

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

AGRICULTURE ELEMENT

ADOPTED BY
THE SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
December 15, 1998
Resolution No. 98-495

AMENDED BY APPROVAL OF DALIDIO RANCH INITIATIVE MEASURE
November 2006

SEPARATED FROM THE OPEN SPACE ELEMENT
May 11, 2010
Resolution No. 2010-151

Revised May 2010

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

Board of Supervisors

Frank Mecham, District 1
Bruce Gibson, District 2
Adam Hill, District 3
K.H. “Katcho” Achadjian, District 4
James R. Patterson, District 5

Planning Commission

Bruce White, District 1
Anne Wyatt, District 2
Carlyn Christianson, District 3
Eugene Mehlschau, District 4
Dan O’Grady, District 5

Department of Planning and Building

Kami Griffin, Assistant Director
Chuck Stevenson, AICP, Division Manager
Mike Wulkan, Supervising Planner
James Caruso, Senior Planner
Jennifer Jimenez, Mapping and Graphic Specialist
Chris Macek, Secretary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1: INTRODUCTION	1-1
A. Purpose	1-1
B. Relationship to Other General Plan Elements	1-5
C. How To Use This Document	1-7
2: THE AGRICULTURE ELEMENT	2-1
A. Agricultural Resources	2-1
B. Agricultural Issues	2-9
C. Agricultural Goals, Policies, Implementation Measures and Programs	2-14
Intent	2-14
Agricultural Goals (AG)	2-14
AG1: Support County Agricultural Production	2-14
AG2: Conserve Agricultural Resources	2-15
AG3: Protect Agricultural Lands	2-15
AG4: Encourage Public Education and Participation	2-15
Agricultural Policies (AGP)	2-16
AGP1: Public Education	2-16
AGP2: Public and Private Lands	2-16
AGP3: Right-to-Farm Ordinance	2-17
AGP4: Agricultural Use of Small Parcels	2-17
AGP5: Residential Density	2-18
AGP6: Visitor Serving and Retail Commercial Use and Facilities	2-18
AGP7: Service Commercial-Type Uses	2-19
AGP8: Intensive Agricultural Facilities	2-20
AGP9: Soil Conservation	2-21
AGP10: Water Conservation	2-22
AGP11: Agricultural Water Supplies	2-23
AGP12: Pest, Vertebrate, and Weed Management	2-24
AGP13: Agricultural Material Composting	2-25
AGP14: Agricultural Preserve Program	2-26
AGP15: Transfer of Development Credits (TDC)	2-28
AGP16: Agricultural Land Conservation Programs	2-29
AGP17: Agricultural Buffers	2-31
AGP18: Location of Improvements	2-32
AGP19: Consolidation of Public and Private Land Holdings	2-33

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
AGP20: Agricultural Land Divisions	2-33
AGP21: Minimum Parcel Size Criteria for the Division of Agricultural Lands	2-34
AGP22: Major Agricultural Cluster Projects	2-37
AGP23: Minor Agricultural Cluster Projects	2-40
AGP24: Conversion of Agricultural Land	2-42
AGP25: Unique or Sensitive Habitat	2-45
AGP26: Streams and Riparian Corridors	2-46
AGP27: Natural Area Preserves	2-47
AGP28: Major Ecosystems	2-48
AGP29: Wildlife Corridors	2-49
AGP30: Scenic Resources	2-49
AGP31: Recreational Use of Agricultural Lands	2-50
AGP32: Trail Access to Public Lands	2-51
AGP33: Archaeological and Cultural Sites	2-51
AGP34: Historical Resources	2-52

<u>Figures</u>	<u>Page</u>
1-1 Lots Approved by Type of Permit Procedure and Land Use Category	1-3
1-2 Land Use Relationships	1-8
1-3 Relationship Between Agriculture Element Designations and LUE Categories	1-11
1-4 Public Lands	1-12
2-1 Map of Groundwater Basins	2-8
2-2 Minimum Parcel Size (Acres) for New Land Divisions of Lands Designated Agriculture ...	2-36
2-3 Major Ag Cluster	2-38
2-4 Minor Ag Cluster	2-40
2-5 Orderly Urban Expansion	2-44

<u>Appendices</u>	<u>Page</u>
A Users Guide	A-1
B Agricultural Mapping Criteria	B-1
C Agricultural Buffer Policies	C-1
D Right-to-Farm Ordinance	D-1
E Agriculture: Land, Economy, Industry	E-1
F Glossary	F-1
G Production Agriculture Determination	G-1
H Summary of Implementation Measures for the Agriculture Element	H-1

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

Amended

December 19, 2006 Ord. 3113
November 2006 2006 Dalidio Ranch Initiative

This page intentionally left blank.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

A. PURPOSE

WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This document originated from a comprehensive update of the County's 1972 **Open Space Element**. The update was adopted in 1998 and was retitled the **Agriculture and Open Space Element** in order to more accurately reflect concerns for both the "agriculture" and "open space" areas of the county. Since this document now deals only with agriculture, it is called the Agriculture Element and **focuses on wisely managing and protecting that important land use resource in San Luis Obispo County.**

MISSION STATEMENT

In accordance with the County's mission statement which "...seeks to enhance the economic, environmental and social quality of life in San Luis Obispo County...", the mission of this element is to:

- * **Identify those areas of the county with productive farms, ranches and soils, and establish goals, policies and implementation measures that will enable their long-term stability and productivity.**

GOALS

The mission, as it pertains to agricultural resources, is addressed through four agricultural goals discussed in detail in **Chapter 2: The Agriculture Element, and summarized as follows:**

Agricultural Goals (AG):

AG 1: Support county agricultural production.

AG 2: Conserve agricultural resources.

AG 3: Protect agricultural lands.

AG 4: Encourage public education and participation.

WHAT ISSUES ARE TO BE ADDRESSED BY THIS ELEMENT?

San Luis Obispo County contains distinct categories of agriculture, including:

- ** soil dependent production agriculture.
- ** intensive (but not necessarily soil dependent) agricultural activities such as greenhouses which often provide critical support to other production agriculture;

There are at least two issues impacting these categories:

1. the steadily increasing numbers of people choosing to settle in the rural regions as opposed to the urban communities; and
2. old land parcels recorded before the State adopted the Subdivision Map Act and/or before the county adopted ordinances governing land use planning.

For the most part, the parcels created by these so called “antiquated subdivisions” remain in private ownership and are, in many instances, capable of development. Many of these old parcels are subdivided on land which might otherwise be better used for production agriculture purposes.

In 1990, the county embarked on the preparation of a “Rural Settlement Pattern Strategy Study” (Rural Settlement Study) to assist in guiding land use policies addressing growth in the rural areas. Interested readers should review the materials prepared through that study (on file in the county Department of Planning and Building).

There are several important findings from the 1990 Phase I Rural Settlement Study report, including:

1. There are almost as many undeveloped individual assessor parcels in the urban areas (defined by the urban and village reserve lines of the communities) as the total of all individual assessor parcels in the rural areas (outside of the urban and village reserve lines).
2. In rural areas of the county, the existing general plan would allow virtually as many new parcels as already existed in those areas in 1990, potentially resulting in approximately 8,000 new parcels representing roughly a 40 percent increase over what already existed in 1990.
3. More than two-thirds of the parcels that would be created through new subdivision as allowed by the general plan would occur on lands designated Agriculture and Rural Lands by the Land Use Element.

If past trends continue, and subdivisions allowable by the existing general plan are created, the character and use of many rural areas will substantially change. Figure 1-1 shows that 3,591 parcels were created between 1987 and 1998 in the three land use categories (zoning districts) that are most common in the rural areas of the county. These districts are Agriculture, Rural Lands, and Residential Rural. This market for rural lands has the potential for significantly changing the landscape of the county.

IS THIS DOCUMENT REQUIRED?

A county (or city) general plan must contain seven mandated elements, as follows: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, **Open Space**, Safety, and Noise elements. In addition, because we are a coastal county, we must also have a certified Local Coastal Plan.

A county (or city) may also elect to adopt optional elements to the general plan to address issues of local concern. At this writing, San Luis Obispo County has the following optional elements: Parks and Recreation, Master Water and Sewer Plan, Economic, Offshore Energy, and Energy elements. This Agriculture Element is an additional optional element of the county’s general plan due to the critical role of agriculture in San Luis Obispo County.

FIGURE 1-1													
LOTS APPROVED BY TYPE OF PERMIT PROCEDURE AND LAND USE CATEGORY													
	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	TOTAL
AGRICULTURE													
Parcel Maps	13	29	21	16	42	14	6	11	6	13	4	0	175
Tract Maps	0	0	8	0	0	58	0	57	7	0	0	0	130
Certificates of Compliance	42	29	134	21	87	52	69	56	174	324	401	85	1,474
Subtotal	55	58	163	37	129	124	75	124	187	337	405	85	1,779
RURAL LANDS													
Parcel Maps	17	18	10	16	7	5	12	2	2	0	2	4	95
Tract Maps	6	8	26	61	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	109
Certificates of Compliance	2	8	2	2	37	0	17	7	10	6	20	15	126
Subtotal	25	34	38	79	44	5	37	9	12	6	22	19	330
RESIDENTIAL													
Parcel Maps	53	83	67	65	75	61	37	10	29	21	17	16	534
Tract Maps	29	147	93	104	345	78	45	0	16	18	0	11	886
Certificates of Compliance	3	7	4	12	4	2	3	0	6	15	4	2	62
Subtotal	85	237	164	181	424	141	85	10	51	54	21	29	1,482
TOTAL	165	329	365	297	597	270	197	143	250	397	448	133	3,591

WHAT IS THE STATE'S LEGISLATIVE INTENT REGARDING AGRICULTURE?

The **State Food and Agriculture Code** contains the state legislature's adopted findings regarding agriculture in California:

The Legislature finds and declares the following:

- (a) Agriculture is the number one industry in California, which is the leading agricultural state in the country.
- (b) Although California's cultivated land accounts for approximately 3 percent of the country's entire supply of farmland, the state has historically produced about 10 percent of the farm cash receipts in the United States.
- (c) California leads the nation in the production of approximately 50 different crops and livestock products.
- (d) The diversity of the state's agriculture is truly impressive, for over 250 different commodities are grown here.
- (e) Family owned farms produce most of the food and fiber produced by the California agricultural industry.
- (f) The economic strength of California's agricultural industry depends on farmers and ranchers being able to profitably market the commodities and products raised.
- (g) A profitable and healthy farming industry must be sustained by a sound natural resource base of soils, water, and air which is developed, conserved, and maintained to ensure sufficient quantities and the highest optimum quality possible.

[Source: Food and Agriculture Code, Article 1, Section 802.]

In support of these findings, the Legislature also adopted the following major principles for agriculture:

- (a) To increase the sale of crops and livestock products produced by farmers, ranchers, and processors of food and fiber in the state.
- (b) To enhance the potential for domestic and international marketing of California agricultural products through fostering the creation of value additions to commodities and the development of new consumer products.
- (c) To sustain the long-term productivity of the state's farms by conserving and protecting the soil, water, and air which are agriculture's basic resources.

[Source: Food and Agriculture Code, Article 2, Section 821.]

In 1995, the California legislature enacted SB 275, the Agricultural Land Stewardship Program Act of 1995. The Act includes an important statement of legislative intent regarding conservation of agricultural lands, as follows:

- a. Encourage voluntary, long-term private stewardship of agricultural lands by offering landowners financial incentives.
- b. Protect farming and ranching operations in agricultural areas from nonfarm or nonranch land uses that may hinder and curtail farming or ranching operations.
- c. Encourage long-term conservation of productive agricultural lands in order to protect the agricultural economy of rural communities, as well as that of the state, for future generations of Californians.
- d. Encourage local land use planning for orderly and efficient urban growth and conservation of agricultural land.
- e. Encourage local land use planning decisions that are consistent with the state's policies with regard to agricultural land conservation.
- f. Encourage improvements to enhance long-term sustainable agricultural uses.

[Source: Public Resources Code Section 10202.]

San Luis Obispo County supports this important piece of legislation. It furthers the legislature's statement of legislative intent as expressed for the required Open Space Element of the general plan; it is supportive of the findings and major principles of the Food and Agriculture Code ; and also provides further support to the California Land Conservation Act (the Williamson Act). This program can make grant monies available to pursue a variety of agricultural conservation programs, including the purchase of agricultural conservation easements, land improvement and planning grants, and technical assistance from the State Department of Conservation. These funds could be used to achieve several important goals and policies found in this plan.

WHAT IS THE COUNTY'S LEGISLATIVE INTENT IN ADOPTING THIS ELEMENT?

It is the county's intent that adoption of this **Agriculture Element** fully comply with the Declaration as well as the Statement of Intent of California law regarding open space, and with the State agriculture policy found in the Food and Agriculture Code. While the State defines agriculture as one component of open space for purposes of the general plan, agriculture faces different issues that require different responses.

B. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

This Element responds to the issue that protection of agricultural resources needs different policies than the protection of open space resources. This Element addresses protection of open space resources on agricultural lands. Open space resources are also addressed in the Conservation and Open Space Element and in the Parks and Recreation Element.

DO EACH OF THE GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS STAND ALONE?

No. All of the adopted elements, mandated and optional, must be "**consistent**" with each other. When a significant change is made to one element, the change must be consistent with the policies of the other elements, or the other elements must be amended in order to maintain the internal consistency throughout the entire general plan.

The reader of this document should remember that resource issues are also addressed in other general plan elements, such the Conservation and Open Space Element. Many of the issues associated with agricultural and open space resources are further addressed in the **Conservation and Open Space Element**.

DOES ADOPTION OF THIS ELEMENT REZONE PROPERTY?

No! The plan has been prepared to be consistent with the land use categories (zones) found in the Land Use Element (LUE) wherever possible. Where rezoning might be necessary, it will be handled as described in the following paragraph.

ARE FOLLOW-UP REZONINGS RECOMMENDED?

Yes, in those few instances where adoption of this element would designate an individual property differently from the comparable (zoning) designation in the LUE. Those actions will be considered in separate advertised public hearings before both the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors (and Coastal Commission if in the coastal zone) before any property would be rezoned. Those hearings will also include notice to affected property owners as required by law.

DOES THIS ELEMENT SUGGEST CHANGES IN THE LAND USE ELEMENT?

Yes. The goals, policies and implementation measures in this document do recommend that follow-up actions be considered that would involve amendments to the Land Use Element. This would occur over time and with more study where needed, so that both elements are internally consistent with each other.

Just like the rezoning of individual properties, those follow-up actions must be the subject of separate advertised public hearings by both the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors (and Coastal Commission where appropriate) before any changes are enacted. Those hearings will also include providing notice to affected property owners as required by law.

PUTTING ACTION INTO THE AGRICULTURE ELEMENT

This element recommends actions that should be taken as implementation measures to carry out the identified goals and polices.

The **adoption of this element does not automatically adopt the recommended implementation measures**. Many of the recommended implementation measures will require future public hearings to adopt amendments to other elements of the county general plan or ordinances. All recommended future

amendments will be subject to advertised public hearings that will allow for full and open public discussions of the proposals before adoption.

A methodical implementation of the recommended actions will be needed in order to achieve the vision of this plan. Progress on the recommended implementation measures will depend on direction from the Board of Supervisors as they determine the priority and availability of funding to carry them out. All potential funding sources, both county dollars and outside revenue sources such as grants, will need to be considered since the competing demands for county government resources may make it difficult to achieve every action recommended in the plan.

When the recommended actions are directed towards non-county agencies, those actions will not become effective until such time as the identified agency takes steps to carry out the recommended actions. Adoption of this element cannot automatically implement those actions.

C. HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

SHOULD I READ THIS DOCUMENT?

Yes, if you are interested in knowing what county policy is towards agricultural and open space resources. You might start by reading the executive summary to determine what level of detail is of interest to you. Based on your interest, you may then decide to review the appropriate parts or the entire element.

No, if you want to know details about the zoning of a specific piece of property, or the types of uses permitted on a piece of property under the zoning. For that type of information, you should review a copy of the Land Use Element and Land Use Ordinance.

However, if you are interested in amending the zoning of a parcel, or in subdividing property within the existing zoning, you should read this document to understand that such decisions do not exist in a vacuum. Reading this document will acquaint you with the goals and policies to which zoning and subdivision should conform.

IS THERE A MAP WITH THIS DOCUMENT?

Yes, there is a map associated with this document. The Land Use Designations map visually portrays the types of issues addressed in the goals and policies of the element.

In preparing the maps, both natural and cultural factors were considered to determine suitable land use designations. Even though this document addresses only agricultural resources, it is recognized that agricultural and natural resources may be intertwined or overlap one another. For instance, a wooded stream corridor may serve several functions, such as recharging the groundwater basin that supports agricultural activities while at the same time controlling flooding, providing wildlife habitat, providing scenic vistas and affording recreational opportunities. If properly managed, these multiple uses may exist in harmony without hindering the ongoing agricultural activities or damaging the stream corridor.

The potential consequences of utilizing the landscape for a given use must be considered. Figure 1-2 illustrates in a very general way the degree of compatibility between various types of land uses and resources. Those compatibilities and conflicts, natural attributes and the potential consequences of the mix of all of these factors, have been taken into account in the preparation of this document and the types of categories shown on the maps.

FIGURE 1-2

LAND USE RELATIONSHIPS

LAND USE	COMPATIBILITIES AND CONFLICTS												NATURAL ATTRIBUTES										POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES													
	Urban	Large & Small Lot Rural	Row Crops	Specialty Crops & Forage Land	Mixed Croplands	Dry Croplands	Rangeland	Intensive Recreation	Extensive Recreation	Multi-use Public Lands	Scenic	0 - 15%	16 - 30%	+ 30%	I, II	III, IV	VI, VII	VIII	Grassland	Wooded	Grasslands	Woodlands	Chaparral & Brush	Seismic Hazard	Landslide Hazard	Flood Hazard	Erosion Hazard	Underground Water Supply	Land Distance	Air Pollution	Water Pollution	Environmental Damage				
URBAN	X																		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
LARGE & SMALL LOT RURAL		X																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
ROW CROPS			X																X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
SPECIALTY CROPS & FORAGE LANDS				X															X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
MIXED CROPLANDS					X														X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
DRY CROPLANDS						X													X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
RANGELAND							X												X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
INTENSIVE RECREATION								X											X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
EXTENSIVE RECREATION									X										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MULTI-USE PUBLIC LANDS										X									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SCENIC											X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

● COMPATIBLE
 ○ SOMEWHAT COMPATIBLE
 X INCOMPATIBLE
 - NOT APPLICABLE

S SLIGHT
 M MODERATE
 C CAUTION

HOW DOES THE MAP IN THIS ELEMENT RELATE TO THE MAPS IN THE LAND USE ELEMENT?

As noted earlier, **the map in this document does not zone property.** As previously noted in the paragraph discussing follow-up rezonings, those actions will need to be advertised for public hearings before changing any zoning on property. The California Coastal Commission will also have to hold public hearings and approve any zoning actions on properties located in the coastal zone. Wherever possible, this element has been prepared to be consistent with the Land Use Element (LUE), and it is the LUE that applies zoning to individual properties.

Figure 1-3 shows the relationship between the map categories in this element and the corresponding land use categories (zoning) in the LUE. In some cases, the land use designations in this element include all lands in the corresponding LUE category. In other cases, the designation in this element includes only some lands in the corresponding LUE category, depending on the location and use of a particular site.

The following is a description of the map included in this plan.

Land Use Designations Map:

Agriculture

This designation includes many different croplands and grazing lands that are individually and collectively important to the local agricultural economy. Also, **all lands covered by Williamson Act agricultural preserve contracts are included** in this map designation. A more detailed description of agricultural lands can be found in Chapter 2, The Agriculture Element, and Appendix C contains a more detailed explanation of the criteria used in mapping the Agriculture designation in this element.

Large - Lot Rural

This designation is applied to privately-owned properties that have limited agricultural potential and where rural residences are the primary use on 20 to 320 acre parcels. This designation generally corresponds to the Rural Lands category in the LUE, but may also include some areas in the Recreation land use category that are developed with privately-operated recreational uses on large acreage.

There are several purposes for this designation, including: very low density rural development in areas of limited agricultural potential recognizing that such uses will be compatible with agricultural uses; protection of open space, watershed and wildlife habitat; maintenance of low population densities in rural areas; and maintaining a clear distinction between the urban/village areas and the surrounding rural areas.

Small - Lot Rural

This designation is characterized by residential uses but may also include scattered agricultural specialty uses, part-time agricultural activities and ranchettes. The designation corresponds to the Residential Rural land use category in the LUE, and may also include some areas in the Residential Suburban category where that category is already located outside or urban and village reserve lines.

