone of Ventura County's economy and lifestyle. There's plenty of evidence that the general public likes it that way. City dwellers flock to farm exhibits at the annual county fair. Voters pass anti-sprawl land-use restrictions with the stated intention of "saving agricultural resources." The Board of Supervisors passed a Right to Farm ordinance designed to protect farmers from the complaints of newcomers who choose to buy homes too close to established agricultural operations.

But there are a few conflicts with the potential to undermine that widespread public support. Among the most volatile of these is the use of pesticides at agricultural operations located close to schools. A survey done by the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools found 29 public or private schools that are adjacent to agricultural operations, defined as sharing a common boundary, across the street or within 300 feet without an intervening use.

Everyone agrees that farms and schools are not ideal neighbors but in Ventura County they seem to be stuck with each other for the foreseeable future. The challenge of finding suitable school sites is a daunting one and those growth-control measures have interrupted the traditional development pattern under which a farm that found itself next to a new school would soon be lost to houses anyway.

To nearly everyone's credit, there have been relatively few serious incidents of school children being impacted by agricultural pesticides. Yet amid growing controversy over the use of methyl bromide near schools and homes at least two recent pesticide-drift incidents have made local headlines -- causing concern to parents and others and seeding mixed feelings among some community members who otherwise count themselves as loyal supporters of Ventura County agriculture.

The Ag Futures Alliance Subcommittee on Schools and Pesticides was created to address those concerns by finding ways to minimize chemical exposure at schools located near agricultural operations. Guided by the AFA principle of creating a safe environment for all members of the community, the subcommittee included representatives of the school system, agriculture, labor, government, environmental advocacy groups and the community at large. This report is the result of the subcommittee's work spanning June-December 2001.

To summarize, the subcommittee concluded that reducing the potential for pesticide-exposure incidents requires a team effort by the entire community. It isn't the farmer's fault if a school exists next to his agricultural operation, and so it isn't fair for the farmer to be stuck with the entire responsibility -- or expense -- of guaranteeing safe coexistence. But it certainly isn't the students' fault that they have been placed in this less-than-ideal situation, and so the school system, county government and community at large must all do their part to ensure that those students and school employees are not placed at risk.

This report identifies specific steps that should be taken by various players on that team: county government, agriculture, school officials and the general public. If each of these communities does its part, we believe both the reality and the perception of pesticide-drift danger will be reduced without impeding the ability to farm.

Recognizing that this kind of cooperation has not always come easily in Ventura County, the subcommittee also suggests some Guiding Principles to help the various sectors of the community work together in a respectful and mutually beneficial manner. Those principles are included in this report.

The major challenge facing the subcommittee was balancing the requirements of agriculture with the health and safety of the community at large. The subcommittee recognizes that there is a relationship between community decisions, such as passing laws that perpetuate incompatible land uses like schools adjacent to agriculture, and community responsibility to help make the situation work. The subcommittee also realizes that in some instances the community may decide that the preservation of a given agricultural parcel is not supportable due to excessive cost, unusual health or environmental concerns, or the fact that the parcel is entirely surrounded by other incompatible land uses.

If preservation of agriculture is a goal of the community then every sector of “the community” as defined by the subcommittee (agriculture, schools, environment, government, labor and the general public) must cooperate to make it possible for agriculture and schools to coexist. In that spirit, the entire Ag Futures Alliance endorses the following recommendations:

Summary of Recommendations

We believe agricultural-related conflicts can be significantly reduced if each segment of the community does its part:

County Government

1. Upgrade Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner (VCAC) work space.
2. Provide VCAC with overtime budget for emergency responses.
3. Expand number of public members on existing VCAC advisory committees or implement new committee for public input.
4. Public Communication and Information Dissemination
 - 4.1 Create Community Information Specialist position for VCAC.
 - 4.2 Create Web-based clearinghouse site for local ag-related information.
 - 4.3 Implement GIS-based system to map and make available pesticide applications (may link to Web site proposed in 4.2).
 - 4.4 Prepare public information resources.
5. Long-term protection for schools adjacent to agriculture
 - 5.1 Investigate feasibility of shelter belts between farms and schools.
 - 5.2 Investigate method of purchasing pesticide use rights from parcels adjacent to schools.
 - 5.3 Disseminate best practices for growers adjacent to schools.
6. Ongoing dialogue between affected parties.
 - 6.1 Continue dialogue between agricultural community, schools and land use planners.
 - 6.2 VCAC field staff should visit schools annually to renew working relationship.
7. Strengthen working relationship with VC Public Health Department.
 - 7.1 Support Public Health’s efforts to educate local health care providers.
 - 7.2 Assure coordination between county Public Health Officer and Superintendent of Schools.

School Community

8. Ventura County Superintendent of Schools (VCSS) to provide model protocols for schools adjacent to farms.
9. Procedures and actions by schools
 - 9.1 VCSS to provide sample emergency procedures for schools.
 - 9.2 Principals of schools adjacent to agriculture will be encouraged to communicate with farmers and form ongoing working relationship.
10. Increase awareness of agricultural industry in Ventura County.
 - 10.1 Disseminate information on adjacent farm operations through existing channels.
 - 10.2 Encourage ongoing education about local agricultural practices.

Agriculture

11. Best practices need to be implemented.
 - 11.1 Agriculturalists should follow recommendations of VCAC.
 - 11.2 Agriculturalists should utilize least toxic agricultural practices/methods.

The Public/AFA

12. Create cooperative clearinghouse for technical assistance and research issues.
13. Expand Right-to-Farm notifications; stress importance to Ventura County's quality of life.
14. Educate community about agricultural practices.
 - 14.1 Educate public about farm issues and practices.
 - 14.2 Increase media reporting on agriculture and related issues.
 - 14.3 Continue public dialogue to apprise agriculture community of concerns from the public.
 - 14.4 Educate the community at large about the Suggested/Recommended Guidelines for schools and agriculturalists
 - 14.5 Work to encourage and support the implementation of all recommendations made in this paper.

