



Connections

January 2009

Local Markets Studied

On **December 2**, SACOG held a workshop to share the results of the Local Market Assessment conducted by Valley Vision and Agriculture in Metropolitan Regions (AMR). The workshop participants also gave key input to help in the next phase of research.

Participants identified three opportunity areas: regulations, education, and distribution and processing infrastructure.

Regulation for small operations especially is a major challenge. Streamlining and improving regulations to make licensing and permitting easier will help.

Education includes teaching consumers about where and how to buy local produce. Farmers also can educate consumers of all ages through farm-to-school visits and farmers' markets.

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Federal Assistance for RUCS Project

On December 18, SACOG Past Board Chair Tom Cosgrove attended a meeting in Washington, D.C. with Congressman Dan Lungren and Army Corps of Engineers Secretary John Paul Woodley to discuss SACOG's request for funds to enhance efficiencies for the region's Habitat Conservation Plans and Corps processes in general.

Woodley assured the Congressman and Cosgrove that they shared the same goal and that efforts were underway to secure funding and formalize a scope of work. Talks between SACOG and Corps officials to establish a scope of work are underway. Should funding be granted, a potential visit to the region by Secretary Woodley and his staff will be planned.

Executive Director Mike McKeever and SACOG consultant Stacey McKinley also recently met with officials from the Congressional Research Service and the Library of Congress for policy and data support related to RUCS implementation.

The GIS arm of the Library of Congress maintains a robust library of data and is able to procure data files from public and private sources. Congressional Resource Services works exclusively to support Members of Congress in establishing policy via the use of the most current data and thorough research. Congressman Lungren arranged for the assistance of both institutions for SACOG.

Experts Weigh in on Rural Transportation

On **December 11**, the first workshop of the Transportation Working Group attracted stakeholders from across the six-county region to discuss common—and unique—issues of moving people and goods through rural areas.

The issues identified most commonly across the six-county region were rural truck traffic, inadequate rural road funding and poor bicycle facilities. Safety, traffic congestion and road maintenance were all significant concerns, especially with increased truck traffic. Participants also noted a lack of funding for road rehabilitation, including a need for new bicycle facilities and more connectivity.

Some issues unique to a few areas include lack of goods movement support between counties, need for preserving historic places and corridors, and lack of wildlife crossings.

One example of a goods movement issue is in Yuba County. Timber and aggregate

trucks impact low-capacity rural roads, causing pavement wear and creating safety issues for other autos and bicycles. Improvements to existing roads could help keep resource goods moving to major corridors. Participants cited many other roads in need of safety and capacity upgrades across the region.

Other issues being studied in transportation include the impacts of traffic on agriculture, vehicle miles of travel and emissions, levels of service, and the challenges from road improvements, including traffic increases and cost sharing.

The next working group meeting is tentatively scheduled for March. To read and comment on the Transportation working paper, visit the RUCS wiki at: www.sacog.org/rucs. For more information contact Matt Carpenter at (916) 340-6276 or mcarpenter@sacog.org.

Local Markets (continued)

Finally, in infrastructure, some of the challenges with distribution could be solved with new locally focused distribution, such as shared processing and distribution.

The Valley Vision and AMR study estimates that the region consumes 2.2 million tons of food per year and produces over 3.4 million tons of food per year, making it a net exporter of food. However, a closer look at data finds that what we eat isn't necessarily what we produce, resulting in a large food flow into and out of the region. As a region we eat twice as much wheat as we produce, 600 times more poultry and 300 times more pork. Conversely, we consume only 2 percent of the rice produced and 6 percent of the tomatoes.

The next local markets workshop is tentatively scheduled for March. To read and comment on the report, visit the RUCS wiki at: www.sacog.org/rucs.

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Land Use Innovations Discussed

The second Land Use Working Group workshop, held on **December 11**, focused on land use policies and programs applicable to the rural-urban edge. Participants reviewed the land use innovations presented in the Land Use working paper and discussed the benefits and drawbacks of each of them as they are applied in cities and counties in the region.

Input on the innovations will be folded into the Land Use Working paper to provide a full picture of the land use policies and programs that influence the rural parts of the region. Among the top

innovations identified by the group, buffers, boundaries delineating urban growth versus rural preserve areas, city and county agreements to plan for agriculture, and agricultural mitigation and conservation easements, were seen as beneficial in some applications or having potential to support agricultural viability at the rural-urban interface.

To read and comment on the Land Use working paper, visit the RUCS wiki at: www.sacog.org/rucs. For more information contact Kacey Lizon at (916) 340-6265 or klizon@sacog.org.

New Law Helps Farm Stands

On **January 1**, a new state law took effect that is intended to ease regulations on farm stands and make it easier for farmers to sell directly to consumers. It includes a number of changes to state law, all of which encourage sales of California-grown fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables, and make it easier for farmers to sell their products locally.

Assembly Bill 2168, authored by Assemblymember Dave Jones, authorizes the California Department of Food and Agriculture to issue regulations to encourage the direct sale by farmers to the public of all types of California agricultural products.

Previously, the law treated farm stand operations similar to retail stores, requiring water and sewer connections that are impractical and cost-prohibitive. This law treats farm stands similar to farmers markets, and creates farm stands as a new class of food facility.



Previously, farm stands could not sell bottled water, soft drinks, or prepackaged or processed agricultural products (such as dried fruit or pies). This law allows farm stands to sell these products, given they are prepared and packaged in an approved facility. Farm stands are also allowed to prepare food for sampling on-site, and if they do so must provide restrooms.

Local Winter Crops

Arugula	Chilies	Sweet Peppers	Rosemary
Bartlett Pears	Chives	Leeks	Ruby Grapefruit
Blood Oranges	Collard Greens	Lettuces	Satsuma Mandarins
Bok Choy	Curly Endive	Marsh Grapefruit	Savoy Cabbage
Bonsai Trees	Curly Kale	Meyer Lemons	Sorrel
Bosc Pears	Dino (Lacinato) Kale	Navel Oranges	Sweet Potatoes
Broccoli	Escarole	Parsley	Tangerines
Broccoli Raab (Rapini)	Eureka Lemons	Potatoes	Thyme
Cauliflower	Gala Apples	Radicchio	Winter Squash
Chard	Granny Smith Apples	Red Cabbage	Young Onions
Chervil	Green Cabbage	Red Kale	