The purpose of the Small-Lot Rural designation is to provide for low density residential development and limited non-residential uses that maintain the rural and open landscape in areas where agricultural uses are not sustainable or are clearly secondary uses. The designation includes existing developed areas, rural subdivisions where development of residential uses is appropriate, and intervening areas that should be consolidated for rural residential use.

Multi-Use Public Lands

Lands owned and administered by federal, state and local government agencies are included in this map designation, along with major land holdings owned by non-profit land conservation organizations. The Multi-Use Public Lands designation includes many properties that are included in the LUE categories of Recreation, Open Space and Public Facilities. Many of these lands are important for their forest, watershed, scenic and recreational resources.

Figure 1-4 shows the approximate acreage and proportions of the county land area under the jurisdiction of public agencies, including government agencies and non-profit land conservation organizations. All together, these lands account for about 25 percent of the total county land area.

Urban Lands

This designation includes all areas within the existing urban and village reserve lines shown in the LUE, as well as areas outside those lines that are already developed with or committed to future urban-types of development for commercial, industrial, recreational, residential, or other non-agricultural uses.

FIGURE 1-3

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGRICULTURE ELEMENT DESIGNATIONS AND LUE CATEGORIES

LUE Category ⁴	Agriculture Element Designation ¹				
	Ag ²	Large-Lot Rural	Multi-Use Public ²	Small-Lot Rural ²	Urban Lands ³
AG	X				X
RL		X			
REC		C	C		X
RR				X	
RS				X	X
RSF					X
RMF					X
O/P					X
CR					X
CS					X
IND					X
PF			C		X
OS		C	C		X

¹ These designations correspond to the LUE categories in this table where indicated with an “X” or a “C.” An “X” means that the given Agriculture Element designation in this plan includes all lands in the corresponding LUE category. A “C” means that the given Agriculture Element designation may include lands in the corresponding LUE category, depending on the location and use of the particular site.

² Applies only within rural areas (outside of urban and village reserve lines).

³ Applies to areas within urban and village reserve lines as well as some areas planned for commercial, industrial and other non-agricultural uses outside of urban and village reserves lines.

⁴ Land Use categories (zoning) defined in the Land Use Element of the County General Plan: AG = Agriculture; RL = Rural Lands; REC = Recreation; RR = Residential Rural; RS = Residential Suburban; RSF = Residential Single Family; RMF = Residential Multi-Family; O/P = Office and Professional; CR = Commercial Retail; CS = Commercial Service; IND = Industrial; PF = Public Facilities; OS = Open Space.

**FIGURE 1-4
PUBLIC LANDS**

Government Jurisdiction ¹	Acres	% of Co. Area
Los Padres National Forest (U.S. Department of Agriculture)	252,900	11.90
Bureau of Land Management (BLM, U.S. Department of the Interior)	181,200	8.50
Camp Roberts (U.S. Department of Defense)	26,000	1.20
Monterey County Water Agency	18,000	0.85
State Highways and County Roads	13,000	0.61
CA Department of Parks and Recreation	14,500	0.68
CA Department of Fish and Game	7,500	0.35
The Nature Conservancy ²	6,100	0.29
S.L.O. County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	6,700	0.32
Miscellaneous (estimated) ³	4,400	0.21
S.L.O. County Parks	12,400	0.58
TOTAL	542,700	25.57

¹ Does not include incorporated cities.

² The Nature Conservancy manages a total of roughly 185,000 acres in the County.

³ Includes Cal-Poly University, Cuesta Collete, California Mens Colony.

HOW DOES THIS ELEMENT APPLY TO PROPERTY?

In order to find out how this plan applies to a particular property or area of the county, follow these steps:

1. Locate the property or area on the Land Use Designations map.
2. If the property or area is designated Agriculture on the Land Use Designations map, refer to Chapter 2 for goals, policies and implementation measures applicable to agricultural lands.
3. If the property or area is used for production agriculture and is zoned other than Agriculture on the Land Use Designations map, refer to Chapter 2 for goals and the policies and implementation measures of AGP 24 through AGP 34.
4. If the property or area includes a watercourse shown by a solid or broken blue line on the latest 7.5 minute U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle maps, the policies regarding streams and riparian corridors may apply. Refer to AGP 26 for the applicable policies and implementation measures when these resources are located on agricultural lands, (please also refer to the Biological Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element for policies and implementation strategies regarding streams and riparian habitat).

5. If the implementation measures included in this element recommend a general plan amendment that would convert lands from the designations shown in either this element or the Land Use Element of the general plan, see the land conversion criteria found in AGP 24 if the conversion involves agricultural land (please also refer to the Open Space Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element for policies and implementation strategies regarding land conversions).

To help use this element, a users guide directing you to portions of the plan by topic can be found in Appendix A.

LANGUAGE

For purposes of this general plan element, all references to the Land Use Element (LUE), Framework for Planning of the LUE and the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) are also construed to mean the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan, coastal Framework for Planning and the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO), respectively, unless otherwise specified.

DEFINITIONS OF GOALS, POLICIES, IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES AND PROGRAMS

The goals, policies, implementation measures and programs in this element are intended to serve as an educational resource for projects that require only ministerial approval. For discretionary projects, projects that need a public hearing, the element provides guidance and a range of alternatives for achieving the stated goals. The goals, policies, implementation measures and programs contained in this element provide the foundation for reviewing development projects for consistency with the general plan.

The following definitions identify the differences between goals, policies, implementation measures and programs.

Goals: A general expression of community values, an ideal future result or condition, based on public health, safety, or general welfare. Goals provide the vision statement of what is the consensus of ideals to be strived for after adoption of this element.

Policies: More specific than goals, policies are statements that guide decision making. They are based on the information gathered and analyzed during the process of developing this element.

Implementation Measures: Recommended measures that may consist of a series of actions, including such things as future amendments to other components of the county general plan or ordinance code, specific standards that should be applied to the review of development projects, or follow--up studies or programs that should be undertaken in order to carry out the desired goals and policies. Recommended implementation measures may also include actions that are suggested to be undertaken by other county departments, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, or private parties.

Programs: Actions that may be initiated by the county or other public agencies to achieve specific community objectives. Because programs are recommended actions rather than mandatory requirements, county implementation should be based on consideration of community needs, support for the program, its related cost and available funding.

CHAPTER 2: THE AGRICULTURE ELEMENT

A. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Fertile soils and ground water resources, combined with moderate climate, form the essential ingredients for agriculture. Examples include the rich irrigated croplands of the Arroyo Grande and Cienega Valleys, the award winning wines made from the vineyards of the Edna Valley and the Paso Robles area, the orchards in the Nipomo Valley, the extensive dry land farming of the north county, and the cattle grazing lands in the coastal hills and interior valleys. These are but some of the unique, diverse and valuable agricultural resources to be found in San Luis Obispo County.

While it is understood that there are many types of agriculture and many facets to the agricultural industry, **the focus of this document is on the land resource as the most important resource to the long-term protection of agriculture in San Luis Obispo County.**

WHAT IS AGRICULTURAL LAND?

The following general description of the main types and uses of agricultural land in this county were developed in consultation with the County Agricultural Commissioner and the Agricultural Liaison Advisory Board as best describing the types of agricultural lands in San Luis Obispo County. The descriptions form the basis for the system used in this Agriculture Element to determine which lands should be included in the Agriculture category shown on the Land Use Designations map. This includes land designated (zoned) Agriculture in the Land Use Element and in this element, all provisions of this chapter contain policies, goals, objectives and other guides or requirements that apply to lands designated in the Agriculture land use category, and not to the Dalidio Ranch land use category, or any portion of the Dalidio Ranch land use category.

It should be noted that any lands that are under Williamson Act agricultural preserve contracts have been automatically included in the Agriculture category shown on the map in this element. The validity of how these lands qualify for preserve status is not being questioned here. If there is any question as to whether a particular site or property ownership should continue to be included in a Williamson contract, that review will occur under the terms of the county's "Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965" as adopted by the county Board of Supervisors.

In the following descriptions of agricultural lands, the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) land capability rating of soils from Class I through VIII generally reflects the quality of soils for various agricultural uses. A general description of these soil classes is found in the next section of this chapter. A more detailed description of agricultural land and an explanation of the criteria used in mapping agricultural lands in this plan are contained in Appendix B.

Irrigated Lands

Row Crops Terrain and Soils: These lands are characterized by various types of vegetables, seed crops, orchards, and other irrigated specialty crops. In valley bottom lands, uses included irrigated field crops and other irrigated specialty crops. Property sizes generally range from 10 acres to hundreds of acres. The topography of these areas consists of nearly level valley bottom lands. The soils are mainly in land capability Classes I and II, but may include some Class III land that has been traditionally or is currently used for row crop production.

These areas support the most intensive farming. The farming operations involve labor-intensive use of equipment and chemicals and much vehicle traffic. They are often close to populated areas because these lands have historically been the easiest to develop. Partly because of that, these areas need special recognition to assure that the land will remain in agricultural use.

Specialty Crops and Forage Lands: These areas are characterized by irrigated orchards and vineyards such as wine grapes, avocados, citrus, and apples. Irrigated uses such as alfalfa and pasture may also be found in these areas. The topography is gently rolling and rolling, on slopes between five and 30 percent. The soils consist mainly of Land Capability Classes III and IV. Property sizes generally range from 20 to a few hundred acres.



Dry Farm Lands

Dry land farming covers a broad range of properties that are primarily cultivated for an annual crop, but also may include some orchard operations. Parcels are normally large in order to be productive units. Farming activities are seasonal. Dry farm lands are divided into two types of croplands, mixed croplands and dry croplands, described below.



Mixed Croplands: Mixed croplands consist of two different types of terrain and crops. One type of mixed cropland is found in valleys with good soils but insufficient water for major irrigated uses. Such areas are characterized by mixed agricultural uses such as dry farm grain and hay and scattered irrigated crops. The other type of mixed cropland is found in areas of higher than average rainfall such as the easterly slopes of the Santa Lucia Range where dry farm orchards and some vineyards occur.

Mixed croplands are characterized by dry farm orchards and vineyards and specialty or high value field crops. The topography of these cropland areas typically range from flat to rolling on slopes between zero and 30 percent. The soils consist mainly of Land Capability Classes III and IV. Property sizes generally range from 40 acres to several hundred acres.

Dry Croplands: These areas are characterized by grain and hay production that is widespread in the northeastern part of the county. Barley, wheat and oat hay are the principal crops. Other crops include dry beans and safflower. Dry croplands may also include grain stubble fields and intervening non-cultivated areas that provide seasonal forage for livestock. The topography of these areas is generally flat to rolling on slopes between zero and 30 percent. The soils consist mainly of Land Capability Classes III and IV. Class VI land has also been commonly used for grain production. Property sizes generally range from 80 to several thousand acres.

Rangelands for Grazing

Grazing lands account for a large percentage of privately owned land in the county. Cattle ranching is the predominant use on these lands. The topography is mainly rolling and on steep slopes between 30 and 75 percent. Rangelands may also include small intervening valleys and ridgetops that have limited use or potential as farmland. The soils consist mainly of Land Capability Classes IV, VI and VII, but may also contain small intervening areas of other land capability classes. Property sizes generally range from 100 acres to thousands of acres, depending on the carrying capacity of the rangelands.



SOILS

As can be seen from the above description of the types of agricultural lands, soil characteristics are critical for agriculture. An understanding of the soils and their properties is an essential factor in developing appropriate agricultural land use patterns and policies. Soils, coupled with climatic conditions and the availability of water, largely determines whether agriculture is feasible and, if so, what kind of crops are possible.

To date, the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) has completed detailed soil surveys for the northern and coastal portions of the county, as well as the Cuyama Valley area that was included in a soil survey for Santa Barbara County. A survey has not yet been completed for the eastern Carrizo Plain area.

Each of the NRCS soil survey reports contains a general soil map that depicts 14 or 15 soil units that have a distinct pattern of soils, relief and drainage that represent a unique natural landscape. A copy of each of the three general survey maps is included in Appendix B of this document. Persons interested in more detailed information should contact the nearest NRCS office. Individual property owners who wish specific information about their property should contact the NRCS and review the detailed mapping in each of the soil surveys, or consider having detailed soils analyses prepared for their property.

The following is a general description of the eight soil capability classes as defined by the NRCS, followed by a brief description of the type of crops that may be typically found on those soils in San Luis Obispo County. Irrigation capability is required to be designated as Class I or II soil in the following descriptions. These irrigated soils are commonly referred to as "prime soils." See Appendix B for a more detailed explanation of the crop descriptions and mapping criteria that were used in the preparation of this document.

Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use. These soils are typically used for vegetables, seed crops, orchards, and other irrigated specialty crops and irrigated field crops.

Class II soils have minor to moderate limitation that reduce the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices. Uses are very similar to those found on Class I soils.

Class III and IV soils have moderate to severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, or that require special conservation practices, or both. In some situations, the Class III soils may be used for some of the crop types that are typically found on Class I and II soils, but are more typically used for specialty crops, forage lands, mixed croplands, and dryland field crops. Irrigated Class IV soils are commonly used for vineyards.

Class V soils are not likely to erode but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use.

Class VI soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuitable for cultivation. These soils have commonly been used for rangeland and dryland grain production.

Class VII soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuitable for cultivation. These lands are primarily used as rangelands for grazing.

Class VIII soils and landforms have limitations that nearly preclude their use for commercial crop production. However, some grazing occurs on these lands.

The conservation of our soil resources is essential to the future of the county. Unfortunately, a combination of actions is constantly occurring that has an adverse effect on this resource. Soil erosion is occurring due to natural processes, but also due to man's actions on the land through urbanization, inappropriate removal of vegetation, overgrazing, cultivation of steep slopes, and the continuing development of rural properties where landowners are not aware of sound conservation practices.

The **Conservation and Open Space Element** of the county general plan addresses soil resources in more detail and contains a number of recommendations for soil conservation.

HYDROLOGY

In the relatively arid climate of San Luis Obispo County, water is a valuable resource that is available in limited quantities. There is a fine balance between available supplies and various demands. The county should, within the limits of its authority, ensure that actions by individuals or agencies are consistent with maintaining this balance. Individuals and agencies should also be encouraged to take actions that will enhance this equation by increasing supplies or reducing demands. This balance between supplies and demands can be strengthened if, through the review of development proposals that have the potential for adversely affecting the water balance, appropriate mitigation measures are established, based on the following considerations:

1. Storage of water in or under the watershed should be maximized, thereby minimizing discharges that are lost out of the watershed.
2. Recharge of groundwater basins should be preserved and enhanced by protecting stream bed gravels that are a major source of recharge from sediment deposition. Other alluvial areas should be protected from impervious surfaces or compaction.
3. Water that is extracted from storage should be properly used in a manner that maximizes its beneficial use and that minimizes evaporative losses.

In addition to the above concerns for water quantity, water quality is equally important. Therefore, water that is targeted for groundwater recharge or surface impoundment should be protected from excessive nutrient and salt loading.

Surface Water

Reservoirs fed by surface waters provide roughly 40 percent of the water supply for the county. There are four major rivers in the county: Salinas, Nacimiento, Cuyama and Santa Maria rivers. Lesser streams include Santa Rosa, Chorro, San Luis Obispo and Arroyo Grande creeks. There are also numerous wetlands located in various areas of the county. There are several major watersheds, including the Salinas River system in the central and much of the eastern portion of the county, and the Cuyama Valley which includes portions of Santa Barbara, Kern and Ventura counties.

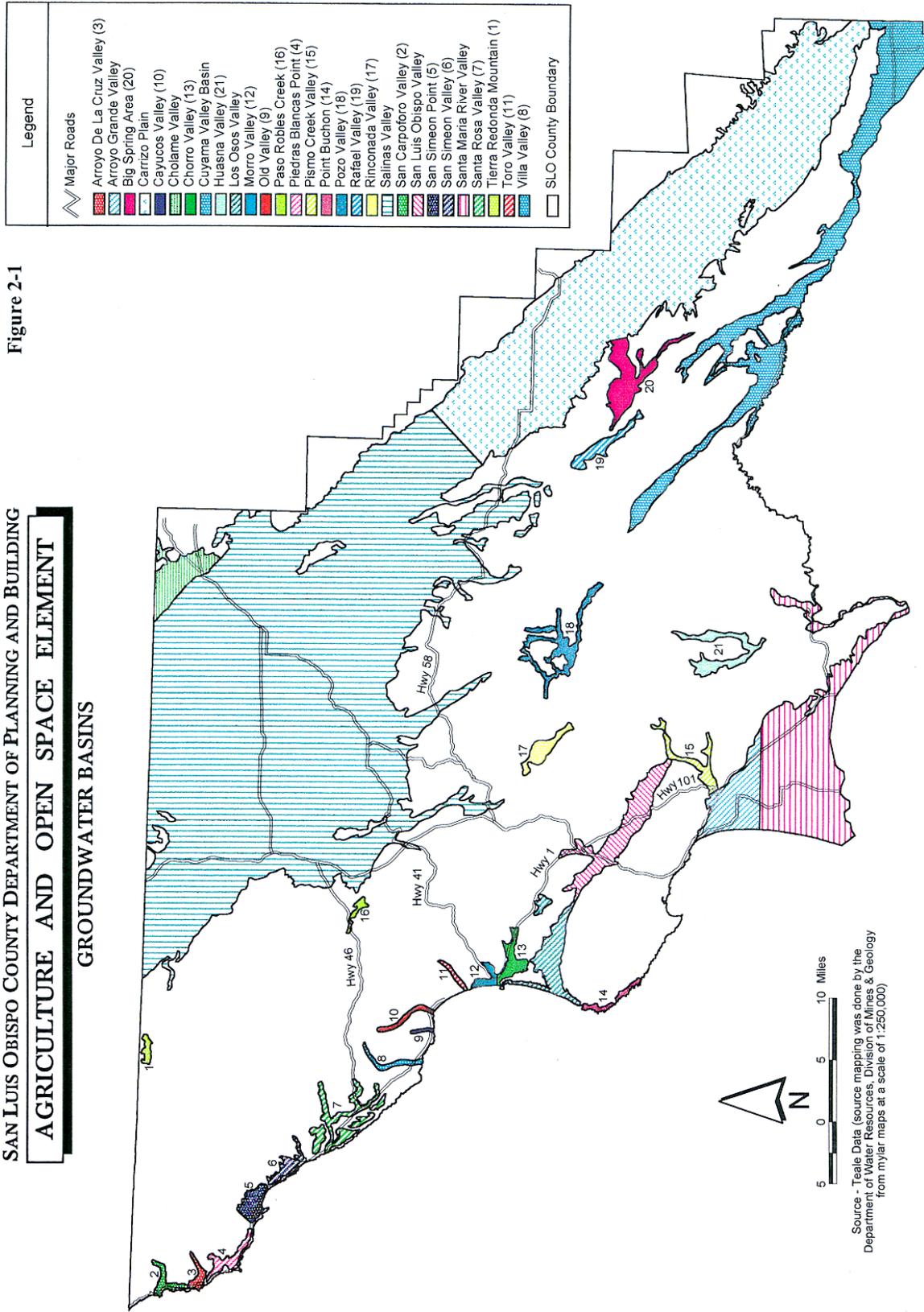
Groundwater

Groundwater is found within younger alluvium deposited in river valleys, and older alluvium and marine sediments. The small coastal groundwater basins are generally composed of younger deposits, while many of the larger inland basins also contain older alluvium. These groundwater basins provide about 60 percent of the water supply for the county.

The California State Department of Water Resources (DWR) has identified San Luis Obispo County as part of the Central Coastal Hydrologic Study Area (HSA), which includes San Benito and Monterey counties to the north and Santa Barbara County to the south. A total of 40 groundwater basins were identified in this multi-county study area, of which 29 groundwater basins are wholly or partly within San Luis Obispo County. Figure 2-1 shows the groundwater basins in the county. There are four large groundwater basins covering hundreds of square miles each: Paso Robles, Carrisa Plain, Cuyama Valley and Santa Maria basins. There are 20 smaller basins covering less than 50 square miles each, such as: Arroyo Grande Valley-Nipomo Mesa, San Luis Obispo Valley and Chorro Valley.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING
AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT
GROUNDWATER BASINS

Figure 2-1



Source - Teale Data (source mapping was done by the Department of Water Resources, Division of Mines & Geology from mylar maps at a scale of 1:250,000)

B. AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

WHY PROTECT AGRICULTURAL LANDS?