Statement of Purpose & Intent

We seek to minimize agricultural chemical exposure to children, faculty and parents at schools adjacent to agricultural operations through communication, education, incentives, and regulations.

Background

Over the past ten years Ventura County has lost between 500 and 1,000 acres per year of agricultural land to urbanization. As urban development has expanded into Ventura County's farming areas, significant concerns have arisen. One of the most prominent issues has been the conflict between commercial agricultural operations and schools.

Ventura County has 29 public or private schools that are known to be adjacent to production agriculture. Standard agricultural practices have resulted in public concern about exposure of school children and school employees to toxic substances, primarily pesticides.

This concern has the potential to undermine the general public's apparently widespread support for preserving agriculture in the county, as expressed in a series of development-restricting ballot initiatives known as SOAR (Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources).

Because agricultural land is a nonrenewable resource, multiple SOAR initiatives have appeared on the ballots in both the county and cities. A countywide SOAR measure, passed in 1998, requires voter approval before land zoned Agricultural, Open Space or Rural can be redesignated to allow a more intense or dense use. Eight of Ventura County's 10 cities have passed similar ordinances, except Port Hueneme and Ojai. Most of these city SOAR measures establish urban growth boundaries and require voter approval before any protected land outside that boundary can be converted to an urban use.

One of the consequences of these land-use measures has been the preservation of existing agricultural-urban interfaces. Problematic situations such as new schools built next to established agricultural operations can no longer be viewed as temporary. With the agriculture now expected to continue (unless voters approve a change), it is more important than ever for schools and adjacent agricultural operations to learn to coexist.

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors in 1997 adopted a "Right to Farm" ordinance. It reiterates state law that protects properly conducted agriculture against major nuisance complaints. The ordinance also requires that purchasers of property in agricultural areas be informed that Ventura County is an agricultural area and a person moving into an agricultural area may be inconvenienced by standard, legal agricultural practices. The ordinance also provides that the county Agricultural Commissioner may mediate disputes between property owners over standard legal agricultural practices. A similar ordinance was also passed by the city of Ventura.

During the past five years, amid growing controversy over the use of methyl bromide near schools and homes, numerous incidents have been alleged to have affected schools adjacent to agriculture. Two of these incidents in the recent past have particularly highlighted the conflict.

In March 2000, an application of fungicides to strawberries adjacent to Rio Mesa High School took place during a district track meet. A video was produced by a member of the public and sent to the Environmental Defense Center (EDC). In this case, there was no claim of drift off target and no claim of injury or illness. Nonetheless, in addition to public concern, there was general agreement within the agricultural community that this was an unacceptable situation from a public relations standpoint.

In November 2000, a documented drift of Lorsban (chlorpyrifos) occurred onto the Mound Elementary School campus from an application to an adjoining lemon orchard while employees, parents and students were arriving at the school in the morning. This incident

resulted in complaints and documented illnesses to children. This incident was referred to the Ventura County District Attorney for enforcement action.

The California Food and Agricultural Code Section 12972 prohibits “substantial drift” of pesticides away from the target crop during an application. The California Code of Regulations Section 6614 prohibits pesticide applications where there is the reasonable possibility of contaminating the bodies or clothing of persons not involved in the application process, there is a reasonable possibility of damage to nontarget crops, animals or other public or private property, or there is a reasonable possibility of contaminating public or private property in a way that creates a health hazard that prevents the normal use of such property. Many pesticide labels also prohibit drift off target in a way that creates a health or environmental hazard.

As a result of these and other alleged problems in the county, Assembly Member Hannah- Beth Jackson, with input from the EDC, Ventura County Farm Bureau and county Agricultural Commissioner, sponsored legislation to expand the ability of local agricultural commissioners to regulate nonrestricted materials in sensitive areas. The proposed legislation (AB947) stalled in committee, due primarily to opposition from agricultural commissioners in some areas of the state and many local Farm Bureaus.

In the absence of appropriate legislation and because Lorsban was designated as a Federally Restricted Material by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in 2001, the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner made the determination under Food and Agricultural Code 14006.5, that Lorsban (chlorpyrifos) requires a permit for agricultural use adjacent to a school in Ventura County. The declaration was made in October 2001.

An essential lesson here is the relationship between community decisions and community responsibility. The recommendations of the AFA Subcommittee on Schools and Pesticides, although specific to this issue, are intended to address the larger problem of the agricultural-urban interface and how to ensure the survival of agriculture while protecting the health and safety of the general public. Of the complaints received by the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner, about two thirds involve agricultural practices other than the use of pesticides -- problems such as noise, dust, odors, traffic and chemicals other than pesticides. If agriculture is to survive adjacent to a sensitive land use such as a school, then responsibilities must be shared by the grower, the school, the government and the community.

When public officials or voters make decisions that create or perpetuate such situations, they must recognize that those decisions carry consequences that cannot rest entirely with the farmer.

The situation at Mound School is a good example. The new policies that resulted from the incident require a change in farming practices, meaning greater expense to the grower. The Agricultural Commissioner spent more than \$15,000 on the incident in 2000, in addition to overtime pay for monitoring applications done on the weekends or holidays since the incident. It has cost the school district approximately \$30,000 as a direct result of the drift incident and additionally for precautions such as covering playground equipment and sandboxes with plastic tarps when applications occur and overtime for maintenance personnel to monitor the site during the application. Other costs include doctor visits for affected students and school staff, and loss of revenue associated with absenteeism of students. The Ventura County District Attorney has spent considerable resources investigating and prosecuting the grower for this incident.

There is also a community cost. The community must decide if it wishes to absorb whatever risk is not subject to mitigation by the government or the grower. Once everything reasonable has been done to mitigate drift off target then the community has to decide whether

this is sufficient. If it is not the public must absorb the cost of whatever else can be done, such as purchasing a buffer zone, subsidizing the grower to become certified organic, to establish a Biologically Integrated Farming System, or purchasing the pesticide rights to a certain portion of that agricultural operation.

