

GENERAL PLAN—AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY ELEMENT

Agricultural Conservation and Production

Goal 8.1: AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION

Long-term conservation and use of existing and potential agricultural lands within the County and limiting the intrusion of incompatible uses into agricultural lands.

Objective 8.1.2: GRAZING

Protection of range lands for grazing of domestic livestock

Policy 8.1.2.1 The County Agricultural Commission shall identify lands suitable for sustained grazing purposes which the Commission believes should be managed as grazing lands. Once such lands have been identified by the Commission, the Board of Supervisors shall determine whether to initiate incentive based programs to retain such lands as productive grazing units.

Objective 8.1.3: PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Protection of agricultural lands from adjacent incompatible land uses.

Policy 8.1.3.4 A threshold of significance for loss of agricultural land shall be established by the Agriculture Department and the Planning Department, with opportunity for public comment before adopting, to be used in rezone applications requesting conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural lands, based on the California LESA system. For projects found to have a significant impact, mitigation shall include 1:1 replacement or conservation for loss of agricultural land in active production and/or 1:1 replacement or conservation for land identified as suitable for agricultural production. A monitoring program should be established to be overseen by the Agricultural Department.

Goal 8.2: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

A healthy, stable, and competitive environment necessary to sustain agricultural industry.

Objective 8.2.4: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION PROGRAMS

Development of programs that provide alternative sources of capital, reduce taxes, or minimize expenditures for agricultural production.

- Policy 8.2.4.1 Programs shall be developed that provide tax benefits and enhance competitive capabilities of farms and ranches thereby ensuring long-term conservation, enhancement, and expansion of viable agricultural lands. Examples of programs include but are not limited to, the following:
- A. Support and allow private organizations to utilize conservation easements or other appropriate techniques to voluntarily restricting land to agricultural uses only.
 - B. Continued use of Williamson Act Contracts (agricultural preserves).
 - C. Formation of land trusts to preserve agricultural lands.
 - D. Make available voluntary purchase or transfer of development rights from agricultural areas to appropriate non-agricultural areas.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

MEASURE AF-D

Develop and implement new programs to ensure the long-term conservation, enhancement, and use of viable agricultural lands, including grazing lands. (Policies 8.1.2.1 and 8.1.2.2)

MEASURE AF-F

Establish a threshold of significance for the loss of agricultural land, a procedure for evaluating a project's contribution to the loss, and means to mitigate losses so that the established threshold is not exceeded. The public shall be provided opportunity to comment on the program(s) before adoption. (Policy 8.1.3.4)

MEASURE AF-I

Develop a program to enhance long-term fiscal stability of agricultural operations, including use of the following:

- Conservation easements;
- Williamson Act contracts;
- Formation of land trusts; and
- Transfer of development rights.

(Policy 8.2.4.1)