- ** The State of California, through the Food and Agriculture Code and State planning law, has found the preservation of agricultural lands to be of major importance to the future well being of the people of California.
- ** It is the policy of San Luis Obispo County to protect and encourage agricultural operations as stated in the county general plan and in the right-to-farm ordinance.
- ** There is a finite amount of land with the necessary characteristics that will enable the production of food and fiber, the basic necessities of life.
- ** Once agricultural land is converted to non-agricultural use, it is virtually impossible to remove the non-agricultural use and convert the land back to agricultural production.
- ** The agricultural industry is a major component of the San Luis Obispo County economy.
- ** Retaining land resources keeps options open for future agricultural activities as the industry changes over time.
- ** Agriculture provides productive open space that contributes to the rural character of the county.
- ** Retaining land in agriculture can have a secondary benefit of retaining other open space resources such as riparian lands, important habitat, and scenic quality.
- ** The open space qualities of agricultural lands contribute to the high quality of life and add to the livability of our communities.
- ** Broad expanses of agricultural land can contribute to the long-term protection of important ecosystems and natural communities.
- ** A strong commitment to agriculture will reduce the pressure to convert productive lands to urban uses, thereby reducing urban sprawl.

Protecting agricultural lands is of long-term importance to the county, state and nation. There is continuing and increasing pressure to convert the rural areas of the county to rural residential homesites. Agriculture can periodically find itself in a poor economic position due to market fluctuations, or adverse natural conditions such as a drought. However, the strong market for rural land in this county and many other parts of the state is a more long-term threat. This is being driven, in part, by the difficulties presented by estate planning and inheritance taxes that often lead to the parcelization of agricultural lands. The pressure for conversion of these lands is also being driven by the desire of many people to escape the pressures of living in the major urban centers. Conversion is also being driven by the desirability of enjoying a rural lifestyle while still being able to connect to the business world through the ever-increasing technical advances of the telecommunications age.

The 1990 Rural Settlement Study Phase I Report evaluated development activity in relation to the agricultural lands that have been identified through the State Farmland Mapping Program. Based on that review, it is important to protect agricultural land now because:

- ** Over 90 percent of the County's "prime" agricultural land occurs in areas that have been experiencing development activity through tract maps, parcel maps and residential building permits;
- ** Almost all of the "unique" agricultural land is located in areas experiencing development;
- ** Over 60 percent of the lands of "local importance" occur in areas where development activity has occurred; and
- ** Lands defined as being of local "potential" have experienced the most development. Because these lands are widely dispersed around the county, it makes it difficult to identify areas that could be easily protected in the future except through a careful review of individual projects on a case-by-case basis.

If the protection of agricultural land is not given a high priority now, the industry may not be able to withstand the pressure to convert to other uses and move on. Farmers who have spent generations on the land and who want to see their families continue to enjoy that lifestyle, and who have a commitment to producing food and fiber for the rest of society, may no longer be able to withstand the pressure to sell the family farm. The long-term result will be the loss of productive lands for future generations, as well as the loss of the history and lifestyle that provides the rural character that is San Luis Obispo County.

What are the Issues Affecting Agricultural Lands?

*** The county's agricultural industry is constantly changing and evolving.**

While more traditional land uses prevail in the more arid eastern portions of the county, thousands of acres have been removed from production as part of the federal conservation reserve program. While it is possible that these acres may eventually be returned to agricultural production, it is also possible that they may not return to their prior use of dry farm grain, but instead be put into some other form of agricultural activities. Areas closer to the coast are being affected by population growth and a trend towards more intensive agricultural uses. As the type of agriculture changes, whether it be from dry land farming to vineyards, or a shift to specialty crops, there is a need to establish policies governing agricultural land use which are flexible and can respond to changing needs and opportunities.

*** Population growth can create pressure for speculative investment in agricultural land for conversion to non-agricultural uses.**

The county's moderate year-round climate, quality educational facilities and other amenities create a desirable environment that draws people to the area and create conflicts at the urban/agriculture interface. Antiquated, small-lot subdivisions typify these problems. These old subdivisions underlying rural and agricultural areas are sold as individual lots and developed as rural homesites in areas without adequate public services. These rural homesites increase conflicts with surrounding agricultural operations in numerous ways.

- * A number of parcels in the Agriculture land use category are too small to support most production agricultural uses.

There are approximately 2,750 parcels that are smaller than 20 acres, totaling about 16,700 acres, which are in the Agriculture category (zone) as designated in the Land Use Element of the general plan. There are another approximately 2,100 parcels, totaling about 6,200 acres, which are 10 acres or less in size. These properties, with a range of farming activities, are what are commonly referred to as "ranchettes" or "hobby farms."

As a positive characteristic, these "ranchettes" enable the property owners to engage in some form of agricultural activity. They also allow the residents to experience a rural lifestyle and may enable their children to participate in such activities as 4-H and Future Farmers of America. While these parcels may also provide some amount of transition from urban to production agricultural lands, or function as community separators between the urban areas, these smaller parcels are too small to provide long-term protection of agricultural land resources.

Because these small parcels comprise the greatest interface between urban/suburban uses and production agricultural land uses, they provide the greatest likelihood of leading to incompatibilities between agriculturalists and their suburban or urban neighbors. These parcels have historically presented the largest number of complaints about agricultural practices that make it increasingly difficult to conduct the business of farming. Therefore, a major focus should be on preventing further breakdown of agricultural lands into these types of small ownership patterns.

- * Estate planning issues among members of agricultural families, or the necessity of paying estate taxes, are frequently acting as the pressure forcing the sale or parceling of farms.

The pressure for parceling agricultural lands among heirs can be substantial. There is often the need to be fair to all family members by providing separate and equal interests in the estate, rather than the heirs all sharing an undivided interest in the land. However, property buyers seeking small rural acreages are willing to pay prices for rural homesites that are many times greater than what the land is worth for agricultural purposes. Parceling of the farmland into rural homesites increases the market value of that land measurably, putting further pressure on adjoining or nearby lands to be converted to non-agricultural uses. Those landowners who choose not to convert are affected by the higher selling prices of the converted lands because increased land values result in higher property, gift and inheritance taxes when the farmland is sold or transferred.

- * Many of the lands better suited to agriculture are located near urban areas and are experiencing increasing conflicts between agricultural practices and urban neighbors.

Even though the county has a strong Right-to-Farm ordinance that contains a clear statement that agriculture is a favored use, more people at the urban/agriculture interface leads to more complaints about conventional agricultural practices. As the density of population adjacent to agricultural lands increases, conflicts can arise between farmers who are continuing routine agricultural practices that produce noise, dust or other annoyances for their non-farming neighbors. These complaints, in the long run, can be detrimental to agriculture's ability to remain viable. Therefore, it will continue to be important to maintain a strong agricultural "right-to-farm" ordinance, as well as strong policies that will ensure appropriate buffers between new development and ongoing agricultural operations.

- * Water is becoming an increasingly scarce resource.

Water is the life blood of agriculture. Groundwater has been the dominant historical water supply for agriculture in San Luis Obispo County, largely because of its low cost. Changes in agriculture itself (such as a shift from dry farming to grapes) have increased groundwater use. Well permits can be obtained easily by any property owner without well output control. Increased population and the desirability of the county for recreational and tourist-related activities creates still more competition for limited groundwater resources.

San Luis Obispo County has committed itself to a path that requires active preservation of local water supplies, including groundwater and water imported from local reservoirs such as Lopez Lake and Lake Nacimiento. Land use decisions have traditionally focused on surface areas; however, the land's contribution to groundwater and surface water supplies should also be evaluated.

The amount of water that can be harvested in any watershed is a function of the geology, geography, and proximity to water storage facilities (both underground and on the surface). Rather than just focusing on the merits of proposed developments relative to their scale and location, the developments should also be reviewed for their contribution to or degradation of water supplies from a cumulative, watershed perspective. Development that produces impervious surfacing over porous soils or produces silts that clog groundwater recharging stream gravels should be mitigated or redesigned to reduce these impacts. The traditional methods of valuing land and its usage should be expanded to include the optimization of groundwater recharge and surface impoundment.

The effects of land use decisions are not only an issue for agriculture. The effects of the decisions will also have potentially significant effects on the carrying capacity of natural systems. Open space resource such as coastal stream habitats and other sensitive environmental resources throughout the county can be adversely affected if the assessment of water issues is not expanded to look at the larger picture in the context of watershed planning and management.

- * Agriculture is affected by many aspects of the local, national and international economy.

Farm debt, fluctuating farm commodity prices, competition in world markets, and operational costs all impact agriculture viability. Diversification and development of uses complementary to agricultural activities may provide opportunities for farmers and ranchers to compete within the agricultural industry, and help to protect agricultural lands for future generations.

- * While more than half of the agricultural acreage in the county is under Williamson Act conservation contracts, the terms of some of those contracts may not adequately protect agricultural land.

The county has steadfastly maintained a strong commitment to the Williamson Act program. However, some of the early areawide preserves may not provide sufficient long-term protection of agricultural lands.

The original Edna Valley, Nipomo Valley and Estrella agricultural preserves, and part of the Shandon preserve, have a minimum parcel size of 40 acres. These preserve areas with the 40 acre minimum parcel size total approximately 57,200 acres. The original Adelaida agricultural preserve, approximately 21,600 acres, has a minimum parcel size of 80 acres. Those parcel sizes may now be too small for properties to sustain long-term agriculture. Under the county's current Rules of

Procedure, much of the dry farm or grazing lands in those preserves would currently require a 160 or 320 acre minimum parcel size.

Moreover, early preserve contracts do not prohibit separate sale of existing parcels of record that are smaller than the agricultural preserve minimum parcel sizes. The result could be the sale of individually-owned parcels in these locations for residential purposes.

Clearly, there is no single solution to such a wide range of issues. Nor are the solutions only local ones. Many issues associated with agriculture may only be resolved through policies at the state or national level. However, the county should define its agricultural land use polices in order to protect agricultural land resources for the future.



C. AGRICULTURAL GOALS, POLICIES, IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES AND PROGRAMS

INTENT

Through the following goals, policies, implementation measures and programs, it is the intent of San Luis Obispo County to promote and protect the agricultural industry of the County, to provide for a continuing sound and healthy agriculture in the county, and to encourage a productive and profitable agricultural industry. This can be done by:

1. Supporting increased sales of crops and livestock products produced by farmers, ranchers and processors of food, fiber and flowers in this county;
2. Supporting the efforts of the county's agricultural industry in developing and enhancing domestic and international markets for San Luis Obispo County products;
3. Supporting the creation of value added products and the development of new consumer products; and
4. Supporting long-term productivity and sustainability of the county's farms and ranches by conserving and protecting the soil, water and air which are agriculture's basic resources.

This chapter focuses on the agricultural resources of the county while recognizing that other valuable open space resources such as wetlands, riparian vegetation, or scenic resources can exist on those agricultural lands. Therefore, the goals, policies and implementation measures in this chapter address agriculture first, but also address the protection of open space resources on private lands designated Agriculture by the LUE and this element and on other lands used for production agriculture. Open space resources are fully addressed in the Conservation and Open Space Element.

AGRICULTURAL GOALS (AG)

AG1: Support County Agricultural Production.

- a. **Support and promote a healthy and competitive agricultural industry whose products are recognized in national and international markets as being produced in San Luis Obispo County.**
- b. **Facilitate agricultural production by allowing a broad range of uses and agricultural support services to be consistently and accessibly located in areas of prime agricultural activity.**
- c. **Support ongoing efforts by the agricultural community to develop new techniques and new practices.**

- d. Develop agricultural permit processing procedures that are rapid and efficient. Do not require permits for agricultural practices and improvements that are currently exempt. Keep the required level of permit processing for non-exempt projects at the lowest possible level consistent with the protection of agricultural resources and sensitive habitats.

AG2: Conserve Agricultural Resources.

- a. Maintain the agricultural land base of the county by clearly defining and identifying productive agricultural lands for long-term protection.
- b. Conserve the soil and water that are the vital components necessary for a successful agricultural industry in this county.
- c. Establish land-use policies in this element that support the needs of agriculture without impeding its long-term viability.

AG3: Protect Agricultural Lands.

- a. Establish criteria in this element for agricultural land divisions that will promote the long-term viability of agriculture.
- b. Maintain and protect agricultural lands from inappropriate conversion to non-agricultural uses. Establish criteria in this element and corresponding changes in the Land Use Element and Land Use Ordinance for when it is appropriate to convert land from agricultural to non-agricultural designations.
- c. Maintain and strengthen the county's agricultural preserve program (Williamson Act) as an effective means for long-term agricultural land preservation.
- d. Provide incentives for landowners to maintain land in productive agricultural uses.

AG4: Encourage Public Education and Participation.

- a. Encourage ongoing public education programs by such organizations as the County Department of Agriculture, U.C. Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau and industry organizations, to provide information about agriculture in San Luis Obispo County and help the public better understand the importance of the agricultural industry.
- b. Encourage public participation through the public hearing process in the on-going development of county plans, policies, and ordinances affecting agricultural lands. Utilize the resources of such organizations as the County Agricultural Liaison Advisory Board, community advisory groups, and conservation organizations.

AGRICULTURAL POLICIES (AGP)

The policies to attain the preceding goals are interrelated, therefore, they are addressed under the following headings: use of agricultural lands; resource conservation and management; protection of agricultural lands; and protection of open space resources on agricultural lands. These policies apply primarily to land designated Agriculture on the land use designations map in this element, unless otherwise specified. The policies are intended to be consistent with adopted policies, standards and ordinances of the Local Coastal Program (LCP) and are in addition to all applicable LCP policies, standards and ordinances.

To the maximum extent possible, the following policies, implementation measures and programs try to balance protection of open space resources and the needs of production agriculture, and minimize the impacts to ongoing production agriculture. It is the intent to **not** require permits for agriculturally-related projects that are currently exempt, and to **keep** the required level of permit processing for non-exempt projects at the lowest possible level consistent with the protection of agricultural resources and sensitive habitats. The policies and recommended implementation measures apply to discretionary land use permits for new development (see Glossary for definition of development) and proposed land divisions.

Policies regarding the use of agricultural lands.

AGP1: Public Education.

- a. **Support and participate in on-going agricultural education programs aimed at informing the general public about our agricultural industry.**

Discussion: If the goals for agriculture as stated in this element are to be effectively accomplished, there should be a commitment to on-going public education about the importance and role of agriculture in this county. There are a variety of public and private agencies that participate in education programs focused on agriculture, including but not limited to the County Agriculture Department, U.C. Cooperative Extension, San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, Cal Poly State University, numerous agricultural industry groups, and others. The county should continue to participate in such programs.

Implementation: The county Department of Agriculture, in coordination and cooperation with U.C. Cooperative Extension, other public and private organizations and educational institutions, should remain in a leadership role of providing public education about the agricultural industry in the county.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

AGP2: Public and Private Lands.

- a. **The agricultural policies and implementation measures in this element shall apply equally to public as well as private lands.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to recognize that the agricultural policies and implementation measures apply equally to public as well as private projects. When public agencies propose projects, the agencies are in a position of setting a positive example for the rest of the community. Since the following policies and implementation measures are part of the county

general plan, the plans and programs of county agencies, school districts and other special districts should be consistent with them.

Implementation/Timeframe: Ongoing through the review of development proposals and the review of agency projects for conformity with the adopted county general plan.

AGP3: Right-to-Farm Ordinance.

- a. **This element reaffirms the county’s Right-to-Farm Ordinance, Title 5 of the County Code, as an effective means to let the public know that the use of real property for agricultural operations is a high priority and favored use. The Right-to-Farm Ordinance requires disclosure statements between sellers and buyers of properties at the time of property transfer and through inclusion of disclosure statements on all discretionary land use permit applications administered by the County Department of Planning and Building.**
- b. **Encourage the County Agriculture Department to: (1) maintain an outreach information program to make the local real estate industry and the public aware of the Right-to-Farm Ordinance and the disclosure provisions on property transactions, and (2) continue mediating issues relating to the Right-to-Farm Ordinance.**

Discussion: Many purchasers of land in agricultural areas are initially attracted by the country environment. Only after they move into the agricultural area do they become aware of the intensity of agricultural activities. Purchasers may complain to government authorities or their elected officials about annoyances from agricultural activities. The purpose of this policy is to minimize such complaints by requiring disclosure of more facts about land in agricultural areas and their potential use when properties change ownership.

Implementation:

1. The County shall follow the provisions in Title 5 of the County Code regarding the right-to-farm ordinance.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. The County Department of Agriculture should maintain an outreach information program to make the local real estate industry and the public aware of the disclosure provisions on property transactions.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP4: Agricultural Use of Small Parcels.

- a. **Encourage the establishment of small-scale agriculture uses, specialty crops, and specialized animal facilities on existing small land parcels in the Agriculture land-use category.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage agricultural uses and discourage rural residences as the principal use on existing small agriculturally-zoned parcels. The Land Use Element and Land Use Ordinance already recognize and encourage these uses as appropriate and allowable

uses in the Agriculture land use category. This will encourage the best use of agricultural land and will help minimize conflicts with surrounding agricultural uses and agriculturally-zoned parcels.

Implementation: In order to better make people aware of the benefits of locating operations devoted to specialty crops and specialized animal facilities (as defined in the LUE and LUO) in agricultural areas of the county, the Agriculture Department, the Department of Planning and Building, and agricultural organizations and agencies should advise existing and prospective owners of smaller agricultural properties about the benefits of locating these uses on properties designated Agriculture, rather than in residential areas where land is likely to be more expensive and land use conflicts are more likely to occur between the agricultural activities and residential neighbors. This policy is to be implemented through day-to-day public contact with persons who desire to establish small-scale agricultural specialty uses on property they already own or are considering for purchase.

AGP5: Residential Density.

- a. **Allow residential density of two primary dwellings on each existing legal parcel of 20 acres or larger in the Agriculture land-use category. On parcels of less than 20 acres, allow one primary and one farm support dwelling.**
- b. **Allow farm support quarters consistent with the standards of the LUO.**
- c. **See AGP 21 for the allowed density when proposing land divisions to create new parcels on lands containing Class I and II irrigated soils.**

Discussion: In item a., the first portion of this policy would not alter the number of primary residences currently allowed by the Land Use Ordinance on parcels larger than 20 acres and designated Agriculture. However, the second portion of item a. would add the ability of having a secondary dwelling on parcels less than 20 acres in size as a way to increase housing flexibility and options for the farm family, but would require that the second home meet the requirements for farm support quarters. Part b. of the policy gives recognition to the existing provisions of the LUO that allow the establishment of farm support quarters, and provides housing options and flexibility for farm operators. Part c. of the policy clarifies that the residential density must be consistent with the requirements of AGP 21 when a land division is proposed on property that contains Class I and II irrigated soils.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO to allow residential density in the Agriculture land use category consistent with this policy and the discussion above.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP6: Visitor Serving and Retail Commercial Use and Facilities.

- a. **Allow limited visitor serving and incidental retail use and facilities in agricultural areas that are beneficial to the agricultural industry and farm operators and are compatible with long-term agricultural use of the land. Such uses shall be clearly incidental and secondary to the primary agricultural use of the site and shall comply with the performance standards in the LUO.**

- b. Locate the visitor serving and incidental retail use off of productive agricultural lands unless there are no other feasible locations. Locate new structures where land use compatibility, circulation, and infrastructure capacity exist or can be developed compatible with agricultural uses.**

Discussion: This policy recognizes the increasing need of farmers and ranchers to diversify their on-site activities from production through the marketing of their agricultural products. On-site and area-specific promotion and marketing of local agricultural products can also enhance local tourism.

Implementation: Both the LUE (Table ‘O’, Allowable Uses) and LUO allow a variety of uses accessory to agricultural operations, such as a winery tasting room, a bed-and-breakfast, or a restaurant. The accessory uses must be clearly incidental and secondary to the primary agricultural use of the site and must comply with performance standards in the ordinance. The types of uses and the effectiveness of the performance standards for their establishment should be monitored over time and, if necessary, future amendments proposed that will further enhance the agricultural operations by the establishment of accessory uses.

Timeframe: On-going.

AGP7: Service Commercial-Type Uses.

- a. Allow limited service commercial-type uses where needed to support local agricultural production.**
- b. Locate the service commercial-type uses off of productive agricultural lands unless there are no other feasible locations. Locate new structures where land use compatibility, circulation, and infrastructure capacity exist or can be developed compatible with agricultural uses.**

Discussion: Most service commercial-type uses needed in agricultural areas are already allowed; for example, farm equipment repair services, veterinary services, rental and farming services using heavy equipment, and bulk supplies that cannot be transported easily between urban and rural areas. These types of uses are included in the land use definitions of Ag Processing, Farm Equipment and Supplies, Food and Kindred Products, Small Scale Manufacturing, Warehousing, and Wholesaling and Distribution.

Service commercial-type agricultural support services are normally located in areas designated as Commercial Service or Industrial, most often located in the urban areas of the county. However, the purpose of this policy is to encourage agricultural support service uses that may need to be located within agricultural areas, but to make sure that the location of those uses complies with standards that protect or enhance long-term agriculture in the area.