Alternatively, voters might decide to exempt certain parcels from SOAR because they are just too expensive to maintain. The cost of preserving agriculture and open space by restricting development must be borne by the entire community and not solely by the agricultural sector, by county government or by the schools. This concept is essential to the survival of the agricultural industry in Ventura County.

Description of the Challenges

Both schools and commercial agriculture face a multitude of challenges as they learn to coexist side by side. The most serious of these fall in two major areas. One is more of a human behavior issue and the second is one of global economics.

Many of the practices employed by Ventura County agriculture, whatever its location, are made necessary by consumer desires both locally and on a global basis. The desire for excellent cosmetic appearance and flawless quality of food drives the use of agricultural chemicals and other practices that some people find objectionable. This dynamic has been exacerbated by the no-growth movement, which has simply frozen for as long as the next 20 years existing land use patterns that have commercial agricultural operations and school sites sometimes adjacent to each other. By and large, the two have coexisted with only isolated cases of conflict but these cases have been highly publicized.

Nationwide within our society there is a high degree of concern about chemicals in general and chemicals used in agriculture specifically. There is widespread disagreement about what pesticide use data means and what impacts pesticide use may have on health and the environment. To further exacerbate the situation, there are those within the agricultural community who do not employ the type of practices and oversight of the application of these materials that are desired or recommended.

The type of structured dialog created through the Ag Futures Alliance will go a long way toward addressing these types of conflicts by encouraging people to exchange information and concerns in a respectful and responsible manner. This should reduce tensions between those who practice agriculture and those who operate or attend schools.

As is often the case, our attempts to deal with our local situation require statewide legislation in order to be effective. This presents a problem because many areas elsewhere in California do not wish to enter into the type of agricultural-urban interface restrictions that have become commonplace in Ventura County. As a result, it is often difficult to obtain legislative support to allow local regulators the flexibility to govern applications in these highly sensitive areas.

In summary, both farmers and their urban neighbors must demonstrate discipline and a desire to function in a world of respect for the needs of others -- both sociological and economic -- and seek the best situation for the community as a whole. The City of Ventura for example, adopted a SOAR growth-control initiative more than six years ago but has yet to develop a community-wide shared vision as to how to make it work. Historically, Californians have not been eager to undertake such enormous challenges in conflict resolution. However, the respectful relationships developed within the Ag Futures Alliance and by others in leadership positions within the community may rise to the occasion. Community-wide agreement can be found -- and must be found if agriculture is to be sustained in Ventura County. Ventura County can serve as a model for the rest of California as its population continues to grow and competition for land, water and other resources becomes more intense.

Description of the Subcommittee Process

The Ag Futures Alliance (for more information on AFA see inside front cover) subcommittee was formed in June 2001 to address pesticide use around schools. In preparation for the subcommittee's work, AFA members prepared two draft documents for the subcommittee. First was the format to be followed in the development of a community paper. Second was a list of work products to be included in that paper.

As the subcommittee pursued its work the AFA continued to meet monthly. At each AFA meeting the pesticide subcommittee reported on its progress and received feedback from the AFA members.

Once the subcommittee was established one member took the responsibility of drafting and distributing agendas, minutes and the various versions of the developing document. Meetings took place every two weeks for five months. To accommodate each members' schedule, subcommittee meetings were scheduled for two hours early in the morning. One subcommittee member hosted all the meetings.

Because of the subcommittee's diverse representation, one of its first steps was to agree to follow the AFA's principles of practice and organization (see AFA Formation Final Report, February 2001). These principles provided the subcommittee members, many of whom had never worked together before, guidelines for behavior as potentially controversial issues were discussed and decisions were made.

The first task to develop the subcommittee's Statement of Purpose and Intent. Once this was agreed upon, the subcommittee embarked on the task of providing substance to the rest of the paper's outline.

The subcommittee spent several meetings discussing and coming to agreement on a variety of barriers to addressing the problem of pesticide use near schools. One issue that was identified as requiring more information was the actual number of schools located directly adjacent to agricultural operations, the number within 300 feet and the number within one-quarter mile. Subcommittee members agreed that this type of information was crucial to the development of the final paper. Therefore, the county Superintendent of Schools drafted a short survey, with assistance from the director of UC Cooperative Extension, for all school districts in Ventura County (see Appendix A). Conducted in Fall 2001, the survey indicated that roughly 24 schools (public and private) are within one-quarter mile of active agriculture, five are within 300 feet, and 24 are adjacent (see Appendix B).

The next step was to establish specific principles to guide decision makers and community members as they take action to implement the subcommittee's Purpose and Intent. The subcommittee offers these principles in the spirit of encouraging community members and decision makers to leave behind some old habits and attitudes and think, and act, outside the box.

Finally, with the Guiding Principles in mind, the subcommittee reached agreement on a series of recommended actions. These recommended actions were then categorized by target audience – County Government, the School Community, the Agricultural Community, and the Ventura County community at large.

Guiding Principles

The Ag Futures Alliances (AFA) of Ventura County believes that the long-term viability of agriculture depends on cooperative relationships with the larger community. Through mutual trust and common purpose, cooperation and consensus are possible. But thinking and behavior must change and new processes must be institutionalized. Understanding and agreeing to adopt a few fundamental principles are important in establishing a strong foundation on which to build trust and respect.

The subcommittee acknowledges and subscribes to the AFA principle that says, “We will work to create a safe environment for all members of the community. We further recognize that, when we consider safe application of agricultural chemicals, special consideration must be given to those community members who are most vulnerable (children) and most exposed (farm workers).”

The following are principles to guide decision makers and community members for the purpose of seeking to minimize agricultural chemical exposure to children, faculty and parents at schools adjacent to agricultural operations through communication, education, incentives and regulations:

1. Work to listen and speak with respect to deepen mutual understanding and trust.
2. Work to respect and include the views of special interests, but community interests have primacy. Decisions and deliberations must be made by bodies and methods that fairly represent the diversity of affected views and interests, and are not dominated by any single view or interest.
3. Work for consensus solutions that balance trade-offs, are reality based, are least harmful to the health and well being of individuals and communities, recognize interdependencies, and are sustainable for the long term.
4. Honor innovation and fresh approaches. Encourage ideas that are new and creative.
5. Work to provide the community with information that is accurate, objective and balanced. Information should illuminate and explore choices, options and scenarios. Engage in mutual learning that will deepen respect and trust in one another. Have the courage to admit when we do not know.
6. Promote cooperation and collaboration. Work to avoid conflict. Sustain relationships that support the diversity of the community.

Recommended Actions

Recommended Actions for County Government

Situation 1: Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner (VCAC) operation is constrained by an overcrowded, antiquated office, poor quality electrical and communication systems, lack of space for technical analysis, lack of parking spaces for its fleet, and general lack of access to support services available to other county departments.

Recommendation 1

By conclusion of 2001-02 fiscal year the Board of Supervisors (BOS) should identify work space needs of VCAC and options for providing workspaces comparable to other county operations.

Situation 2: VCAC must respond to after-hours and weekend pesticide emergencies but lacks an overtime budget and, due to workload, lacks ability to use comp time.

Recommendation 2

Beginning with supplemental appropriation for 2001-02 fiscal year and in budget process for 2002-03 fiscal year, the BOS should allocate reasonable budget for overtime to protect citizens and maintain integrity of pesticide oversight system. It is recommended that a ratio of overtime to salaries be established for VCAC that is equivalent to the overtime budget for other public safety agencies (Environmental Health, Solid Waste, others).

Situation 3: Desire for more public input to VCAC priorities.

Recommendation 3

By June 30, 2002, the BOS should expand number of public non-agricultural members on existing advisory committees or implement new committee for public input to VCAC priorities.

Situation 4: Public requests for information from VCAC, including pesticide use information, has increased and many requests are technical in nature. Highly trained technical staff must take time away from primary duties to respond to calls from public and participate in community meetings.

Recommendation 4.1

Beginning with the 2002-03 fiscal year, the BOS should create a minimum half-time Community Information Specialist position to (a) take calls and provide information to the public, (b) coordinate public information programs, and (c) represent VCAC at community meetings, where appropriate. If necessary, position may be shared or coordinated with County Health Office or other department.

Recommendation 4.2

By December 30, 2002, the BOS should create an Internet (Web) site on Ventura County's agricultural history, status, practices, information on pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals used, information on alternatives in use, and links to other Web sites.

Recommendation 4.3

By June 30, 2003, the BOS should establish a Geographic Information System-based system to provide information on local agricultural pesticide use. May be Web-enabled like systems now in use in other California counties.

Recommendation 4.4

By December 30, 2002, VCAC and other groups should have ready-to-go handouts and information on pesticides, farm operations, and other frequently asked questions. Information should be available on one or more Web sites.

Situation 5: Need to establish long-term separation of neighbors from adjacent agricultural operations.

Recommendation 5.1

By June 30, 2002, the BOS should direct staff to investigate feasible funding for "shelter belts" that will separate agriculture and adjacent sensitive uses such as schools. (Note: It is assumed that future neighbors will incorporate shelter belts into their site plans.)

Recommendation 5.2

By June 30, 2002, the BOS should direct staff to investigate method to purchase pesticide use rights from interested ag parcels adjacent to schools and other sensitive uses.

Recommendation 5.3

By June 30, 2002, VCAC should direct staff to provide information on best practices for growers located adjacent to schools. Sample guidelines are attached in Appendix C.

Situation 6: Ongoing communication is needed between agriculture interests and non-farm community regarding long term land use, buffers, shelter belts and adjacent sensitive uses.

Recommendation 6.1

Continue dialogue between agriculture community, schools and land use authorities over long-term means of managing existing sites and effective strategies for new campuses. (Timeline is ongoing.)

Recommendation 6.2

Field staff from VCAC should visit the principal of each school adjacent to agriculture, as defined, by October 31 of each school year to establish contact, ensure that information has been provided to the site level, and remind principal or designated staff person to contact VCAC for official information if questions or concerns arise.

Situation 7: Support ongoing communication and cooperation between VCAC and VC Public Health Officer.

Recommendation 7.1

County Public Health Officer is appropriate source of medical information. Funding and assistance is needed for County Public Health Officer to provide pesticide-related resource information to local physicians, clinics and members of the public. County clinics are likely to serve many affected students and need to be part of communications. (Timeline is ongoing.)

Recommendation 7.2

County Public Health Officer should coordinate with Superintendent of Schools at beginning of each school year to confirm procedures and identify information sources. (Timeline is ongoing.)

Recommended Actions for the School Community

Situation 8: Best practices at the agriculture-school interface need to be described and communicated.

Recommendation 8

Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools (VCSS) to oversee development of model protocols. VCSS will coordinate distribution to affected schools and school districts and will recommend process to monitor implementation. Sample guidelines are attached in Appendix D. Final information will be available by June 30, 2002.

Situation 9: All schools adjacent to or near agriculture should adopt school emergency procedures that address pesticide drift and other potential accidents.

Recommendation 9.1

VCSS will compile sample emergency procedures and make available to schools. Schools will be encouraged to include these procedures in their mandatory Comprehensive School Safety Plans that are updated by March 1 of each year. Sample emergency procedures may be posted on an Internet site and are attached in Appendix E.

Recommendation 9.2

Affected school site staff (principals, others) need to actively participate with adjacent agricultural operations to establish ongoing communication and relationships. A reminder letter to superintendents of districts with schools adjacent to agriculture will be sent by the VCSS by September 10 of each school year, with an earlier mailing date desirable for year-round schools.

Situation 10: Parents are concerned about potential risks from adjacent or nearby agricultural operations.

Recommendation 10.1

School districts should disseminate information through school newsletters and other sources, including proposed Web site(s).