Implementation: Review the existing standards in the LUO and CZLUO and, where necessary, propose amendments to those standards to require that land use permit applications for service commercial-type uses in support of agriculture comply with specified performance standards such as: siting related to agricultural uses; access; water supply and recharge areas; fire protection service; setbacks and screening. These standards would apply to uses that are included within the definitions

of Ag Processing, Farm Equipment and Supplies, Food and Kindred Products, Small Scale Manufacturing, Warehousing, and Wholesaling and Distribution.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP8: Intensive Agricultural Facilities.

- a. **Allow the development of compatible intensive agricultural facilities that support local agricultural production, processing, packing, and support industries.**
- b. **Locate intensive agricultural facilities off of productive agricultural lands unless there are no other feasible locations. Locate new structures where land use compatibility, circulation, and infrastructure capacity exist or can be developed compatible with agricultural uses.**

Discussion: Agriculture's needs are the primary determinates of the location of agricultural facilities. Intensive agricultural facilities include many different types of uses that have varied requirements as to location, site characteristics, water, sanitary service and waste disposal, as well as a variable degree of potential conflicts with residential and other urban land uses. Examples of such uses are livestock feedlots, dairies, hog farms, poultry operations, mushroom production, greenhouses, aquiculture facilities, feed and grain mills, meat-packing plants, other types of food processing plants, breweries, wineries, produce packing sheds, packing and packaging materials, ice manufacturing, and transportation facilities for agricultural products and supplies.

This policy recognizes that additional intensive agricultural facilities may be needed to support local agriculture. However, not all such uses may be appropriate on all locations where they might be proposed. Finding suitable locations for such facilities where development will be compatible with surrounding uses is important to both agriculture and the surrounding uses. Accordingly, the county should actively assist in finding appropriate locations in agricultural, industrial or commercial service areas.

The LUE and LUO have appropriate standards for the location of such uses. However, one such type of use not referenced as an allowed use would be a brewery. Under existing county standards, wineries can be established using grapes either grown on-site or imported from another site. While hops are not yet an established crop in this county, breweries could become similar to wineries if more locally grown product becomes available so as to make establishment of a brewery feasible. Standards in the LUO should establish the requirements for developing a brewery by spelling out such factors as requiring that a majority of the raw products needed are grown in San Luis Obispo County, the type of land use permit required, how the site is to be developed, and the type of access required to the site.

A review of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system shows that wineries, breweries, and the manufacturing of other types of spirits are included in the definition of Food and Kindred Products. However, under the existing LUE/LUO, breweries are not referenced as a use that could be established in this county. Therefore, the LUE/LUO should be amended to include breweries as a conditional use.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should work with representatives of the agricultural industry, individuals and community groups to identify appropriate development standards for the placement of intensive agricultural facilities that are directly related to agricultural production, processing, packing and support industries.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUE to include breweries in the definition of "Food and Kindred Products." The LUO should also be amended to incorporate appropriate development standards for breweries, such as but not limited to requiring that a majority of the raw products needed are grown in San Luis Obispo County, the type of land use permit required, how the site is to be developed, the type of access required to the site, as well as a provision that breweries shall not be located on agricultural lands unless there are no other feasible alternative locations available. Further definition of what constitutes a winery and accessory activities should also take place.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

3. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO by adding development standards for uses included in the land use definition of "Food and Kindred Products" (as defined in Framework for Planning) similar to those standards already in place for wineries that will ensure compatibility with the rural and agricultural character of the area.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

Policies regarding resource conservation and management.

AGP9: Soil Conservation.

- a. **Encourage landowners to participate in programs that reduce soil erosion and increase soil productivity. Promote coordination between the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, Consolidated Farm Services Agency, Morro Bay State and National Estuary, and other agencies and organizations.**
- b. **Emphasize the long-range benefits of proper drainage control and tillage, cropping, soil amendment, and grazing techniques to minimize soil erosion.**
- c. **Assure that roads and drainage systems on county-controlled properties and facilities do not negatively impact agricultural lands and that the roads and systems are properly maintained.**

Discussion: Loss of topsoil is a threat to the continued productivity of agricultural lands. The purpose of this policy is to minimize the loss of topsoil by encouraging broad-based cooperation between property owners, ag operators, agencies and organizations that will lead to effective soil conservation practices on farmlands and on county-controlled properties.

Implementation:

1. The County Department of Agriculture should participate in educational efforts regarding soil conservation developed cooperatively by the Resource Conservation Districts, Consolidated Farm Services Agency, U.C. Cooperative Extension, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Morro Bay State and National Estuary Programs. Educational efforts should utilize all available information and avoid duplication of effort.
2. These standards and methods should also be applied to lands and facilities owned and operated by the County to set a positive example for soil conservation.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

AGP10: Water Conservation.

- a. **Encourage water conservation through feasible and appropriate “best management practices.” Emphasize efficient water application techniques; the use of properly designed irrigation systems; and the control of runoff from croplands, rangelands, and agricultural roads.**
- b. **Encourage the U.C. Cooperative Extension to continue its public information and research program describing water conservation techniques that may be appropriate for agricultural practices in this county. Encourage landowners to participate in programs that conserve water.**

Discussion: Land area, the water falling on it, and groundwater stored beneath its surface are inseparable in determining agricultural values and productivity in the County. Other than the land itself, water is the most precious resource for agriculture. Conserving water can benefit agriculture by reducing groundwater pumping. Uncontrolled runoff can contribute to soil loss, reduced water quality in streams, increased impact on riparian habitat, decreased opportunity for groundwater recharge and degradation of the general productivity of the watershed.

Implementation:

1. Encourage farmers and ranchers to periodically conduct irrigation efficiency analyses, such as those provided by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service mobile irrigation lab program, or an equivalent. If financially feasible, the County should consider funding assistance.
2. The County Department of Agriculture should participate in educational efforts regarding water conservation developed cooperatively by the Resource Conservation Districts, Consolidated Farm Services Agency, U.C. Cooperative Extension, and the U.S. Natural

Resources Conservation Service. Educational efforts should utilize all available information and avoid duplication of effort.

3. Conservation methods should also be applied to lands and facilities owned and operated by the County to set a positive example for water conservation.
4. County departments should facilitate the approval of water conservation, surface water retention, improvement of ground water recharge areas and artificial recharge structures by providing applicants for such structures with information identifying which local, state and federal agencies must be contacted regarding such projects.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

AGP11: Agricultural Water Supplies.

- a. **Maintain water resources for production agriculture, both in quality and quantity, so as to prevent the loss of agriculture due to competition for water with urban and suburban development.**
- b. **Do not approve proposed general plan amendments or rezonings that result in increased residential density or urban expansion if the subsequent development would adversely affect: (1) water supplies and quality, or (2) groundwater recharge capability needed for agricultural use.**
- c. **Do not approve facilities to move groundwater from areas of overdraft to any other area, as determined by the Resource Management System in the Land Use Element.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to strongly promote agricultural uses. Where urban development uses groundwater supplies, surrounding agricultural uses are often eventually displaced. By maintaining groundwater supplies primarily for irrigated agriculture uses, the county can encourage continued and expanded agricultural uses. In addition, this could reduce the chances that urban and suburban development will diminish recharge, deplete agricultural water supplies, degrade water quality, or make those supplies uneconomical for agriculture to use.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the guidelines for general plan amendments in Framework for Planning of the LUE to reference this policy as it applies to groundwater supplies.

Timeframe: 18 months from plan adoption.

2. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO, CZLUO and the Real Property Division Ordinance to establish standards to ensure that proposed land divisions and discretionary land use permit projects for non-agricultural purposes in rural areas do not adversely affect water supplies, watershed yields or water quality for existing or expanded agricultural uses. The standards should be based on

approved groundwater basin/resource capacity studies, or other studies done in connection with the environmental review process.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

3. On a watershed basis, County Planning, Engineering and Agricultural Departments will prepare a proposed work program to conduct or facilitate preparation of up-to-date groundwater basin/resource capacity studies that identify water supplies and drainage requirements (i.e., future demand vs. delivery capacity, trends, watershed yields, safe yields, surface drainage channels and salt sinks) relating to the needs of agriculture and other uses. The proposed work program and subsequent studies will be prepared in consultation with the county Water Resources Advisory Committee, U.C. Cooperative Extension and the Natural Resources Conservation Service,

Timeframe: Proposed work program submitted to Board of Supervisors within 12 months of plan adoption.

4. Recommend to LAFCO denial of proposed annexations to incorporated cities or special districts which would adversely affect existing agricultural water supplies and which would be inconsistent with preceding implementation measures.

Timeframe: Ongoing through review of proposed annexations.

5. The ~~county~~ Environmental Health Division should initiate an information program to fully identify the potential beneficial uses and potential hazards of reclaimed water.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

6. The County Engineering Department, Agriculture Department, U.C. Cooperative Extension, and production agriculture representatives should advise the Planning and Building Department on matters involving agricultural water supplies, demand and water quality effects on crops.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

AGP12: Pest, Vertebrate, and Weed Management.

- a. **Assure that pests such as squirrels and noxious weeds are managed on county owned properties so as to avoid impacts on agriculture.**
- b. **Encourage the use of integrated pest management techniques to manage pests, vertebrates, and weeds on both public and private lands.**
- c. **Support and promote programs that help landowners learn pest control methods, utilizing the expertise of the U.C. Cooperative Extension and the County Agriculture Department.**

Discussion: This policy emphasizes the importance of managing pests on private and county-controlled properties. Pests can have a detrimental effect on agricultural operations, including increased costs to manage pests. In order to minimize concerns about possible environmental and health effects of herbicides and other chemicals, the county should promote integrated pest management techniques.

Implementation:

1. The county should support continued funding of pest and vertebrate control programs, including integrated pest management techniques, on county properties and facilities where needed to prevent significant effects on agriculture or public health, and encourage private property owners to participate in these programs.
2. Encourage other local, state and federal agencies and organizations to work cooperatively with the county pest, vertebrate and weed management programs.
3. Encourage the County Agriculture Department and U.C. Cooperative Extension to provide public education information about pest management programs.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

AGP13: Agricultural Material Composting.

- a. **Encourage the composting and re-use of agricultural commodities and materials.**
- b. **The county should carefully evaluate and work cooperatively with appropriate state and federal agencies, local organizations and land owners to determine whether and under what circumstances bio-solids are appropriate for land disposal.**

Discussion: Composting of agricultural wastes and by-products offers an opportunity to return resources to the agricultural operation. It also offers a way to reduce the impacts on available space in landfills and reduce air pollution from agricultural burning. An agricultural composting activity is exempt from permit requirements if green or animal material is produced and composted on site, and a similar amount of compost is returned to the site or another property operated by the agriculturist. Agricultural materials composting operations and facilities are regulated through the California Code of Regulations and the Public Resources Code which are enforced by a number of different governmental agencies.

The county should evaluate the issues associated with land applications of bio-solids (sludge). If it is determined that there are benefits to agriculture to allow such applications, guidelines should be prepared to specify how and where such materials may be applied. The county Agricultural Commissioner, Environmental Health Department and the Department of Planning and Building should work cooperatively with U.C. Cooperative Extension, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, waste generators, land owners, researchers and environmental organizations to carefully evaluate this issue to determine the appropriate actions to take.

Implementation:

1. Composting should be encouraged through voluntary action of landowners and operators.

Timeline: Ongoing.

2. The Board of Supervisors should ask the county Agriculture and Environmental Health Departments, with public participation and input, to develop recommendations as to whether and under what circumstances bio-solids can be used on agricultural lands.

Timeline: 12 months from plan adoption.

3. The county should continue to participate in public educational programs concerning issues associated with land application of bio-solids.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Policies regarding the protection of agricultural lands.

Sales of existing lots in rural subdivisions and other substandard-size parcels scattered throughout the county can result in major adverse impacts on agricultural land use. Many areas containing small parcels are still owned and operated as large farms and ranches. Some of these areas are protected for the term of land conservation contracts because the contracts prohibit conveyance of individual parcels or groups of parcels that are smaller than the minimum parcel sizes applied to agricultural preserves. However, many small parcels are not given that protection through agricultural preserve contracts. Many of these parcels could also become available for sale if the land owners decide to file a notice of non-renewal of an ag preserve contract in order to be able to offer the parcels for eventual sale. The impacts on agriculture could be serious and long-term.

Agricultural land owners should be encouraged to enter into land conservation contracts. However, additional protection programs are needed that are focused on productive agricultural resources and cost effective to implement.

The following policies focus on agricultural land protection by addressing agricultural preserves, lot line adjustments, transfer of development credits (TDC's), and other conservation tools and strategies that may be useful in protecting agricultural resources.

AGP14: Agricultural Preserve Program.

- a. **Encourage eligible property owners to participate in the county's agricultural preserve program.**

Discussion: Through 1995, cropland and grazing lands involved approximately 1,160,400 acres (including acreage in the Conservation and Reserve Program) or 55 percent of the total county area (2,122,240 acres) and accounted for approximately 74 percent of privately-owned lands in the county. The agricultural preserve program continues to be the primary program for long-term protection of agricultural land in the county. A Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) contract provides

tax incentives for land owners to participate in the program in exchange for agreeing to keep their properties in large parcels and in agricultural uses for minimum terms of 10 or 20 years, depending on property location. A contract reduces property taxes to reflect the production value of agricultural land, thereby promoting long-term agricultural use.

The county has a strong agricultural preserve program. Between 1980 and January 1, 1998, approximately 109,200 acres have been added to the contracted lands. However, there has still been pressure to convert agricultural land to non-agricultural use. Since adoption of the Land Use Element/Land Use Ordinance system in 1980, over 3,000 acres of land have been rezoned from the Agriculture category to non-agricultural land use categories in the unincorporated areas of the county.

The pressure for conversion can also be seen in statistics compiled by the California Department of Conservation, the agency that oversees the state's Williamson Act program. Those statistics show that while the county had approximately 769,200 acres under Williamson Act contract as of January 1, 1998, notices of non-renewal are filed on approximately 8,000 acres of these contracted lands.

The county should continue to support incentives to encourage land owners to participate in the agricultural preserve program. These incentives can include such things as the continued subsidization of application processing fees for new agricultural preserves, as well as timely processing of land use permit applications for agriculturally-related development on lands under agricultural preserve contracts. Detailed policies to maintain and strengthen the agricultural preserve program are described in the county "Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965," as adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

The state legislature has also recognized that additional incentives are needed to expand options for landowners who wish to gain longer term farmland protection than otherwise available through a conventional Williamson Act contract. Amendments to the Land Conservation Act in 1998, added a new option called a "farmland security zone." Under this amendment to the Act, land owners may voluntarily rescind an existing contract in order to simultaneously enter into a new contract designating the property as a farmland security zone. The term of the contract shall be not less than 20 years, with an automatic annual one year extension of the initial term unless a notice of nonrenewal is filed by the owner.

Lands covered by a contract in a farmland security zone will receive additional protection through tax valuation provisions in the Revenue and Taxation Code, application at a reduced rate of any special tax approved by the voters for urban-related services, limitations on the annexation of lands under such a designation and contract to a city or special district, and a prohibition against a school district declaring local zoning regulations inapplicable to lands to be used or acquired by the district. The county should amend its Rules of Procedure to incorporate this legislation, inform holders of existing Williamson Act contracts of this new option and assist any interested owners in applying it to their land.

In another tax-related matter, family farmers should be made aware of the opportunity to measurably reduce federal death taxes by electing to use Internal Revenue Service Section 2032A (Special Use Valuation). A summary of qualifications for that section is included in the county Rules of Procedure referenced above.

Implementation:

1. As an incentive for land owners to participate in the agricultural preserve program, the county should continue to provide a subsidy to the application filing fees for processing applications to establish agricultural preserves. In addition, the Department of Planning and Building shall provide timely processing of land use permit applications for agriculturally-related development on land subject to Williamson Act contract.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. The County Agricultural Preserve Review Committee should consider, and recommend to the Board of Supervisors, proposed amendments to the county Rules of Procedure to incorporate recent changes to the Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) that provide for the creation of “farm security zones,” and recommended procedures by which a landowner may voluntarily enter into a new contract designating the property in such a zone.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP 15: Transfer of Development Credits (TDC).

- a. **Continue to utilize a voluntary TDC program to help protect agricultural resources by guiding development to more suitable areas.**

Discussion: The adopted TDC program is applicable in the inland areas of the county, not in the coastal zone. As noted in Framework for Planning of the LUE, a TDC program is a planning tool that “...allows the right to develop (called credits) to be separated from one site (the sending site) and moved to another (the receiving site). The transfer of the credits reduces the development possible on the sending site and increases the development possible on the receiving site.” The program is “...voluntary, incentive-based, and market-driven between willing sellers and willing buyers. Land owners are not obligated to use this technique to request an amendment to the general plan or to subdivide property in conformance with existing regulations.”

Framework for Planning contains an important statement about the objectives of the TDC program, as follows:

“The primary purpose of the TDC program is to promote appropriate settlement patterns while maintaining an overall level of development within the service capacities of transportation and other public service systems. As a countywide program it endeavors to: protect both land with agricultural capability and the business of agriculture itself; reduce development potential within land divisions or other areas that do not have adequate services for residents; protect important or extraordinary natural areas, habitats or cultural resources; reduce development potential in areas that may have the potential for landslides, fires, or other hazards; and reduce air quality impacts associated with locating residential development distant from jobs, schools, shopping and recreation.”

The TDC program can be an effective way to direct growth and development away from agricultural areas, thereby reducing potential conflicts with agricultural activities. This voluntary program can also help the owner of agricultural lands achieve the value of the potential development without

having to sell the property or otherwise develop it. Use of the TDC program may also offer potential tax benefits to the property owners, but that will depend on the circumstances of each ownership.

The TDC ordinance is adopted in the Land Use Ordinance which sets out the procedures and standards for its use. The county should continue to encourage landowners to consider using the TDC ordinance as another available tool to meeting their needs. Amendments should also be proposed to the Local Coastal Plan that would allow the use of TDC's in the coastal zone.

Implementation:

1. Ongoing through the voluntary action of land owners.
2. Prepare proposed amendments to the LCP that would add the voluntary TDC program as an available land use tool in the coastal zone.

Timeframe: 18 months from plan adoption.

AGP16: Agricultural Land Conservation Programs.

- a. **Encourage and support efforts by non-profit and other conservation organizations to protect agricultural lands and maintain agricultural production.**
- b. **Consider establishing a limited county program to acquire conservation easements or development rights from willing land owners. Such programs should encourage maximum flexibility for agricultural operations.**

Discussion: There are a number of organizations active in farmland protection programs. Private non-profit conservation organizations include the San Luis Obispo Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and the American Farmland Trust.

The San Luis Obispo Land Conservancy provides assistance to land owners interested in protecting agricultural, aesthetic and ecological values on their land. They offer counseling and assistance in establishing conservation easements, transfer of development credits, estate donation, and other conservation programs.

The American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a national organization dedicated to the conservation of productive farmland. AFT increases public awareness of agricultural issues, provides technical assistance to government agencies and private organizations, and engages in individual farmland conservation real estate transactions.

The Coastal Conservancy is a state agency also actively engaged in farmland preservation programs in California coastal counties. The Coastal Conservancy has been active in San Luis Obispo County, working on projects with incorporated cities, as well as in the unincorporated areas of the county.

In 1998, the county was successful in securing a grant from the Agricultural Land Stewardship Program (see discussion in chapter 1) to assist in the investigation of the potential impacts of antiquated subdivisions on areas of intensifying agriculture. The grant funding will enable the compilation of a database of the antiquated subdivisions in areas of the county where agricultural

intensification is occurring, especially vineyards, so as to assess the potential impact to agriculture if the underlying lots are developed with non-agricultural uses. When completed, that evaluation should help provide further direction to the goals and policies of this general plan element, as well as to the Land Use Element. The county should continue to actively pursue participation in this grant program as future funds become available to address agricultural issues.

The following acquisition strategies are examples of some of the measures that could be carried out by conservation organizations or by the county. In all cases they should be accomplished between willing buyers and sellers. **In those limited instances where the County may be an active participant, the primary focus of these strategies should be on purchase of easements and development rights, rather than the outright purchase of agricultural lands.** While any of the potential programs could have costs and operational concerns, there may be some limited application in appropriate circumstances, although public purchase may be the most problematic due to limited public funds.

The following strategies are not an all-inclusive list and other creative methods will need to be developed and implemented over time.

Purchase of Development Rights and Conservation Easements. The purchase of development rights (PDR) from a willing seller retires development potential through deed restrictions, leaving land owners all other rights of ownership except the right to sell homesites or to establish other types of development, for which the rights have voluntarily been extinguished. Land owners may receive income and estate tax benefits, in addition to protecting local agricultural areas from conversion to other uses. However, there could also be tax penalties due to capital gains tax.

Land owners can also choose to enter into conservation easements to protect agricultural land. A "Bargain Sale Conservation Easement" allows the land owner to receive cash income, but provides a way to offset increased capital gains tax.