Recommendation 10.2

School districts should inform school staff, teachers, parents, students, others of learning resources and opportunities about local agricultural operations and agriculture in general. Encourage awareness of local crops, growers, and markets. (Timeline is ongoing.)

Recommended Actions for the Agricultural Community

Situation 11: Best practices at the agriculture-school interface need to be implemented and followed.

Recommendation 11.1

Agriculturalists to follow best practices recommendations provided by VCAC.

Recommendation 11.2

Agriculturalists should utilize least toxic agricultural practices/methods.

Recommended Actions for the Community at Large/AFA

Situation 12: Create system to receive and prioritize requests for technical assistance and research for growers/farmers and Pest Control Applicators (PCAs) who must work near schools, sensitive sites, and homes.

Recommendation 12

By June 30, 2002, VCAC, UC Cooperative Extension and other stakeholders will propose system for coordinating and prioritizing technical assistance and research requests concerning best practices and operating procedures at the agriculture-urban interface, especially adjacent to schools.

Situation 13 Pesticides, fertilizers, noise, dust, smells, etc. are all part of living in a county that has repeatedly voted to preserve agriculture as part of the community.

Recommendation 13

Expand Right-to-Farm notifications; stress importance of agriculture to Ventura County's quality of life

Situation 14: Many citizens do not understand farm operations and potential risk of various activities they may see or smell.

Recommendation 14.1

Emphasize AFA's charge to educate public about local agriculture issues, including farm operations and practices. Inform members of the public about actions growers have taken to respond to public concerns while educating about economic and global competitive pressures on local agriculture.

Recommendation 14.2

Encourage expanded reporting in local newspapers and media outlets.

Recommendation 14.3

Continue public dialogue to apprise agricultural community of concerns of the public at large.

Recommendation 14.4

Educate the community at large about the Suggested/Recommended Guidelines for schools and agriculturalists.

Recommendation 14.5

Work to encourage and support the implementation of all recommendations made in this paper.

Conclusion

Support for these recommendations will materially improve safety and long-term stability at Ventura County's agricultural-urban interface.

By educating and building effective relationships between county agencies, the agricultural community, schools, and the public, agriculture in Ventura County may continue to prosper while maintaining safe practices for neighboring schools and other sensitive uses.

All parties must share the burden, and continuing efforts are required to implement and maintain desired safety and cooperation.

APPENDIX A

School/Agriculture Interface Survey

- I. How many schools in your district have farming/agricultural operations:
 - a. Adjacent to the school?
 - b. Within 300 feet of the school?
 - c. Within a quarter of a mile of the school?

2. For each school in category #1c above, what is between the school and the agriculture?

3. For each school reported in question #1 (a, b, & c) above, how would you describe the agricultural operation?
 - a. What is being grown?
 - b. How intensive is the operation, meaning how often is there farming activity of any kind?
 - c. What would that activity be?
 - d. Do you know if pesticides are being applied?

4. Do you have a relationship with the grower(s)? If yes, what is the relationship – Do you know their name? Do you have their phone number? Do you talk regularly?

5. Are there any particular issues/concerns about the agricultural operation(s) that you would like to mention?

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESPONSES GIVEN

School	District	SURVEY RESPONSES GIVEN							
		Adjac.	300'	1/4 mi	Buffer	Grown	How Often	Activity	Pesticides
Briggs Elem	Briggs	x				Lemons Avocados	Once a month	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown - Spray non- school hrs
Olivelihoods Elem	Briggs	x				Lemons Avocados	Once a month	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown - Spray non- school hrs
Weathersfield Elem	Conejo Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile							
Fillmore High	Fillmore	No active Ag within 1/4 mile							
Fillmore Junior High	Fillmore			x	Homes	Citrus	Regularly	All	None
Piru Elem	Fillmore	x				Citrus	Not very	Weed abatement	None
San Cayetano Elem	Fillmore	No active Ag within 1/4 mile							
Sespe Elem	Fillmore			x	Homes	Citrus	Regularly	All	Yes - Spray non- school hrs
Julien Hathaway Elem	Hueneme	No active Ag within 1/4 mile							
Mesa Elem	Mesa Union		x			Lemons	Weekly	All	Yes - Spray non- school hrs
Arroyo West Elem	Moorpark	No active Ag within 1/4 mile							

Campus Canyon Elem	Moorpark	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						
Chaparral Middle	Moorpark	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						
Mesa Verde Middle	Moorpark	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						
Moorpark Continuation HS	Moorpark	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						
Moorpark High	Moorpark	x		Nursery			Yes	
Mupu Elem	Mupu		x	Creekbed	Avocado	Limited	Picking	None - Organic
Laguna Vista	Ocean View	x			Strawb	Weekly	Picking / Weeding / Planting	Yes
Mar Vista Elem	Ocean View	x			Strawb	Weekly	Picking / Weeding / Planting	Yes
Ocean View Junior	Ocean View	x			Strawb	Weekly	Picking / Weeding / Planting	Yes
Tierra Vista Elem	Ocean View	x			Strawb	Weekly	Picking / Weeding / Planting	Yes
Meiners Oaks	Ojai USD	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						

Mira Monte Elem	Ojai USD	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						
Nordhoff High	Ojai USD	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						
San Antonio Elem	Ojai USD	x			Citrus	Limited	Picking	No
Summit Elem	Ojai USD		x	Homes	Kiwi / Hay	Limited		No
Topa Topa Elem	Ojai USD		x	Homes	Citrus	Limited	Picking	No
Adolfo Camarillo High	OUHSD		x	Freeway Homes	Strawb.	Weekly	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Yes
Channel Islands High	OUHSD	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						
Frontier Continuation	OUHSD		x	Road	Rowcrops	Daily	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Yes
Oxnard High	OUHSD	x			Rowcrops	Monthly	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Yes
Rio Mesa High	OUHSD	x			Strawb	Monthly	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Yes
Frank Intermediate	Oxnard Elem	x			Strawb	Weekly	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Yes Methal Bromide