Purchase and Resale or Lease with Restrictions. This strategy involves purchasing land and placing restrictions on its use and development. The land is then resold at a reduced market price that reflects the land use restrictions. The end result is equivalent to purchase of development rights. This concept may be more appropriate for entities other than the County to enter into.

Fee Simple Purchase and Lease-Back. This strategy protects farmland through outright purchase. Both real property and estate tax problems can be solved for farmers who sell their land to a public agency or conservation organization. Fee simple purchase can be very costly. This strategy should be considered the lowest priority by the County and may be most appropriate for other conservation organizations to pursue.

Long-term Conservation Lease. Where agricultural lands also contain open space resources that are worthy of protection, such as riparian habitat, scenic qualities, etc., but the land owner is not interested in selling the property or the development rights, an alternate approach may be to enter into long-term conservation leases. Similar to the provisions of a Williamson Act contract, such a lease could offer protection of the resources for an extended period of time, while also offering the property owner a revenue stream that will enable maintenance of the agricultural activities. The lease could be held by a conservation organization, with the term of the lease automatically renewed

annually for another year similar to a Williamson Act contract. This, and other creative methods of resource conservation, should be explored more fully.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building, in cooperation with the county Agriculture Department and U.C. Cooperative Extension, should assist agricultural and conservation organizations in developing and implementing programs to conserve agricultural land. The agencies should prepare a public information brochure for distribution to the agricultural community making them aware of the advantages of participating in such programs.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

2. In cooperation and coordination with conservation organizations and other jurisdictions, the county should explore the possibility of establishing a program to protect agricultural lands by purchasing development rights and conservation easements from willing sellers, by offering long-term conservation easements, or through other innovative programs.

Timeframe: To be determined by Board of Supervisors after plan adoption.

3. The County should actively pursue grant funds under provisions of the Agricultural Land Stewardship Program Act of 1995, to assist with the implementation measures contained in this Agriculture Element.

Timeframe: Ongoing after plan adoption.

AGP17: Agricultural Buffers.

- a. **Protect land designated Agriculture and other lands in production agriculture by using natural or man-made buffers where adjacent to non-agricultural land uses in accordance with the agricultural buffer policies adopted by the Board of Supervisor (see Appendix C).**

Discussion: New residential and other non-agricultural uses that are proposed adjacent to agricultural land or uses may result in land use conflicts. Residential and other non-agricultural uses can be adversely affected by odors, noise, dust and pesticide use. Farmers and ranchers are affected by resident complaints and lawsuits, pilferage of vegetables and fruits, increased incidence of trespass, theft and vandalism, disturbance of livestock by dogs and people, introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases harmful to agricultural uses, increased potential for fire on dry farm and grazing lands, and competition for available water resources.

The LUO contains a number of location and setback standards to separate existing residential areas and uses from potentially incompatible agricultural uses such as feedlots, poultry ranches, or hog farms. In addition, the Board of Supervisors has adopted policies for establishing buffers between agricultural areas and non-agricultural development in order to minimize possible land use conflicts. A further modification to those policies should be considered that would include a provision for public disclosure that a buffer has been applied to a property as part of the county's approval of a

discretionary land use permit. The disclosure would provide notice to prospective buyers and sellers that such a restriction applies.

Implementation:

1. The County Department of Agriculture shall review applications for land divisions, lot line adjustments, land use permits and proposed general plan amendments for consistency with the agricultural buffer policies adopted by the Board of Supervisors (see Appendix C).

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. The Department of Planning and Building, the County Department of Agriculture, and agricultural industry groups should develop proposed amendments to the Agricultural Buffer Policy establishing a disclosure process (similar to that found in the Right-to-Farm Ordinance, Title 5 of the County Code) that would inform potential buyers and sellers of properties that, as part of the county's approval of a discretionary land use permit, an agricultural buffer has been applied to a property.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

AGP18: Location of Improvements.

- a. **Locate new buildings, access roads, and structures so as to protect agricultural land.**

Discussion: This policy is intended to ensure that new facilities will be sited so that the most productive agricultural land will be kept available for agricultural production. On such land, allowable uses should generally be limited to those that are most directly related to agricultural production. Such limitations are found in existing inland LUE planning area standards that limit uses in the Arroyo Grande, Nipomo and Oso Flaco Valleys.

Implementation: Consistent with Agricultural Goal AG1d, no new permitting requirements are proposed for agricultural development that is currently exempt. The required level of permit processing for non-exempt projects should remain at the lowest possible level consistent with protection of agricultural resources. The Department of Planning and Building should:

1. Propose amendments to the LUO as needed to establish standards for projects requiring discretionary approval on irrigated lands or dry farm lands by either (a) locating new buildings, structures and roads on a very limited portion of the total site area, or (b) locating such improvements on the least productive portions of the property, or (c) locating such roads so they do not bisect farm fields, or (d) locating facilities outside sensitive habitats consistent with AGP 25, unless the discretionary review shows there is no practical alternative for siting the proposed facility.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

2. Propose amendments to Framework for Planning and applicable planning area standards in area plans to limit allowable uses on row crop terrain and soils (as discussed earlier in this

chapter under the heading “What is agricultural land?”) to those uses that are most directly related to agricultural production (see Appendix G for an example of allowable uses).

Timeframe: For Framework for Planning, 24 months from plan adoption. For area plans, as part of scheduled updates, or 18 months from plan adoption for area plans not scheduled for updating in that time frame.

AGP19: Consolidation of Public and Private Land Holdings.

- a. **Encourage consolidation of publicly and privately owned lands that will facilitate both better management of public lands and better operation of farms and ranches.**
- b. **Encourage the sale or trade of isolated publicly-owned parcels that are contiguous to privately owned lands designated Agriculture. Use voluntary merger or lot line adjustment processes so there is no increase in the number of privately owned parcels.**

Discussion: Los Padres National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands include scattered parcels in agricultural areas. Likewise, private in-holdings occur within these federal lands. The county should encourage consolidation of land holdings; for example, through land trades between private land owners and federal, state or local government agencies. However, land that is transferred from public to private ownership should not contain significant scenic, recreational or biological resources.

Implementation: The county Department of Planning and Building, with assistance from the county Agriculture Department, should work with the U.S. Forest Service, BLM and appropriate state and county agencies to prepare a complete inventory of parcels under federal, state or county ownership that are suitable for agricultural use and would be appropriate for consolidation and transfer from public to private ownership. Consult with adjacent private property owners before any transfers occur from public to private ownership.

Timeframe: 36 months from plan adoption.

AGP20: Agricultural Land Divisions.

- a. **Where a division of agricultural lands is proposed, a contiguous cluster division consistent with AGP 22 or 23 is an alternative to a conventional “lot split” land division.**
- b. **Where a land division is proposed, the proposed parcels should be designed to ensure the long term protection of agricultural resources.**

Discussion: Where lands can qualify for subdivision based on the parcel size criteria described in AGP 21, the use of agricultural cluster divisions consistent with AGP 22 and 23 may be the preferred alternative over the conventional "lot split" land divisions. Agricultural cluster divisions provide a way to protect lands for continued and enhanced agricultural production, particularly if the homes are clustered in a compact, contiguous manner which reduces the agricultural/residential interface.

When any division of agricultural land is proposed, the county Agriculture Department should carefully review the proposal. The primary concern should be that the resulting parcels will maintain the land resources, so they will have a strong likelihood of remaining in long-term sustainable agriculture.

To encourage the use of a cluster design, there should be an increase in the number of parcels that will provide a sufficient incentive to the land owner to choose the cluster approach. In return for that increase, areas of the site intended for agricultural production are permanently protected by a recorded open space easement, as well as being placed in a Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) contract that will provide long-term protection of the agricultural resources.

There will be circumstances where a land owner proposes a conventional division of agricultural land and does not wish to accomplish an increase in the number of parcels, or the owner believes the conventional design best meets the agricultural goals for the property. For such a project, the Agriculture Department's review should include consideration of designated building envelopes, as well as a possible limitation on the number of residences that can be established on the proposed parcels. Since the proposed parcels would also be reviewed against the criteria found in Figure 2-2, the resulting parcels would qualify for an agricultural preserve (Williamson Act) contract for further protection of the agricultural resources. Other agricultural or conservation easements on the agricultural portions of the proposed parcels should also be considered.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO and CZLUO to implement this policy.

Timeframe: 18 months from plan adoption.

2. During the CEQA-required environmental review of discretionary land divisions, where the land contains sensitive environmental features and involves active agricultural production or has the potential for agricultural production, the value of the environmental resources should be weighed against the value of agricultural production.

Timeframe: Ongoing through the review of development projects.

AGP21: Minimum Parcel Size Criteria for the Division of Agricultural Lands.

- a. **Minimum parcel sizes for the proposed division of land designated Agriculture shall be based upon the existing and potential use of the land for cropland and grazing. Minimum parcel size standards for the creation of new parcels are shown in Figure 2-2.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to revise the method of determining minimum parcel sizes for new land divisions to emphasize protection of the agricultural land resource for long-term crop production and grazing uses. The existing LUO contains three methods for determining minimum parcel sizes for proposed divisions of land in the Agriculture category: (1) size based on existing agricultural use; (2) size based on land capability; and (3) size based on Williamson Act contract.

This policy would be implemented in two ways: increase the minimum parcel size from 20 to 40 acres for land under existing irrigated uses; and increase the minimum parcel size from 20 to 40 acres for lands designated as Class I or II soils. To accomplish this, amendments should be adopted for both the LUO and the county agricultural preserve Rules of Procedure.

When proposed parcel sizes are based on existing agricultural uses, the minimum parcel sizes should be large enough to sustain farming practices and minimize incompatibility between adjacent agricultural uses. To accomplish this, the minimum parcel size for lands with existing irrigated crops should be increased to a 40 acre minimum, up from the current 20 and 30 acre minimums in the LUO.

However, there should also be the flexibility to achieve new parcels as small as 20 acres, provided the proposed land division can meet specific criteria that will ensure the long-term viability of the new parcels to remain in production agriculture. The criteria should include the following: the soils must be Class I or II irrigated; there must be at least 18 acres of the 20 acre parcel planted with irrigated row crops, speciality crops, orchards or vineyards; there must be a production water source in place; there should be only one primary residence; and the created parcels must go into a Williamson Act contract in accordance with the county Rules of Procedure.

Implementing this policy would also require another amendment to the LUO. Under the use test, the existence of specialized animal facilities as the basis for a proposed land division should be eliminated. These types of uses, such as large scale horse ranches, feedlots, auction facilities, etc. (see definition in LUE Framework for Planning), are often not dependent on the land resource and may be shorter-term uses.

Finally, the “averaging test” should also be eliminated. This existing LUO provision allows the use of the average size of abutting parcels to be used to determine the minimum parcel size for the proposed land division of agricultural land. This practice results in agricultural properties breaking down based on smaller adjacent parcels, rather than making sure that the proposed parcels will enable long term agricultural productivity.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO, CZLUO and the agricultural preserve Rules of Procedure to accomplish the following:

1. Incorporate this policy, as described in the above discussion, including the minimum parcel size standards for creation of new parcels, as shown in the following Figure 2-2. Eliminate specialized animal facilities as a basis for proposed division of agricultural lands.
2. Eliminate the averaging test that determines minimum parcel sizes based on the average size of adjacent parcels in the Agriculture land use category.
3. Apply the minimum parcel size standards in Figure 2-2 to proposed land divisions in existing and new agricultural preserves and land conservation contracts, unless a larger minimum parcel size is specified in an existing Williamson Act land conservation contract.
4. Refer proposed divisions of agricultural lands to the County Department of Agriculture for review as to whether the proposed parcels can be expected to be sustainable agricultural parcels.

5. Require that divisions of agricultural lands include covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC & R's) that notify subsequent owners that they are purchasing land in an agricultural area and that the county supports its "Right-to-Farm Ordinance" for protection of agricultural operations.

Implementation: 18 months from plan adoption.

FIGURE 2-2 MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE (ACRES) FOR NEW LAND DIVISIONS OF LANDS DESIGNATED AGRICULTURE (1)		
Natural Resource Conservation Service Land Capability Classification(2)	Irrigated(2,3,4)	Non-irrigated(2)
I, II (3)	40 acres; 20 acres if planted	---
III, IV	40	160
VI, VII	40 w/orchards or vineyards	320
VIII	---	320
<p><u>Notes:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The parcel sizes in this table represent the <u>minimum</u> sizes allowable. Discretionary review of proposed land division applications may result in parcel sizes <u>larger</u> than those listed in the table. 2. For lands under Williamson Act contracts where portions of the property have different land capability ratings and agricultural uses, minimum parcel size(s) is determined per the county Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1966 (see Appendix A). 3. Land must be irrigated to qualify for an NRCS rating of Class I or II. Refer to the Glossary for the definition of irrigated. See Appendix C for a definition of irrigated lands as used in this element, as well as the general soil maps published by the USDA. 4. Proposed parcels may be as small as 20 acres if the following criteria are met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the proposed parcels must be Class I and II soils, irrigated; b. there must be at least 18 acres planted in irrigated row crops, specialty crops, field crops, orchards or vineyards; c. there must be a production water source installed; d. each proposed parcel will be limited to one primary residence; and e. the resulting parcels must enter into a Williamson Act agricultural preserve contract in accordance with the county Rules of Procedure. 		

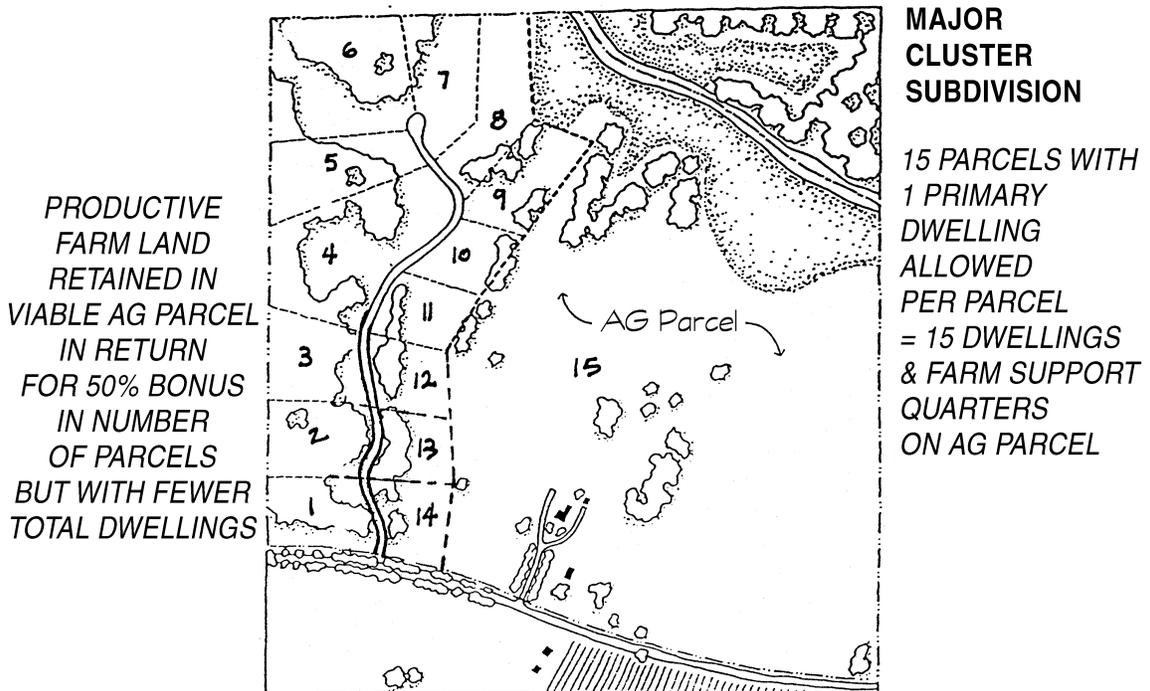
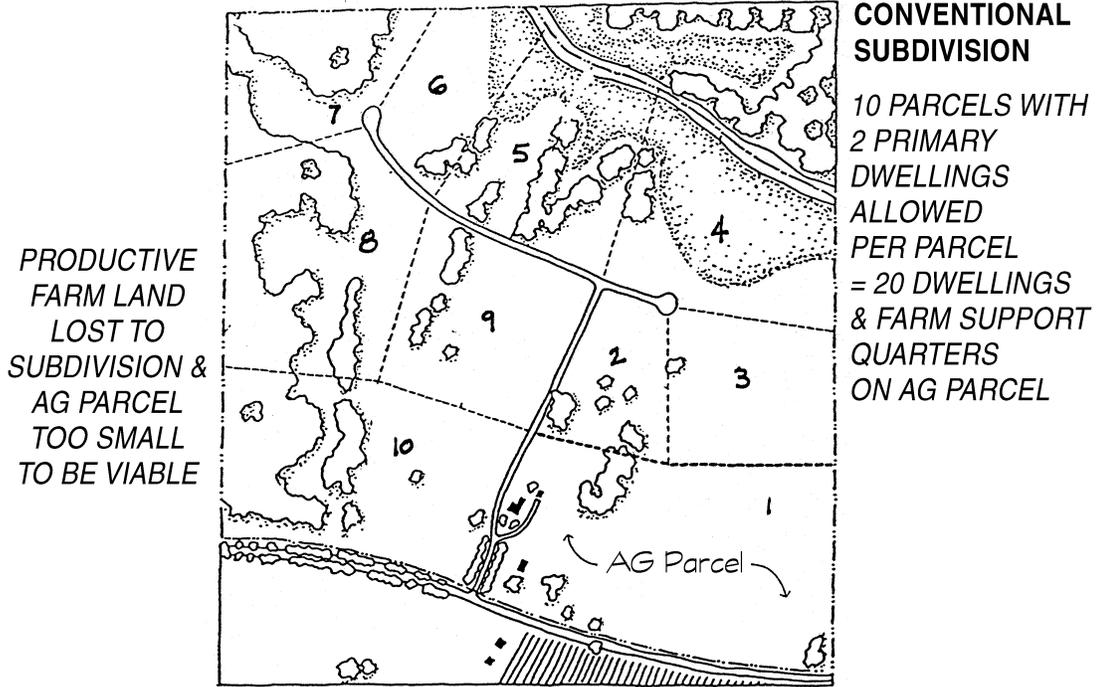
AGP22: Major Agricultural Cluster Projects (not available in Coastal Zone)

- a. **Properties that are partly or entirely within five miles of the urban and village reserve lines designated in the LUO and that meet the minimum area criteria can apply for a major agriculture cluster.**
- b. **The maximum number of parcels allowed in a major agricultural cluster project shall be equivalent to the number of primary dwellings normally allowed on the parcels that would result from a conventional land division in the Agriculture land use category based on the minimum parcel size criteria specified in Figure 2-2. (Major agricultural cluster projects may include a reduction in the number of parcels down to 26% of the maximum potential allowance if proposed by the applicant in order to mitigate potential impacts of the project.)**
- c. **All resulting agricultural parcels must meet the minimum parcel size criteria of Figure 2-2 and must be covered by a permanent agricultural open space easement.**
- d. **All resulting residential parcels are entitled to one dwelling per parcel.**
- e. **Whether or not an EIR must be prepared will be determined by the CEQA “initial study.”**
- f. **Consistent with the provisions of the existing agricultural cluster ordinance in the LUO, areas of the site intended for agricultural production must be permanently protected by a recorded open space easement and be placed in a Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) contract.**

Discussion: The Board of Supervisors adopted the agricultural cluster ordinance in 1984 as a tool available to inland property owners to “encourage the preservation of agricultural lands...for the continuing and enhanced production of food and fiber...” As an incentive, the ordinance states that it is the Board’s policy to “encourage the use of clustering by allowing the number of cluster parcels to equal the number of dwelling units normally permitted on a standard agricultural land division” (LUO Section 22.04.037). See Fig. 2-3 for an illustration of the cluster project concept.

The existing ordinance provides for the development of residential cluster divisions on large properties in the Agriculture land use category located outside the coastal zone. In order to apply for an agricultural cluster project, these properties must be at least 160 acres in size if located within one mile of the urban reserve line of San Miguel, Paso Robles, Atascadero, San Luis Obispo, Arroyo Grande and Nipomo, and the Creston village reserve line, and up to 2,560 acres at five miles from an urban or village reserve line. The existing ordinance also requires that the clustered lots be within the five mile boundary if other portions of the project site exceed five miles, and also mandates that an environmental impact report (EIR) be prepared for any proposed ag cluster project.

FIGURE 2-3



The purpose of this policy is to make several proposed amendments to the existing ordinance to provide more incentives for its use, as well as to make a distinction between “major” and “minor” ag cluster projects so that minor ag cluster projects could become available to land owners in the coastal zone. Major ag cluster projects can be expected to be more intensive projects. Therefore, it is reasonable to continue to limit these types of projects to within five miles of the specified urban and village reserve lines. The less intensive minor ag cluster projects envisioned by AGP 23 offer another option to land owners within the five mile area as well as in the outlying rural areas of the county (greater than five miles), including in the coastal zone, to achieve some added development density over what they could achieve with a standard land division, in return for protecting and enhancing their agricultural operation.

If major ag cluster projects are to be an alternative for proposed divisions of agricultural properties in the areas around the specified communities, several important revisions to the existing ordinance should be considered, as follows:

1. The minimum acreage currently required to apply for a major agricultural cluster project should be amended to require that the resulting agricultural parcel(s) meet the minimum parcel size standards specified in Figure 2-2 and be placed in a Williamson Act ag preserve contract as specified in the county Rules of Procedure (in accordance with the existing provisions in Land Use Ordinance Section 22.04.037)(5), the parcel(s) would also be covered by an open space easement that exists as long as the clustered residential lots exist).
2. Add the urban reserve line of the City of Santa Maria to the list of specified communities around which a major ag cluster project can be proposed where the candidate site is located outside the coastal zone, thereby adding this tool as an option in the rich agricultural area of the Santa Maria and Oso Flaco Valleys.
3. Revise the mandatory requirement for an EIR as follows:
 - a. Eliminate the mandatory EIR and instead allow the CEQA "initial study" process to determine whether an EIR should be prepared. The initial study should closely examine the potential impacts on the long-term protection of the agricultural, environmental and biological resources, as well as the availability of and potential impacts on resources such as water, traffic, air quality, schools and other public services and facilities.
4. For projects where portions of the project site lie outside the specified five mile boundary, revise the ordinance to eliminate the current requirement that the proposed cluster lots be located within the five mile limit. Instead, allow the proposed clustered lots to be located anywhere on the project site that will have the least impacts on the agricultural operations.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare amendments to the LUO as described above to implement the policy.

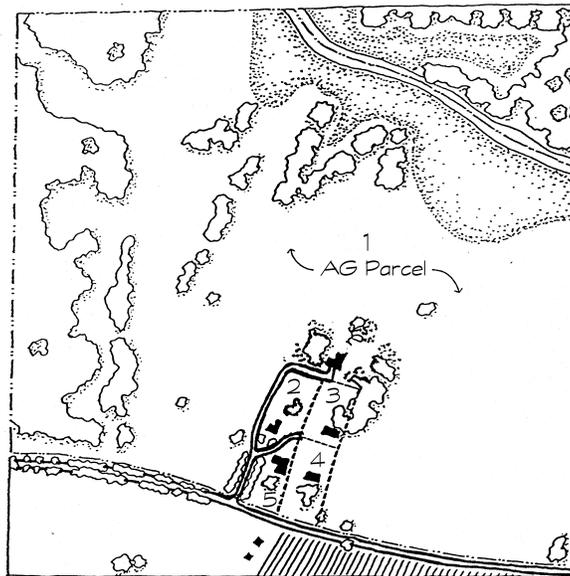
Timeframe: 18 months from plan adoption.

AGP23: Minor Agricultural Cluster Projects.

- a. Properties throughout the county, including the coastal zone, can apply for a minor agriculture cluster project.
- b. The maximum number of parcels allowed in a minor agricultural cluster project shall be equivalent to the number of parcels that would result from a conventional land division in the Agriculture land use category based on the minimum parcel size criteria specified in Figure 2-2, with an increase of at least one more parcel or up to a maximum 25% increase in the number of parcels that could be achieved with a conventional land division.
- c. All resulting agricultural parcels must meet the minimum parcel size criteria specified in Figure 2-2 and must be covered by a permanent agricultural open space easement.
- d. All resulting residential parcels are entitled to one dwelling per parcel.

Discussion: This policy is proposed to be applicable throughout the county, including the coastal zone. This policy would allow the use of a cluster design for agricultural land divisions where the applicant wants to propose a project less intense than a major cluster division as described in AGP22 above. Since the Coastal Act and the county's Local Coastal Plan place so much emphasis on the long-term protection of coastal agriculture, making this design tool available in the coastal zone is an important addition to the CZLUO. See Figure 2-4 for an illustration of the minor cluster project concept.

FIGURE 2-4



PROPERTY QUALIFIES FOR 4 PARCELS IF
CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISION.

*MINOR CLUSTER PROJECT:
4 PARCELS WITH ONE PRIMARY DWELLING
+ 1 PARCEL (25% DENSITY BONUS) FOR AG PARCEL.*

One of the reasons for this policy is to encourage agriculturalists to stay on the land and not sell the family farm. For example, agriculturalists often have a legitimate business need to subdivide land for financing purposes. In addition, they may need a limited number of small homesites for members of the agricultural family so that they can stay on the land for the long-term. At the present time, the only option available to these agriculturalists is to propose a conventional land division that may actually prove more harmful than beneficial to the long-term protection of the agricultural resources.

The implementation for this policy addresses those needs by providing for creation of a limited number of small parcels. Another benefit of this policy is that by encouraging cluster division, agricultural lands can be permanently protected for continued and enhanced agricultural production.

Many agriculturalists feel that there are not enough incentives or flexibility in the current land use regulations to encourage property owners to subdivide land using a cluster approach instead of a conventional land division. As a result, cluster land divisions are rarely used, even though the cluster division may be the most appropriate to protect agricultural resources.

The implementation of this policy addresses those concerns by providing for smaller parcel sizes and some density bonus, but not requiring that such projects meet the same requirements as a major agricultural cluster project (see AGP 22). The most important differences between the major and minor agricultural cluster project would be: minor cluster projects would be available for use anywhere in the county, including the coastal zone, and not be limited to within five miles of an urban/village reserve line; and minor cluster projects would receive a straight 25 percent density bonus, or at least one more lot than could be achieved with a standard land division.

In exchange for the increase in the number of parcels and the flexibility offered by the minor agricultural cluster approach, the agricultural lot(s) shall meet the minimum parcel size standards specified in Figure 2-2 and be placed in a Williamson Act agricultural preserve contract in accordance with the county Rules of Procedure, and should also be covered by a permanent agricultural open space easement as described for major agricultural cluster projects. CC&R's would be applied to the non-agricultural clustered lots to notify the purchasers that those lots are located in an agricultural area and that the county supports its "Right-to-Farm" ordinance for protection of agricultural operations. The cluster project application would also be given priority processing as a further incentive to the applicant.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO and the CZLUO to establish standards for minor agricultural land divisions consistent with this policy and as described above.

Timeframe: 18 months from plan adoption.

AGP24: Conversion of Agricultural Land.

- a. **Discourage the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses through the following actions:**
 1. **Work in cooperation with the incorporated cities, service districts, school districts, the County Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Advisory Liaison Board, Farm Bureau, and affected community advisory groups to establish urban service and urban reserve lines and village reserve lines that will protect agricultural land and will stabilize agriculture at the urban fringe.**
 2. **Establish clear criteria in this plan and the Land Use Element for changing the designation of land from Agriculture to non-agricultural designations.**
 3. **Avoid land redesignation (rezoning) that would create new rural residential development outside the urban and village reserve lines.**
 4. **Avoid locating new public facilities outside urban and village reserve lines unless they serve a rural function or there is no feasible alternative location within the urban and village reserve lines.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is twofold: to protect agricultural land at the urban fringe by limiting the expansion of urban development; and to discourage urban/suburban sprawl by preventing "leapfrog" development into the agricultural areas of the county.

Agricultural land is often converted to other uses for a variety of reasons, including: urban growth pressures, rising land values and speculation, competition between urban and agricultural uses, the desirability of large-lot rural homesites, subdivision of agricultural properties into parcels too small to sustain agricultural uses, piecemeal LUE amendments to non-agricultural land use categories, and a lack of policies that clearly define under what circumstances agricultural lands should be converted to other uses and land use designations in the general plan. This conversion of agricultural land has the potential to seriously erode the long-term protection of agricultural resources.

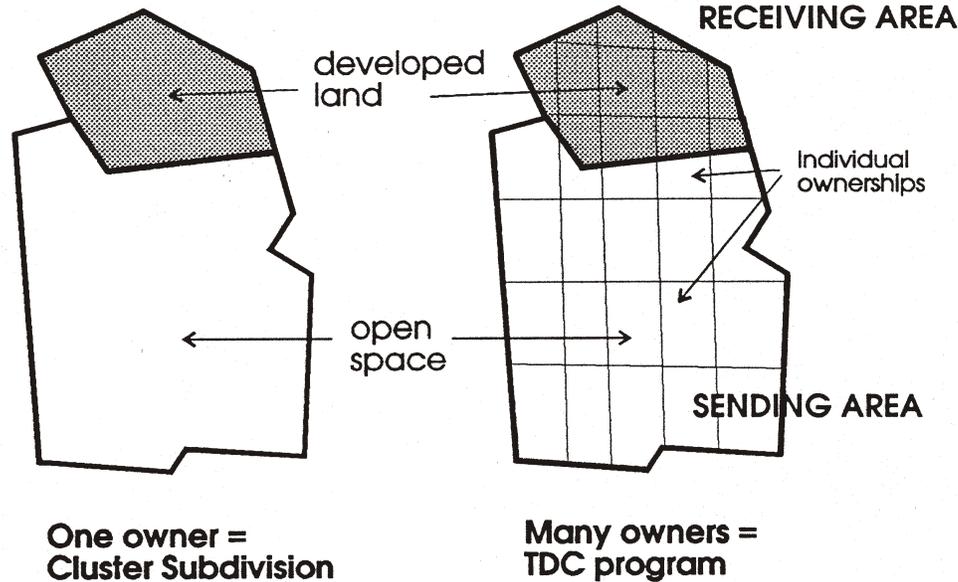
Even with the strong Williamson Act program in the county, there has been pressure to convert agricultural lands to other non-agricultural uses. Since adoption of the LUE in 1980, over 3,000 acres of land have been rezoned from the Agriculture category to non-agricultural land use categories in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Statistics from the state Department of Conservation's farmland mapping program show that in the period between 1984 and 1995 (the last year for which statistics are available), there was an overall decrease in agricultural land of about 14,800 acres. There was a net increase of Prime Farmland due to intensification (primarily irrigated vineyards); however, the net acreage of Farmland of Statewide Importance also declined by 783 acres.

The LUE contains a number of general goals that focus on the environment, distribution of land uses, phasing of urban development, and the provision of public services and facilities. Consistent with those goals, specific criteria should be developed for when it may be appropriate to convert agricultural lands to other uses. The criteria should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- ** Do not expand existing urban or village areas until such areas are largely built-out, or until such time as additional land is needed to accommodate necessary uses or services that cannot otherwise be accommodated within the existing urban or village area.
- ** Urban or village expansion should occur only where contiguous to an existing urban/village reserve line, as shown in the concept diagram in Figure 2-5, or where an entirely new urban or village area is needed in order to direct development away from surrounding agricultural or open space resources.
- ** Where urban expansion is to occur, it shall be annexed to an incorporated city or an existing community services district/county service area. The annexation shall occur only where the clustered development from rural property is to be located adjacent to the urban area, or when higher density development is to occur and where such development is consistent with resource and service capabilities and orderly extension of urban services.
- ** Where agricultural land is proposed for conversion to urban/suburban uses, give consideration to the protection of agricultural lands in the following priority order: row crop terrain and soils, specialty crops and forage lands, dry farm lands, and rangelands for grazing.
- ** Approve land for conversion from Agriculture to non-agriculture designations based upon a detailed site specific evaluation and consistency with the following findings:
 - a. the land does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the Agriculture designation in this plan or the Land Use Element; and
 - b. agricultural production is not feasible due to some physical constraint (such as soil infertility, lack of water resource, disease), or surrounding incompatible land uses; and
 - c. adjacent lands are already substantially developed with uses that are incompatible with agricultural uses; and
 - d. the conversion to non-agricultural uses shall not adversely affect existing or potential agricultural production on surrounding lands that will remain designated Agriculture; and
 - e. there is an over-riding public need for the conversion of the land that outweighs the need to protect the land for long-term agricultural use, such as the orderly expansion of an incorporated city or community.
- ** Approval of land conversions from agriculture to non-agricultural land uses will include a finding that the conversion will not materially reduce groundwater recharge.

FIGURE 2-5



Implementation:

1. In cooperation with the incorporated cities and service districts, consider the criteria described in the above discussion to develop policies and implementation measures that will provide for the protection of agricultural lands as well as appropriate urban expansion.
2. Based on the results from item #1 above, consider proposed amendments to Framework for Planning of the LUE that incorporates those policies and implementation measures into the guidelines for general plan amendments and revise the purpose and character statements for the Agriculture category so they are consistent with those criteria.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

3. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), in cooperation with the incorporated cities and service districts, should develop and adopt standards, criteria and procedures consistent with this plan and the LUE to be used in making decisions on proposed annexations and expansions of cities and service districts that may affect agricultural lands.

Timeframe: LAFCO adoption 18 months from adoption by the county of the criteria specified in item #1 above.

4. Refer proposed general plan amendment requests and proposed annexations and expansions of service districts to the County Department of Agriculture and affected community advisory groups whenever the proposal involves potential conversion of agricultural lands.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Policies regarding the protection of open space resources on agricultural lands.

The Agriculture Element has its primary focus on the agricultural resources of the county. However, it is recognized that productive agricultural lands can also contain valuable open space resources such as unique or sensitive habitat for plants and animals, wetlands, riparian vegetation, or scenic lands that are so important to defining the character of San Luis Obispo County. Therefore, the following policies and implementation measures address the protection of open space resources on private lands designated (zoned) Agriculture in the LUE and in this element, as well as lands in other designations being used for production agriculture.

Open space resources are also addressed in the Conservation and Open Space Element and in the Parks and Recreation Element. Therefore, the reader may also wish to review those elements for additional background information and discussion.

To the maximum extent possible, the following policies, implementation measures and programs try to balance protection of open space resources and the needs of production agriculture, and minimize the impacts to ongoing production agriculture. It is the intent to **not** require permits for agriculturally-related projects that are currently exempt, and to **keep** the required level of permit processing for non-exempt projects at the lowest possible level consistent with the protection of agricultural resources and sensitive habitats. The policies and recommended implementation measures apply to discretionary land use permits for new development (see Glossary for definition of development) and proposed land divisions.

AGP25: Unique or Sensitive Habitat.

- a. **Encourage private landowners to protect and preserve unique or sensitive habitat.**
- b. **For new development requiring a discretionary permit and for proposed land divisions, protect unique or sensitive habitat affected by the proposal through the following measures:**
 1. **Site the proposed development so as to avoid significant impacts on the habitat or significant impacts on the agricultural operations. Provide for adjustments in project design where alternatives are infeasible, more environmentally damaging, or have a significant negative impact on agriculture.**
 2. **When significant impacts are identified, the landowner shall implement county-approved mitigation measures consistent with the existing requirements of CEQA.**

Discussion: Consistent with the existing requirements of CEQA, the environmental review of discretionary permits on lands containing both agricultural and open space resources should make every effort to balance the mitigation of potential impacts on the open space resources with the needs of the agricultural operation so that both resources are equally protected. Early consultation with applicants can help define how the potential mitigation measures might affect the agricultural operation. In those instances where significant impacts on the open space resources are identified, county approved mitigation measures shall be implemented consistent with the existing requirements of CEQA.

Implementation/Timeline: On-going through CEQA review of discretionary projects.

AGP26: Streams and Riparian Corridors.

The following policies apply to watercourses shown by a solid or broken blue line (“blue line” streams) on the latest U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps and their associated riparian vegetation. As noted earlier in this chapter, the county’s LCP shall take precedence over these policies where the LCP addresses these issues.

- a. Encourage private landowners to protect and preserve stream corridors in their natural state and to restore stream corridors that have been degraded. Provide information and incentives to eliminate overgrazing in stream corridors. Encourage off-stream livestock watering sources.
- b. For new development requiring a discretionary permit and for land divisions, protect streams and riparian habitat affected by the proposal through the following measures:
 1. Consistent with the requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board’s Basin Plan, establish a grading and building setback of 30 feet from the top of the steam bank. Locate buildings and structures outside the setback. Do not remove riparian vegetation within 30 feet of the top of the stream bank. Provide for adjustments when the applicant demonstrates that such setbacks would have a significant negative impact on the agricultural viability of the site, or where alternatives are infeasible or more environmentally damaging, and the adjustments are acceptable to the Regional Board.
 2. Require appropriate erosion control measures during and following construction.
 3. Consistent with state and federal requirements, allow steam alterations for water supply and flood control projects, road maintenance, maintenance of existing channels, or improvement of fish and wildlife habitat if there are no practical alternatives.
 4. Consistent with state and federal requirements, assure that stream diversion structures protect habitats.
 5. When significant impacts to stream or riparian resources are identified, the landowner shall implement county-approved mitigation measures consistent with the existing requirements of CEQA.

Discussion: Streams and riparian corridors are found throughout San Luis Obispo County. They are not only important resources in their own right, they often contribute to the health of the agricultural operation occurring on the same lands.

Mitigation of potential impacts on these resources is addressed through many state and federal programs and regulations, as well as development standards found in county plans and ordinances. In an effort to reduce or eliminate conflict between these regulations, the setback distances and

other standards found in this policy are proposed to be consistent with the standards found in the Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan.

The mitigation of impacts on streams and riparian corridors is to be evaluated through the review of discretionary projects. Where significant impacts are identified, county approved mitigation measures will be implemented under the provisions of CEQA.

Implementation:

1. The county Planning and Building Department, in consultation with the Agriculture Department, Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.C. Cooperative Extension and the Resource Conservation Districts, should prepare public information materials regarding techniques for preserving and/or restoring riparian corridors.

Timeframe: 18 months from plan adoption.

2. Review all blueline streams shown on the current U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute quadrangle maps as appropriate to determine which should be in the Sensitive Resource Area Combining Designation, recognizing that not all blue line streams may be streams.
3. Prepare proposed amendments to the LUO and Title 21 to establish criteria development standards to implement this policy as described above.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

AGP27: Natural Area Preserves.

Where the County considers the establishment of a proposed Natural Area Preserve that may include agricultural lands, or be adjacent to agricultural lands, the following policies shall apply:

- a. Designation and management of a proposed Natural Area Preserve shall not interfere with agricultural uses on private lands that are either within or adjacent to the proposed preserve.
- b. If the County purchases agricultural land from a willing seller for inclusion within a Natural Area Preserve, the County shall offer to lease the land for continued agricultural use, with priority being given to the seller or to an adjacent owner.
- c. The county shall take all reasonable measures to prevent trespass and damage to adjacent property owners.

Discussion: On September 1, 1992, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors adopted the Natural Area Plan, as previously approved by the County Parks and Recreation Commission. The plan contains goals and management strategies intended to “Provide guidelines for the creation of site specific management plans for maintaining the delicate and sensitive biosystems at **County operated Natural Area Preserves**” (emphasis added).

Consistent with the Natural Area Plan, the decision to acquire any lands for Natural Area Preserves rests with the Board of Supervisors. The site specific management plans for any preserves are to be approved by the County Parks and Recreation Commission prior to implementation.

Proposed Natural Area Preserves are intended to be created on lands operated by the County. The preserves described in the Natural Areas Plan may contain some lands suitable for agricultural uses, or may be adjacent to lands in agricultural use. The intent of this policy is to recognize that while it is important to consider establishment of Natural Area Preserves, the potential impact on agricultural uses should also be considered.

Implementation: On-going through implementation of the Natural Areas Plan by the County Board of Supervisors and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

AGP28: Major Ecosystems.

If the county considers the establishment of a network of Major Ecosystems as described in the Biological Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element, the following factors shall be considered for how such a system may interact with agricultural lands:

- a. **Designation and management of a Major Ecosystem shall not interfere with agricultural uses on private lands that are either within or adjacent to the Major Ecosystem.**
- b. **Landowners should be encouraged to adopt range and farmland management programs that will maintain and enhance the land as well as maintaining and protecting habitat and ecosystems.**
- c. **Any development of lands adjacent to an identified core area of a Major Ecosystem that requires a discretionary permit must follow CEQA to guide the types and uses and intensity of development so as to be consistent with the biological diversity and natural processes of the Major Ecosystem.**

Discussion: All land is part of a larger ecosystem. The actions taken on a parcel of land will affect surrounding lands in that larger ecosystem.

An ecosystem can be simply defined as all the components of a biological community and the physical environment, and the interactions among and between them. Since ecosystems are made up of many components, the challenge is to maintain the balance between those components. Giving priority to one component over another could inadvertently result in negative impacts to both.

Agricultural lands are also part of an ecosystem. The actions taken in support of agricultural activities will have an impact on the ecosystem. Likewise, actions taken to conserve an ecosystem will have an impact on agricultural lands and activities. The Biological Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element contains policies and strategies for their protection, including the possible designations of Major Ecosystems.