Lemonwood	Oxnard Elem		x	Homes	Strawb	Weekly	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Yes Methal Bromide
Rose Avenue Elem	Oxnard Elem		x	Homes	Strawb	Weekly	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Yes
Las Colinas	PVSD		x	Homes	Citrus	Weekly	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown
Las Posas Elem	PVSD		x	Homes	Rowcrops	Daily	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Unknown
Los Primeros Structured	PVSD		x	Homes	Rowcrops	Daily	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Unknown
Tierra Linda Elem	PVSD		x	Homes	Citrus	Weekly	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown
El Rio Elem	Rio Elem	No active Ag within 1/4 mile						
Rio Del Valley Junior High	Rio Elem	x			Strawb. Rowcrops	Daily	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Unknown
Rio Lindo Elem	Rio Elem		x		Avocados	Daily	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown
Rio Plaza Elem	Rio Elem		x		Strawb.	Daily	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Unknown
Rio Real Elem	Rio Elem		x		Strawb.	Daily	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Unknown

Santa Clara Elem	Santa Clara El	x	Citrus Avocados	Daily	Picking / Pruning / Road Maint	None	Organic
Blanchard Elem	Santa Paula	x	Citrus	Quarterly	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown	
Thelma B Bedell Elem	Santa Paula	x	Citrus	Quarterly	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown	
Webster, Barbara Elem	Santa Paula	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Apollo Continuation High	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Crestview Elem	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Hillside Junior High	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Hollow Hills Elem	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Katherine Elem	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Knolls Elem	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Madera Elem	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					

Simi Elem	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Sycamore Elem	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Township Elem	Simi Valley	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Somis Middle	Somis	x		Rowcrops	Weekly	Weeding / Irrigation / Harvest	Yes - Spray non-school hrs
Balboa Middle	Ventura	x		Citrus Avocados	Daily	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Yes - Lorsban
Buena High School	Ventura		x	Citrus Avocados	Daily	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Yes - Lorsban
Elmhurst Elem	Ventura	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Loma Vista Elem	Ventura	No active Ag within 1/4 mile					
Mound Elem	Ventura	x		Citrus Avocados	Daily	Picking / Pruning	Yes Lorsban
Poinsettia Elem	Ventura		x	Citrus Avocados	Daily	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown
Reynolds, Blanche Elem	Ventura		x	Rowcrops	Daily	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Unknown

Saticoy Elem	Ventura	x	Citrus	Daily	Picking / Spraying / Pruning	Unknown
Serra Junipero Elem	Ventura	x	Rowcrops	Daily	Planting / Weeding / Harvesting	Unknown
Sheridan Way Elem	Ventura	No active Ag within 1/4 mile				
Ventura High	Ventura	No active Ag within 1/4 mile				

SUMMARY:

Number of Schools shown by Ventura County Assessor's office	91
Minus Number of Non Public Schools shown by Ventura County Assessor's office	< 21 >
Balance - Public Schools shown by Ventura County Assessor's office	70
Of the 70 Public Schools, 29 confirm there is "No active Agriculture within 1/4 mile"	< 29 >
TOTAL Public Schools with Active Agriculture within 1/4 mile	41

Survey Responses from 41 schools:	17	4	20	10 Homes	12 Strwb	15 Daily	15 Yes
				2 Roads	18 Citrus	12 Weekly	2 MBromide
				1 Creek	1 Nursery	6 Monthly	3 Lorsban
				7 Unknown	2 Avocado	8 Unknown	7 No
					7 Rowcrop		14 Unknown

**Committee Supplied
Information on Private
Schools:**

7 1 4

TOTALS: 24 5 24

APPENDIX C

Voluntary Guidelines for Use of Agricultural Pesticides Adjacent to Schools

Definitions: **Adjacent is defined as sharing a common boundary, across the street, or within 300 feet with no crop or structure in between.**

It is understood that each situation is unique and will require, to a certain extent, tailoring these guidelines to accommodate individual circumstances. These guidelines are voluntary, and are suggested “reasonable measures to assure” that pesticide applications made adjacent to schools do not adversely effect non-target crops, animals, or persons not involved in the application process.

1. Guidelines for establishing a relationship with your neighbors
 - a. Establishing the relationship
 - i. Find the appropriate person to establish a relationship with, make sure all notification goes through that person
 - ii. Make a visit to the person so that you know who you are dealing with and to establish a relationship. At this meeting you should:
 - A. Provide the school representative with written information that outlines the general schedule of your farming activities.
 - B. Request a copy of all scheduled after school and weekend activities for the year;
 - C. Request to be notified when schedules change;
 - D. Exchange contact information;
 - E. Establish a procedure for notification, in writing, that you each agree on, so that administrators know when a pesticide application is scheduled adjacent to the school. It is important to get this procedure in writing in case of changes in staff at the school.
 - F. Provide the school with information on the potential health effects of exposure to the pesticides you plan to use over the coming year
 - iii. If there is a pesticide emergency after 4 p.m. and before 7 a.m. or on the weekend advise the school to call 911.
 - b. Written notification of pending applications of pesticides when they occur adjacent to a school
 - i. Provide written notification to the identified school official prior to the application. It is preferable that this notification be provided at least 48 hours prior to any application that will occur adjacent to the school. It is suggested that you also call the school contact to assure that the notification was received.