Ecosystems are more than just the sum of their various components, involving a complex system of linkages between plants, animals, their environment, and humans. The key to maintaining the health of an ecosystem is to maintain the complex system of linkages in the ecosystem wherever possible. Large expanses of agricultural lands offer the potential to maintain those linkages while also continuing a viable and healthy agricultural industry in the county.

Implementation: On-going through the policies described in this element.

AGP29: Wildlife Corridors.

- a. **Identification or designation of a wildlife corridor in accordance with the Biological Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element shall not interfere with agricultural uses on private lands.**
- b. **Encourage landowners to adopt range and farmland management practices that will not interfere with the migration of wildlife through their properties.**
- c. **When evaluating development proposals that require discretionary permits, identify and protect on-site wildlife corridors as part of the CEQA process.**

Discussion: As discussed in AGP 28, one of the keys to healthy ecosystems is maintaining the linkages that exist within the system. Wildlife corridors are an important part of those linkages. In many instances, agricultural operations offer the capability for wildlife movement. Often, the landowners recognize the importance of these corridors and incorporate them into their management practices. The county, along with agricultural industry groups and educational organizations, should continue to offer encouragement to landowners to recognize the importance of wildlife corridors as a component of their farm management practices.

When a landowner proposes development that will require approval of a discretionary land use permit, the project will be subject to an environmental review process under CEQA. It is during the CEQA review that on-site wildlife corridors should be considered so that a project will have minimal impact on any such corridors, and to ensure that maintenance of the corridor(s) will have a minimal impact on the on-going agricultural operation. Typically, no regulatory conditions are imposed on the agricultural operation.

Implementation: On-going through the CEQA review of discretionary projects.

AGP30: Scenic Resources.

- a. **Designation of a scenic corridor through the public hearing process as described in the Visual Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element, shall not interfere with agricultural uses on private lands.**
- b. **In designated scenic corridors, new development requiring a discretionary permit and land divisions shall address the protection of scenic vistas as follows:**
 1. **Balance the protection of the scenic resources with the protection of agricultural resources and facilities.**

2. **When selecting locations for structures, access roads, or grading, the preferred locations will minimize visibility from the scenic corridor and be compatible with agricultural operations.**
3. **Use natural landforms and vegetation to screen development whenever possible.**
4. **In prominent locations, encourage structures that blend with the natural landscape or are traditional for agriculture.**

Discussion: One of the major attributes of San Luis Obispo County is its splendid scenic quality, and agriculture is a major contributor to that quality. It is the bucolic rural setting that is attractive to so many of the county residents, property owners and visitors, and contributes to the quality of life enjoyed by all.

A drive along scenic rural roadways is one of the many aspects of this county enjoyed by many people. The Visual Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element establishes policies for the evaluation of proposed county scenic corridors and the type of standards that should be applied to development in designated scenic corridors along public roads and highways. Where a designated scenic corridor passes through or along agricultural lands, establishment of the scenic corridor should not impact normal agricultural operations.

If the landowner along a county designated scenic corridor applies for a development application for a discretionary land use permit or land division, the CEQA review of the proposed project should seek to balance the protection of the scenic qualities along the corridor with the needs of the agricultural resources and facilities. The purpose of this policy is to provide direction as to how that balance should be accomplished without unduly restricting the agricultural operation. In those instance where the land owner establishes uses that are exempt from land use regulations, or applies for a ministerial land use permit, this policy provides guidance that the county encourages the landowner to voluntarily incorporate into the development proposal.

Implementation: Ongoing through the CEQA review of discretionary land permit applications, and through voluntary actions of land owners establishing uses that are exempt from permits or only need a ministerial permit.

AGP31: Recreational Use of Agricultural Lands.

- a. **Encourage recreational uses on privately-owned lands on a case-by-case basis where such uses are compatible with on- and offsite agriculture and with scenic and environmentally sensitive resources.**

Discussion: The county general plan has long encouraged owners of rural properties to establish recreational opportunities on their lands where it is feasible and compatible with the agricultural and rural setting. This policy further recognizes that recreational uses can be an important part of the rural setting and should be developed so they are compatible with agricultural and environmental resources.

Implementation: Ongoing through the CEQA review of development proposals that require a discretionary land use permit, and through information provided to land owners for their voluntary use as they establish uses that are either exempt from permit requirements or need only a ministerial permit from the county.

AGP32: Trail Access to Public Lands.

- a. **In accordance with the County Parks and Recreation Element, access trails shall not conflict with agriculture or environmentally sensitive resources.**
- b. **Provide sufficient policing and maintenance so that trails do not result in trespass or in damage to sensitive resources, crops, livestock, other personal property, or individuals.**

Discussion: This policy deals with trails on private and public lands, including trails used by off-highway vehicles (OHV's). This policy gives support to the creation of trails in agricultural areas, as long as the establishment of the trails does not adversely impact agricultural activities and is between willing buyers and sellers. In all cases, establishment of trails shall conform to the requirements of the adopted County Parks and Recreation Element.

Implementation: Ongoing through implementation of the adopted County Parks and Recreation Element.

AGP33: Archaeological and Cultural Sites.

- a. **When reviewing discretionary development, protect sensitive archaeological and cultural sites by avoiding disturbance where feasible.**
- b. **If sensitive sites cannot be avoided, mitigate the impact of development to the maximum extent feasible.**

Discussion: Archaeological and cultural resources are found throughout the county, in all types of land use designations in the general plan. The purpose of this policy is to recognize that these important resources need to be treated with care as property owners conduct activities on their lands. The Land Use Ordinance contains development standards that may apply if the landowner applies for development permits. In addition, the Cultural Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element deals with protection of areas, sites, and buildings having architectural, historical, or cultural significance. Particular attention will be paid to these resources if the landowner applies for a discretionary land use permit or land division, but compliance with state and federal regulations is required whether or not a permit might be required from the county.

Implementation: Ongoing through compliance with existing county, state and federal standards regulating the handling of these resources, and through the CEQA review of proposed discretionary land use permits and land divisions.

AGP34: Historical Resources.

- a. **When initiated by landowners, protect the character of significant historical features and settings by implementing the recommendation for historical resources found in the Cultural Resources chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element.**

Discussion: The Conservation and Open Space Element, an element of the county general plan, provides guidance for the handling of historical resources. The Land Use Ordinance also contains standards that may apply when a landowner applies for development permits on a property containing historical resources. As with archeological and cultural resources, historical resources occur throughout the county in many different land use designations in the general plan. This policy gives further recognition to the importance for protecting these resources that are a critical piece of county history.

Implementation: Ongoing through voluntary actions of landowners, and through the CEQA review of proposed discretionary land use permits and land divisions.

APPENDIX A: USERS GUIDE

APPENDIX A USER'S GUIDE TO THE AGRICULTURE ELEMENT

HOW DOES THE PLAN APPLY TO MY PROPERTY	WHERE TO FIND IT			
	GOALS ¹	POLICIES (AGP, OSP) ²	CHAPTER	MAP
1. Is it designated Agriculture?	AG 1		2	Land Use Designations
2. What are the agricultural issues?			2	
a. Land use	AG 1,2,3	AGP 1-8,31,32	2	
b. Land division	AG2,3	AGP 20-23	2	
c. Land conservation & management	AG 1-4	AGP 9-17, 19	2	
3. Is it another land use designation?			2	Land Use Designations
a. Large-Lot Rural	AG3	AGP 22	3	Land Use Des.
b. Small-Lot Rural	AG3	AGP24		Land Use Des.
c. Urban Lands	AG3	AGP24		Land Use Des.
4. Can the designation be changed?				
a. From Agriculture	AG 1,2,3,4	AGP 24	2	
b. To Large-Lot Rural, Small-Lot Rural	AG 3	AGP24	2,3	
c. To Urban Lands	AG 3	AGP24	2,3	
Key: ¹ AG: Agricultural Goal ² AGP: Agricultural Policy				

This page intentionally left blank.

APPENDIX B: AGRICULTURE MAPPING CRITERIA

Agriculture

The Agriculture designation in this plan includes several different cropland associations and grazing lands that are individually and collectively important to the local agricultural economy. Sources of data used in mapping these lands include the State Department of Water Resources land use maps, State Department of Conservation Important Farmland Series maps, U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soils maps (land capability rating and potential use of soils), U.S. Geological Survey maps (topography and vegetation), LUE official maps (land use categories, natural hazards, and parcel sizes), Assessor's maps and records (property ownership), and Department of Planning and Building maps of properties subject to land conservation contracts.

The following are the general parameters used in mapping lands in the Agriculture designation.

- A. Agricultural Preserves.** All agricultural preserves subject to land conservation contracts are designated Agriculture in this plan. Since the use and capability of some of those lands are limited, they might otherwise be included in different designations in this plan and in the LUE. However, such properties are committed to development restrictions for 10 to 20 years unless notices of nonrenewal are in effect to terminate contracts within a shorter term. Upon termination of contracts, the appropriate LUE and Agriculture Element designations will be evaluated through the general plan amendment process to determine if some other designation is appropriate.

An exception to this mapping of agricultural lands is for land holdings owned by non-profit land conservation organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, where the land is managed to protect open space resources. Such lands are mapped as Multi-Use Public Lands.

- B. Agricultural Use.** Areas of the county characterized by a mixture of agricultural and non-agricultural uses are mapped according to the predominant land use. For example, rural subdivisions under single ownership and farmed as a unit may be designated Agriculture. In addition, scattered parcels smaller than the applicable minimum parcel size for new land divisions in the Agriculture category of the LUE which are within a larger agricultural area may be designated Agriculture if necessary to maintain the agricultural integrity of an area. However, rural subdivisions of individually-owned lots that are too small for viable agricultural uses are typically designated Small-Lot Rural in this plan.

Specialized animal facilities such as horse ranches and poultry ranches and non-soil dependent uses such as greenhouses may be designated Agriculture if the underlying parcels meet the criteria for that designation. Specialized animal facilities and non-soil dependent uses may often be shorter-term uses than other agricultural uses. Consequently, appropriate parcel sizes for future land divisions should be based on the land's existing and potential use for long-term crop and grazing production, rather than the specialized uses.

- C. Land Capability.** The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) land capability rating of soils (Classes I through VIII) generally reflects the quality of soils for various agricultural uses. However, it is primarily an index of the level of soil conservation problems, such as erosion. Consequently, the individual soils descriptions should be reviewed to determine potential agricultural uses for an area. Also, soils mapping has limitations of scale. A soil for which grazing is indicated as the best use may contain smaller areas suitable for farming. On the other hand, soils described as farmland may contain small areas

unsuitable for farming. The land capability ratings may be periodically updated by the NRCS. When that occurs, the mapping in this plan should be reviewed and revised as appropriate through a general plan amendment.

- D. Location.** Location is a consideration in mapping Agriculture. Many areas with limited agricultural potential which are distant from urban areas are designated Agriculture if used primarily for grazing. For example, large areas of the southeastern county have a very limited livestock carrying capacity because of the arid climate and sparse vegetation; yet, the area is so distant from urban centers that the Agriculture designation may be appropriate if the land is primarily used for grazing.

Following is a description of the subcategories of the Agriculture designation in this plan and the criteria used to classify lands in those subcategories of Agriculture.

A. Irrigated Lands

1. **ROW CROP TERRAIN AND SOILS.** These areas support the most intensive farming operations, involve labor-intensive practices with above normal traffic and extensive use of equipment and chemicals, are often close to populated areas, and need special recognition to assure that farming will continue. Row crop terrain and soils has the following characteristics:
 - a. Existing and potential agricultural uses include various types of vegetables, seed crops, orchards, and other irrigated specialty crops. In valley bottom lands, uses include irrigated field crops and other uses reflecting farmer preference where there is potential for conversion to row crops.
 - b. Property sizes generally range from 10 acres to hundreds of acres, but contiguous properties as small as five acres may be included where used for high value, labor-intensive specialty uses such as strawberries or soil-dependent greenhouses. Small intervening properties are included in order to maintain the agricultural integrity of these farmland areas.
 - c. Topography consists of valley bottom lands with slopes generally between 0 and 5 percent.
 - d. Soils consist mostly of land capability Classes I and II, but may include some Class III land that has been traditionally used or is currently used for row crop production. Small areas consisting of soils in other land capability classes may be included because they are impractical to map in other categories.
 - e. Climate is varied, but the most extensive and productive lands are the coastal valleys where year-round moderate temperatures allow multiple cropping. Interior valley bottom lands with superior soils and agricultural water supplies are important for possible future conversion from field crops to row crops.
 - f. Water is derived from underlying groundwater basins and is typically applied by row, sprinkler or drip irrigation.
2. **SPECIALTY CROPS AND FORAGE LANDS.** The lands in this classification require sprinkler or drip irrigation and are primarily used for grapes, avocados and apples. This classification also includes irrigated uses such as alfalfa or irrigated pasture where the land is also

suitable for orchards and vineyards. Crops can be grown on moderate slopes with seasonal labor requirements. The location of specialty crops and forage lands is determined by availability of water and climatic conditions. Orchard and vineyard production is characterized by the need for large amounts of capital with several years delay but high return on the investment. Crops are grown on a broad range of parcel sizes. Specialty crops and forage lands have the following characteristics:

- a. Agricultural uses include irrigated orchards and vineyards such as wine grapes, avocados, citrus, and apples. Also included are irrigated uses such as alfalfa and pasture on gently rolling lands that are also suitable for irrigated orchards and vineyards. Some areas that were primarily used for irrigated field crops have developed with scattered orchards and vineyards. However, not all areas of irrigated field crops will be converted to orchards and vineyards. One reason is that feed crops are commonly associated with livestock operations on the same property.
- b. Property sizes generally range from 20 acres to a few hundred acres, but smaller properties used for high value crop production are also included.
- c. Topography is gently rolling and rolling on slopes between 5 and 30 percent.
- d. Soils consist mostly of Land Capability Classes III and IV.
- e. Climate imposes varied requirements for different types of crops. For example, subtropical fruits are limited to areas with a temperate coastal climate and deciduous fruits and nuts are generally better suited to the interior with its sunny hot summers and cold winters.
- f. Water is derived from groundwater sources and is applied either by drip or sprinkler irrigation.
- g. Economics, new agricultural techniques and grower preference are other factors which determine the location of various specialty crops.

B. Dry Farm Lands

Dry farm lands includes a broad range of properties that are primarily cultivated for an annual crop, but includes some orchard operations. Parcels are normally large in order to be productive units. Farming activities are seasonal with a moderate amount of labor and a considerable investment in farm machinery. Dry farm lands are divided into two types of croplands, mixed croplands and dry croplands.

1. MIXED CROPLANDS

Mixed croplands consist of two different types of terrain and crop associations. One type of mixed cropland is found in valleys with good soils but insufficient water for major irrigated uses. Such areas are characterized by mixed agricultural uses such as scattered irrigated crops and dry farm grain and hay. The other type of mixed cropland is found in areas of higher than average rainfall such as the easterly slopes of the Santa Lucia Range where dry farm orchards and some vineyards occur. Mixed croplands have the following characteristics:

- a. Agricultural uses include dry farm orchards and vineyards and specialty or high value field crops such as almonds and walnuts.
- b. Property sizes generally range from 40 acres to several hundred acres.
- c. Topography ranges from flat to rolling on slopes between 0 and 30 percent.
- d. Soils consist mostly of Land Capability Classes III and IV.
- e. Climate is most important with regard to rainfall. For example, dry farm almond orchards are best situated in areas of the county with an average annual rainfall exceeding 12 inches. Dry years or spring frosts can result in very poor harvests. Higher rainfall areas contain substantial intervening areas of dense woodland on steeper slopes.
- f. The location is confined to areas of existing production, since such crops as dry farm almonds and walnuts are not anticipated to expand significantly.

2. DRY CROPLANDS

Dry croplands have the following characteristics:

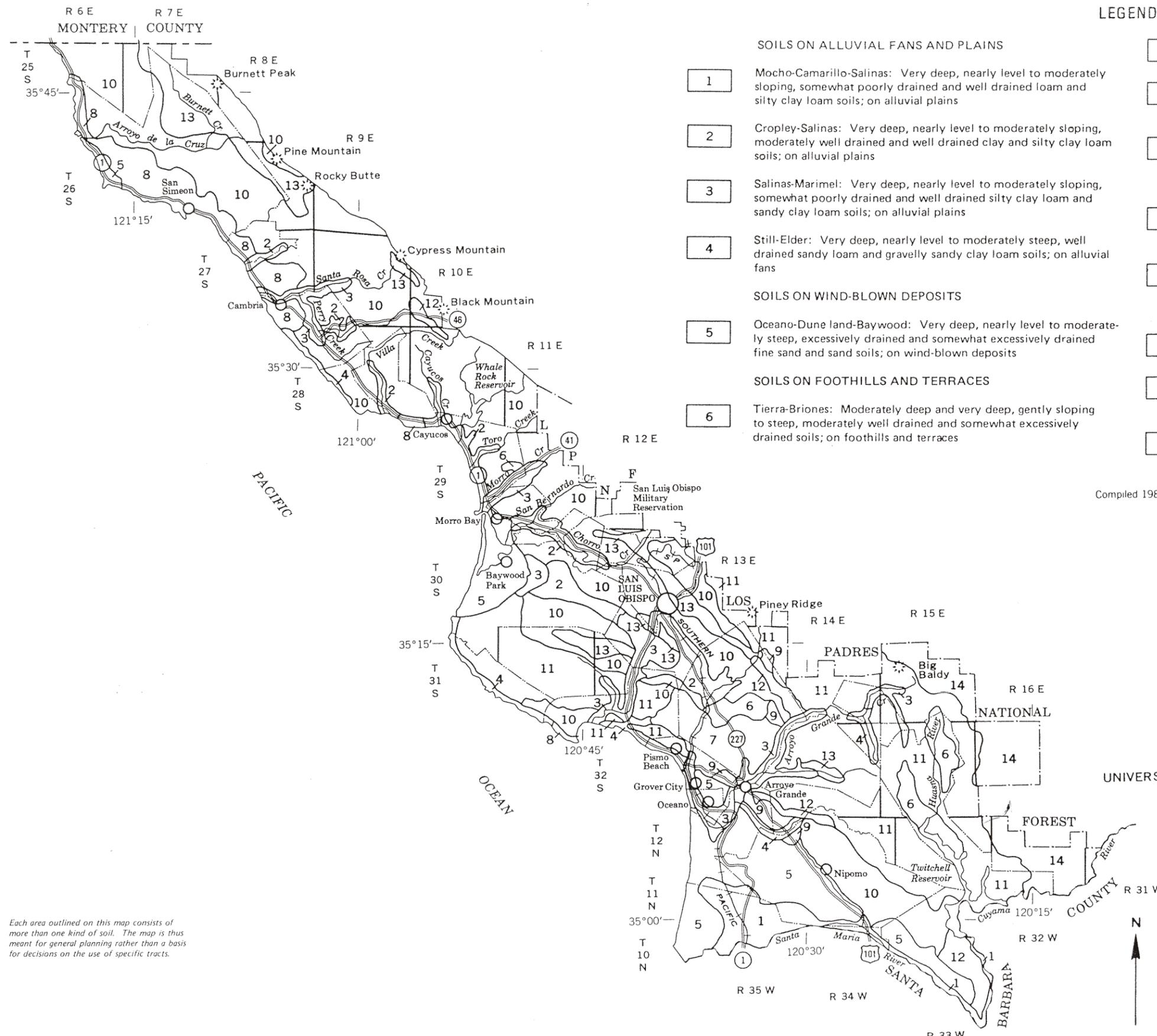
- a. Agricultural uses include grain and hay production, which is widespread in the northeastern part of the county. Barley, wheat and oat hay are the principal crops. Other crops include dry beans and safflower.
- b. Property sizes generally range from 80 acres to several thousand acres.
- c. Topography is flat to rolling on slopes between 0 and 30 percent.
- d. Soils consist mostly of Land Capability Classes III and IV. Class VI land has also been commonly used for grain and hay production.
- e. The amount and distribution of rainfall is very important. Areas with higher rainfall can usually produce a crop every year. The more arid portions of the county may require two or three-year summer fallow crop rotation practices.
- f. The location includes areas of predominant dry farm grain and hay production. Grain stubble fields and intervening non-cultivated areas provide seasonal forage for livestock.

C. Rangelands for Grazing

Grazing lands account for a large percentage of privately-owned land in the county. Cattle ranching is the predominant use on these lands, which have the following characteristics:

1. Property sizes generally range from 100 acres to thousands of acres.
2. Topography is mostly rolling and steep on slopes between 30 and 75 percent. Small intervening valleys and ridgetops that have limited use or potential as farmland are also included.