- ii. Written notification should include:
 - (1) The intended date and time of application
 - (2) The intended application method
 - (3) The pesticide(s) to be applied
 - (4) The Agricultural Commissioner's phone number
 - (5) The pager and/or cell phone number of the person in charge of the application
 - (6) Procedures in case the application is delayed or rescheduled
 - c. Whenever possible make applications adjacent to a school when school is not in session, or when the least amount of people are present and have been notified.
2. Equipment Modifications
- a. Use the appropriate hand or ground equipment properly adjusted to reduce off target movement as much as possible
 - b. Speed sprayers must be specifically adjusted to account for the density of the canopy and the size of the trees, if necessary shut off nozzles at the top of the circle on a speed sprayer so that the spray is directed into the middle of the tree canopy
 - c. Use the largest droplet that will allow adequate coverage
 - d. Consider the use of hand-held equipment in the first several rows of trees nearest the school
3. Other suggestions for use of pesticides around schools
- a. Substitute less toxic materials in blocks abutting schools when possible. Contact Cooperative Extension or the VCAC for information on least toxic alternatives
 - b. Consider the use of orchard floor applications and non-foliar applications whenever feasible in blocks adjacent to the school
 - c. Consider the use of granular applications whenever feasible instead of foliar applications to trees.
 - d. Do not make applications during school hours
 - e. Attempt to make applications when the fewest people are present at the school site
 - f. Make applications adjacent to schools when there is a wind blowing away from the school to avoid as much as possible drifting onto the campus even when the school is not in session.

APPENDIX D

Recommended Guidelines

For Schools Adjacent to Agricultural Operations

January 2001
Ag Futures Alliance

It is understood that each situation is unique and will require, to a certain extent, tailoring these guidelines to accommodate individual circumstances.

I. Identify a Staff Person to Establish and Maintain a Relationship with the Adjacent Grower(s).

- A. Each district that has a school(s) located adjacent to an active agricultural operation should identify an appropriate staff person, at the school, to establish and maintain an active relationship with the grower(s).

II. Contacting the Adjacent Grower(s)

- A. If you know the neighboring grower(s), contact him/her and request a meeting to establish an ongoing relationship that will work for both the school and the grower.
- B. To identify the neighboring grower, contact the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office (933-3165 or 647-5931) and explain that you'd like to establish a working relationship with your neighboring grower but you don't have their contact information.

III. Establishing a Relationship(s) with Adjacent Grower(s)

At the initial meeting you should:

1. Request a written summary of the various activities that will take place on the agricultural property over the coming year;
2. Provide the grower a written schedule of all after-school and weekend activities for the year;
3. Exchange contact information;
4. Establish a procedure, in writing, for written notification that each agrees upon. It is important to get this procedure in writing in case a change in staff at the school or with the grower occurs. In most circumstances it is reasonable to request notification 48 hours prior to any application occurring adjacent to the school. Information that should be requested as part of the notification procedure includes:
 - a) The intended date and time of application
 - b) The intended application method
 - c) The pesticide(s) to be applied
 - d) The CAC's phone number
 - e) The pager and/or cell phone number of the person in charge of the application
 - f) That the school contact person will be called if the application is delayed or cancelled

5. Request information on the potential health effects of exposure to the pesticides that the grower plans to use over the coming year;
6. Request that whenever possible pesticide applications adjacent to the school be made when school is not in session, or when the least amount of people are present and have been notified;
7. Agree that when scheduled school activities change you will provide a revised schedule to the grower(s);
8. Agree that you will both share information on any problems with the agreed upon system if challenges arise.

IV. Notify all Appropriate People of the New Relationship

- A. The principal should notify all school staff, teachers and parents/guardians of the staff person who is now responsible for establishing and maintaining the relationship. This would include alerting all staff, teachers and parents that this staff person should be contacted with questions or concerns and to receive information on prettification (if secured).
- B. The principal should include information in both teacher/staff newsletters/announcements and in parent newsletters/mailings of any upcoming cultural practices that the grower(s) have advised the staff person about.

V. Additional Recommendations

- A. Once every school year the principal and the identified staff person should meet with a County Agricultural Commissioner staff person, the public health officer and the grower(s) to discuss procedures and share contact information.
- B. The principal should assure that at the beginning of each school year every teacher and staff member has the phone number for the County Agricultural Commissioner's office in case of a pesticide emergency.

APPENDIX E

Sample **School Emergency Procedures For Pesticide Drift**

It is the District's desire that none of its sites be affected by pesticide drift or exposure of any kind. However, with the realization that such conditions are beyond the control of the District, the following are recommended actions to be taken in the event of an incident.

Pesticide exposure or drift may occur at any District facility near agricultural operations. Growers will, on occasion, spray insecticides and/or fertilizers. While there are regulations that require the growers to prevent the chemical to drift beyond the boundary of the field on which the application is occurring, our schools may still be affected. In many cases, there is no requirement that the grower give the school or the community any prior notification of these applications. The District will do everything in its power to obtain prior notice so that steps can be taken to minimize potential exposure.

Your first indication of a pesticide application may be notification by public officials or by the odor of the chemical in use. If drift is detected, take the following steps:

1. The Principal will notify the Superintendent immediately.
2. Notify the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner (933-3165 or 647-5931). Request an inspector be sent to the site immediately. If the Agricultural Commissioner's Office is closed (normal hours are 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.) call 911.
3. Notify all on campus day-care providers.
4. Notify all employees including crossing guards and volunteers
5. If necessary, render first aid.
6. Until ordered to evacuate, assume that a shelter-in-place strategy will be employed and do the following:
 1. Direct that all students and staff remain indoors until it is safe or directed otherwise.
 2. Direct that all heating and ventilation systems (HVAC) are shut down.
 3. Direct that all windows are closed.
7. Establish Command Post and Incident Command System.

1. As word of the incident spreads, be prepared to release students to parents or guardians.
8. Contact Environmental Health Department at 654-2811 to gain their assistance in handling the emergency and so that they may put local physicians on alert for possible chemical exposure treatment.
9. Contact the fire department for possible hazardous materials team deployment.
10. The decision to evacuate the site will be made by the superintendent or his designee based on the recommendations of the principal and/or by competent civil authority.
11. If an evacuation order is imminent, prepare to move students and staff to a designated area. If evacuation is not imminent, students and staff should remain in classrooms or in assigned areas.
12. Should the event occur at the start of the school day, notify the following of the emergency:
 1. Bus drivers and dispatchers. Contingency plans may require transportation to an alternate site.
 2. Check safety of students at any affected bus stops and popular walking routes to/from school.
13. If contamination is present after the school day, the district will notify after-school users holding permits (youth athletic teams, scout groups, community classes, etc.) of possible concern.

District Notification Requirements:

As soon as practical after the immediate emergency has been controlled, the District/Site will contact the following:

1. Adjacent or nearby schools.
2. All other users of the campus, including after school clubs, Scout groups, athletic teams, ROP's and Child Development Centers.
3. As much as possible, ideally on the day of the event, the District will supply parents/staff with the following information:
 1. Chemical involved, including how much and when the drift occurred.
 2. Possible symptoms and effects to be monitored with the suggestion that the child be seen by their physician if any symptoms occur. The physician should be advised by the parent of a possible chemical exposure.
 3. Mitigating actions (showering, bagging of clothing, etc.
 4. Statement of campus safety.

Post Event Clean-up/Safety Procedures:

Any site administrator who suspects pesticide drift may have occurred onto school district property during non-school hours should contact the Superintendent's Office and the Director of Risk Management.

The actual response will depend on the nature of the chemical in use. For example, the actions taken on an oil-based insecticide may differ significantly from those taken when a powder or granulated substance which is mixed with water is used. Therefore, it is important that the name of the substance used be ascertained and that proper methods be taken. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office should be helpful in obtaining this information and in making recommendations for proper clean-up procedures. The principal will coordinate with Maintenance and Operations and the Director of Risk Management to assure that appropriate resources are available. In general, the following steps are recommended:

1. In most cases, a wash down of playground equipment, outdoor tables, railings, pillars, doors and drinking fountains with soap and water and a thorough rinsing will suffice. In some cases, steam and/or a high pressure hose will also be effective. Ensure that run-off from the washing process does not contaminate playgrounds or other areas of the campus.
2. If indoor areas are exposed, soap and water are generally the preferred method to clean tables, counter tops and sinks.
3. Classroom animals should be monitored for any adverse effects.
4. All HVAC filters are to be changed.
5. Evaluate potentially contaminated material on the grounds (leafy debris, play sand, bark chips) for possible cleaning or removal.

Prior Notification:

If the District is notified prior to a pesticide application near one of the sites, contact the Superintendent and the Director of Risk Management and the following steps are to be taken:

Prior to the application:

1. The district and/or the principal shall notify all parents of the school by taking the following actions:
 1. Posting a notice at a central location on the outside of the school immediately after the district and/or principal receives notification of the pesticide application;
 2. Placing copies of the notice in the front office; and
 3. Sending a written notice home to parents immediately after notification is received by the district and/or principal. Both the written notice and the posted notice shall include all information known by the district and/or principal pertaining to the

pesticide application, i.e. the chemical, the amount of the chemical, the timing of the application and the method of application.

2. Requests must be made to the grower that all spraying be done outside of school hours, preferably during weekends, holidays and vacations when schools and fields are not in use.
3. All windows and doors are to be closed and locked.
4. All heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC) are to be shut down.
5. Playground equipment/surfacing material (sand and/or bark) and outdoor tables are to be covered with tarpaulins.
6. Outdoor drinking fountains are to be covered with plastic.
7. All school/classroom animals are to be removed to safe areas.

After application:

1. Remove all tarpaulins and plastic covers.
2. Tarpaulins are to be cleaned and plastic discarded.
3. Wash down all playground equipment, outdoor tables and drinking fountains.
4. Monitor the site for any conditions that will require mitigation and respond accordingly. For example, areas of standing water should be removed or covered with clean sand. The principal will coordinate with Maintenance and Operations and the Director of Risk Management to assure that appropriate resources are available.
5. Refer to Post Event Clean-up/Safety Procedures above for possible further actions.

APPENDIX F

Resources

University of California Cooperative Extension
Farm Advisors
669 County Square Dr., Suite 100
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 645-1451

Community & Children's Advocates
Against Pesticide Poisoning
Lynda Uvari - Board Member
P O Box 5388
Ventura, CA 93005-0388
(805) 654-4186
CCAAPP4u@aol.com

Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office
Stan Mantooth, Associate Superintendent, Business and Personnel Services
5189 Verdugo Way
Camarillo, CA 93012
(805) 383-1905
(805) 383-1908 FAX
smantooth@vcss.k12.ca.us
www.vcss.k12.ca.us

Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner
W. Earl McPhail-Agricultural Commissioner
815 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Paula, CA 93060
(805) 933-3165
(805) 525-8922 FAX
susan.johnson@mail.co.ventura.ca.us
earl.mcphail@mail.co.ventura.ca.us

California Rural Legal Assistance
338 South "A" Street
Oxnard, CA 93030
(805) 483-8083
(805) 483-0535 FAX

Ventura County Farm Bureau
5156 McGrath Street
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 289-0155
(805) 658-0295 FAX
vcfb1@aol.com

Environmental Defense Center
2021 Sperry Avenue, Suite 18
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 677-2570
(805) 677-2577 FAX

Physicians for Social Responsibility
3250 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1400
Los Angeles, CA 90010-1438
(213) 386-4901

AG INNOVATIONS NETWORK (AGIN)

The Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance partners with Ag Innovations Network in the organization and facilitation of its efforts. Ag Innovations Network is a small group of professionals dedicated to helping preserve and protect our unique agricultural heritage by helping farmers and ranchers develop new practices and new revenue streams that keep land in agriculture.

The mission of AG Innovations Network (AGIN) is to enhance the long-term sustainability of communities by assisting agriculture to fulfill its essential role as the keystone in a healthy ecosystem, economy, and society.

AGIN creates and facilitates public processes that bring together divergent groups with a stake in agriculture to find common ground and implement solutions that address local needs. AGIN also designs and implements marketing programs, resource stewardship programs, and public education campaigns.

All these activities focus on solutions that increase the use of sustainable farming practices, increase the awareness of the importance of a healthy agricultural base to a sustainable society, and reduce the friction between farmers, governments, and the general public.

To learn more about AGIN, or to contact them, visit their website at www.aginnovations.net.