3. Soils consist mostly of Land Capability Classes IV, VI and VII, but also contain small intervening areas of other land capability classes.
4. The amount and distribution of rainfall is very important for production of grasses and forbs grazed by livestock. The best grazing lands occur on open hillsides on the coastal side of the Santa Lucia Range, while some of the less productive grazing lands are in arid areas in the southeast portion of the county.
5. Natural vegetation consists mostly of grasses and forbs in open to moderately wooded terrain. Large areas of dense woodland, chaparral or barren lands are excluded unless they are part of large operating ranches and/or are located in agricultural preserves.
6. The location is widespread and depends mainly upon property size and quality of land for grazing. Marginal grazing lands located near urban areas are generally not included in Agriculture.



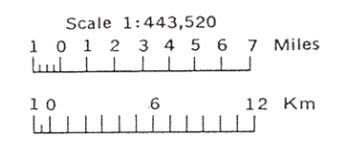
LEGEND

- SOILS ON ALLUVIAL FANS AND PLAINS**
- 1 Mocho-Camarillo-Salinas: Very deep, nearly level to moderately sloping, somewhat poorly drained and well drained loam and silty clay loam soils; on alluvial plains
- 2 Croypley-Salinas: Very deep, nearly level to moderately sloping, moderately well drained and well drained clay and silty clay loam soils; on alluvial plains
- 3 Salinas-Marimel: Very deep, nearly level to moderately sloping, somewhat poorly drained and well drained silty clay loam and sandy clay loam soils; on alluvial plains
- 4 Still-Elder: Very deep, nearly level to moderately steep, well drained sandy loam and gravelly sandy clay loam soils; on alluvial fans
- SOILS ON WIND-BLOWN DEPOSITS**
- 5 Oceano-Dune land-Baywood: Very deep, nearly level to moderately steep, excessively drained and somewhat excessively drained fine sand and sand soils; on wind-blown deposits
- SOILS ON FOOTHILLS AND TERRACES**
- 6 Tierra-Briones: Moderately deep and very deep, gently sloping to steep, moderately well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils; on foothills and terraces
- 7 Arnold-Pismo-Briones: Shallow to deep, moderately sloping to very steep, somewhat excessively drained soils; on foothills
- 8 San Simeon-Concepcion: Moderately deep and very deep, gently sloping to steep, moderately well drained soils; on old marine terraces
- 9 Chamise: Very deep, moderately sloping to moderately steep, well drained soils; on foothills and dissected terraces
- SOILS ON HILLS AND MOUNTAINS**
- 10 Los Osos-Lodo-Diablo: Shallow to deep, moderately sloping to very steep, well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils; on hills and mountains
- 11 Santa Lucia-Lopez-Rock outcrop: Shallow and moderately deep, moderately sloping to extremely steep, well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils, and Rock outcrop; on hills and mountains
- 12 Nacimiento-Calodo: Shallow and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained soils; on hills and mountains
- 13 Rock outcrop-Obispo-Henneke: Rock outcrop and shallow, strongly sloping to very steep, somewhat excessively drained and well drained soils; on hills and mountains
- 14 Millsap-Rock outcrop: Moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained soils, and Rock outcrop; on mountains

Compiled 1981

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

GENERAL SOIL MAP
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
CALIFORNIA, COASTAL PART



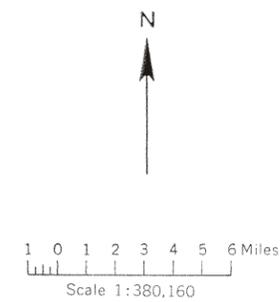
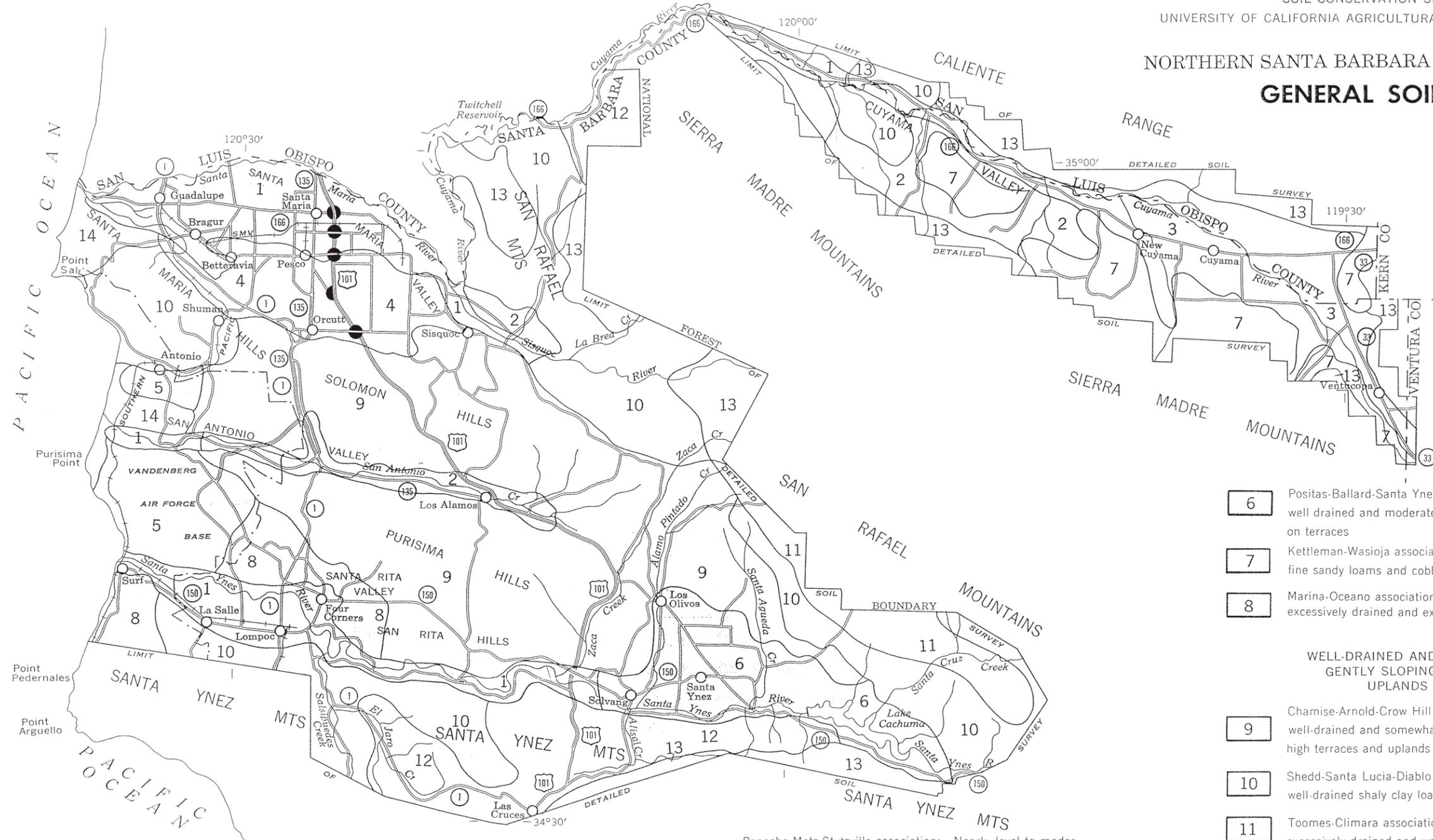
Each area outlined on this map consists of more than one kind of soil. The map is thus meant for general planning rather than a basis for decisions on the use of specific tracts.



This map is for general planning. It shows only the major soils and does not contain sufficient detail for operational planning.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

NORTHERN SANTA BARBARA AREA, CALIFORNIA
GENERAL SOIL MAP



SOIL ASSOCIATIONS*

- SOMEWHAT EXCESSIVELY DRAINED TO SOMEWHAT POORLY DRAINED, NEARLY LEVEL TO MODERATELY STEEP SOILS OF THE ALLUVIAL FANS, FLOOD PLAINS, VALLEYS, AND TERRACES
- 1** Sorrento-Mocho-Camarillo association: Nearly level to moderately sloping, well-drained to somewhat poorly drained sandy loams to silty clay loams on flood plains and alluvial fans
 - 2** Pleasanton-Botella-Elder association: Nearly level to moderately steep, well-drained and moderately well-drained sandy loams to clay loams on terraces and alluvial fans and in valleys

- 3** Panoche-Metz-Stutzville association: Nearly level to moderately sloping, somewhat excessively drained to somewhat poorly drained loamy sands to silty clay loams on flood plains and alluvial fans

- SOMEWHAT EXCESSIVELY DRAINED TO SOMEWHAT POORLY DRAINED, NEARLY LEVEL TO VERY STEEP SOILS OF THE TERRACES AND ADJACENT UPLANDS
- 4** Betteravia-Garey association: Nearly level to moderately steep, moderately well drained and well drained loamy sands to sandy loams on terraces
 - 5** Tangair-Narlon association: Nearly level to strongly sloping, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well-drained sands and loamy sands on terraces

- 6** Positas-Ballard-Santa Ynez association: Nearly level to moderately steep, well drained and moderately well drained fine sandy loams to clay loams on terraces
- 7** Kettleman-Wasioja association: Gently sloping to very steep, well-drained fine sandy loams and cobbly fine sandy loams on uplands and terraces
- 8** Marina-Oceano association: Nearly level to moderately steep, somewhat excessively drained and excessively drained sands on mesas and dunes

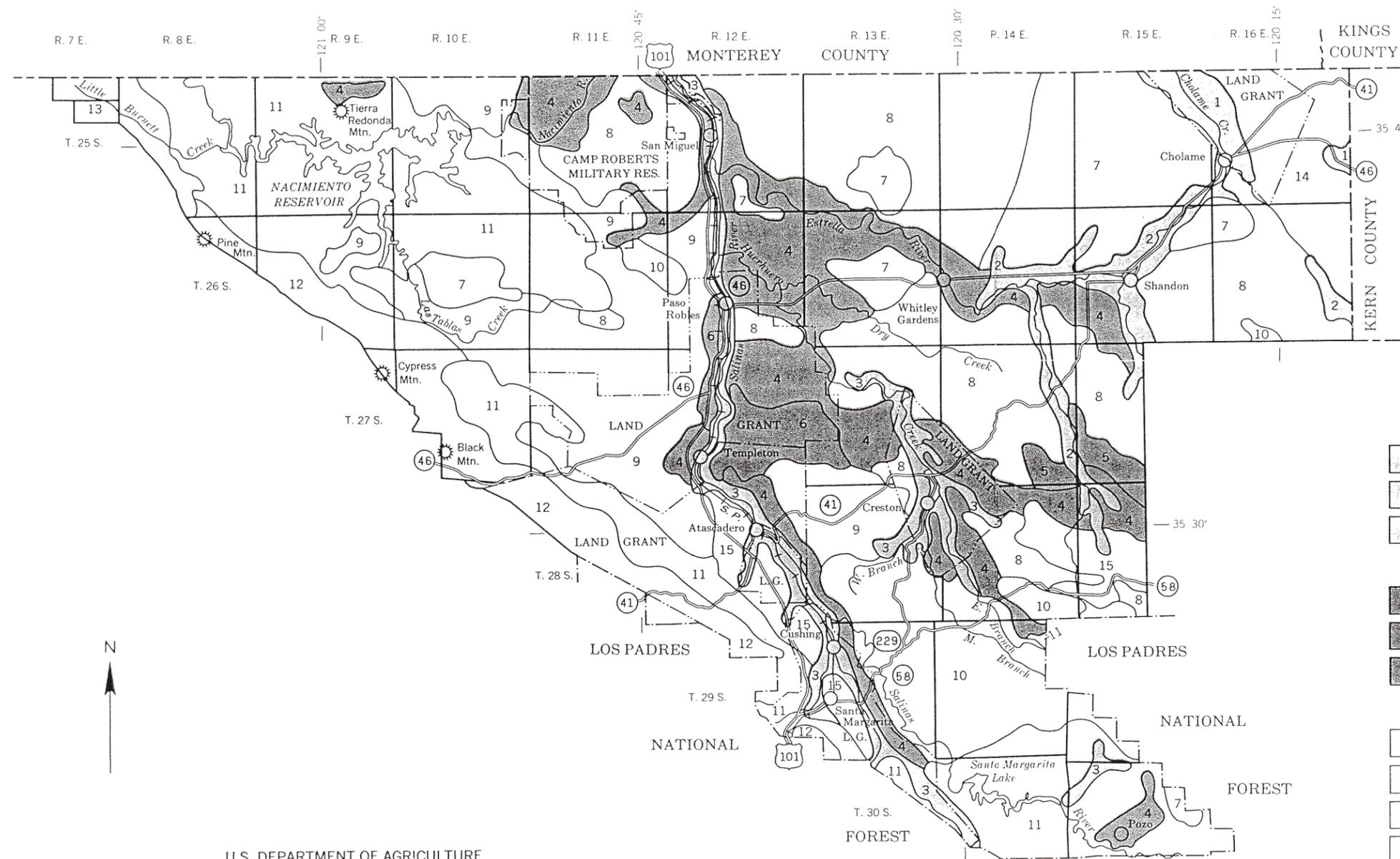
WELL-DRAINED AND SOMEWHAT EXCESSIVELY DRAINED, GENTLY SLOPING TO VERY STEEP SOILS OF THE UPLANDS AND HIGH TERRACES

- 9** Chamise-Arnold-Crow Hill association: Gently sloping to very steep, well-drained and somewhat excessively drained sands to clay loams on high terraces and uplands
- 10** Shedd-Santa Lucia-Diablo association: Strongly sloping to very steep, well-drained shaly clay loams and silty clays on uplands
- 11** Toomes-Climara association: Moderately steep to very steep, somewhat excessively drained and well-drained clay loams and clays on uplands
- 12** Los Osos-Gaviota association: Moderately sloping to very steep, well-drained and somewhat excessively drained clay loams to sandy loams on uplands

MISCELLANEOUS LAND TYPES

- 13** Sedimentary rock land-Rough broken land association: Steep to extremely steep, excessively drained lands on uplands
- 14** Dune land association: Coastal sand dunes and sandy beaches

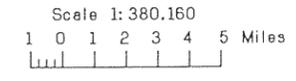
*Textures in name of associations refer to surface texture of the soils



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

GENERAL SOIL MAP

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,
 PASO ROBLES AREA



Each area outlined on this map consists of more than one kind of soil. The map is thus meant for general planning rather than a basis for decisions on the use of specific tracts.

MAP UNITS*

- SOILS ON ALLUVIAL PLAINS, ALLUVIAL FANS, AND FLOOD PLAINS
- 1 Mocho-Capay-Camarillo: Very deep, nearly level to moderately sloping, poorly drained to well drained clay loams, silty clays, and silty clay loams
 - 2 Pico-San Emigdio-Sorrento: Very deep, nearly level to moderately sloping, well drained fine sandy loams and clay loams
 - 3 Still-Elder-Metz: Very deep, nearly level to moderately sloping, well drained and somewhat excessively drained clay loams, loams, and loamy sands
- SOILS ON TERRACES
- 4 Arbuckle-Positas-San Ysidro: Very deep, nearly level to hilly, moderately well drained and well drained fine sandy loams, coarse sandy loams, and loams
 - 5 Chanac-Camatta: Very deep, gently rolling to very steep, well drained loams; some are shallow to a hardpan
 - 6 Lockwood-Concepcion: Very deep, nearly level to rolling, moderately well drained and well drained shaly loams and sandy loams
- SOILS ON HILLS AND MOUNTAINS
- 7 Nacimiento-Ayar: Moderately deep and deep, strongly sloping to steep, well drained silty clay loams and silty clays
 - 8 Nacimiento-Los Osos-Balcom: Moderately deep, strongly sloping to very steep, well drained silty clay loams, clay loams, and loams
 - 9 Linne-Calodo: Shallow and moderately deep, strongly sloping to very steep, well drained shaly clay loams and clay loams
 - 10 Cieneba-Vista-Andregg: Shallow and moderately deep, strongly sloping to very steep, well drained and excessively drained coarse sandy loams
 - 11 Dibble-Gaviota-Shimmon: Shallow and moderately deep, strongly sloping to very steep well drained clay loams, sandy loams, and loams
 - 12 Los Osos-Lompico-Lodo: Shallow and moderately deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained and somewhat excessively drained clay loams, loams, and gravelly clay loams
 - 13 Henneke-Rock outcrop: Shallow, moderately steep to very steep, somewhat excessively drained very cobbly clay loams, and Rock outcrop
 - 14 Ayar-Millsholm-Nacimiento: Shallow to deep, strongly sloping to very steep, well drained silty clays, clay loams, and silty clay loams
 - 15 San Andreas-Arnold-Santa Lucia: Moderately deep and deep, moderately steep to very steep, well drained and somewhat excessively drained sandy loams, loamy sands, and shaly clay loams

*Textures in the headings refer to surface layer of the major soils.

APPENDIX C: AGRICULTURAL BUFFER POLICIES

The following ag buffer policies have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors (revised November 2005).

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Agricultural Commissioner and Planning Director through the county's land use Agriculture Element to:

1. Promote and protect agriculture
2. Protect the public's health and safety
3. Provide the Board of Supervisors, LAFCO, School Districts, and City Councils with technical information, assistance and buffer recommendations to address land use compatibility and issues affecting agriculture.

Objectives

The Agricultural Commissioner will evaluate referrals to determine if potential "significant land use conflict" between agricultural lands and non-agricultural lands will occur with the proposed project. The basis for the determination and recommended mitigation measures will be provided in a written report. Determination and recommendations are advisory and made on a site-specific basis within the established buffer policies and procedures.

Buffers reduce Land Use Conflict from:

1. Pesticide Use
 - A. Provides for a margin of safety for the public and sensitive non-target areas.
 - B. Reduces the need for spray buffers or other governmental restrictions which negatively impact agriculture.
 - C. Helps maintain the feasibility of pesticide use as an alternative for sustainable agriculture.
 - D. Reduces local neighbor conflict and complaints to agriculturalist and government agencies.
2. Noise and Night time lighting
 - A. Reduces the potential for nuisance from a variety of agricultural sources such as bird frightening devices, pumps, heavy equipment, wind machines, etc.
 - B. Reduces local neighbor conflict and complaints to governmental agencies.
 - C. Reduces the disturbance from noise and light associated with night harvesting.

3. Dust
 - A. Creates distance or screening for dust to settle out before affecting homes or people.
4. Trespass/Vandalism/Theft/Litter/Liability
 - A. Helps reduce the potential negative impact that people and pets can have on agricultural property.
 - B. Helps reduce the impact that stray livestock can have on neighbor's property.
5. Rodent Control
 - A. Helps maintain the use of agricultural rodent control materials which may be otherwise prohibited in close proximity to homes, schools, and other urban areas.
 - B. Reduces the likelihood of accidental poisoning of pets.
6. Agricultural Burns
 - A. Helps maintain agricultural burning as a cultural management tool. Otherwise, burns may be prohibited or further regulated if dwellings are built too close to agricultural property.
 - B. Protects the public's health and safety.
7. Beekeepers
 - A. Helps preserve the use of bees for honey production and pollination. Otherwise, beekeepers may be forced to move hive sets out of agricultural areas due to close proximity to urban areas.
 - B. Protects the public's health and safety from bees searching for food and water.
8. Erosion and Development
 - A. Reduces the sources of soil erosion in agricultural areas from development activities on adjacent lands.
 - B. Reduces impacts on agriculture from flooding and siltation.
9. Harborage and introduction of agricultural disease and pests
 - A. Protects agriculture by reducing the incident of insect and diseases moving from backyard situations to adjacent agriculture.
10. Other sources of land use conflict unique to certain situations.

Referral Process

1. The Agricultural Commissioner's office responds to referrals sent by the Planning Department, Public Works, LAFCO, School Districts, or city government. Issues usually relate to proposed development, land divisions, lot line adjustments, zoning or general plan changes adjacent to or in the vicinity of existing agricultural land use. Responses are in writing and advisory only.
2. An on-site evaluation is conducted usually with the applicant and/or agent. Nearby agricultural operators are contacted whenever possible.
3. Existing agricultural use, within an appropriate range, is evaluated for potential significant land use conflict with the proposal. Realistic future agricultural uses on agricultural zoned parcels may also be considered.
4. Buffer determinations and other mitigation measures are made on a case by case basis considering established buffer distance ranges and all relevant factors. Countywide standard or minimum setback distances are used only when specified in the LUO. However, this procedural guideline is followed to provide for maximum consistency.
5. Recommended mitigation measures are subject to review and modification by the department as long as the margin of safety is maintained, potential nuisance issues are adequately addressed and potential land use conflict is maintained at a level below significance.
6. Agricultural Commissioner land use reports will also identify potential land use conflicts and negative impacts to agriculture in situations which may be partially or not at all mitigated. Even with buffer setbacks, etc., agriculturalists may be further restricted in their production practices or experience losses due to adjacent development.
7. Agricultural Commissioner's staff is available for testimony at public hearings upon the request of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Subdivision Review Board, Planning and Building Department, LAFCO, or city government.

Procedural Guidelines

Introduction

Type and extent of agricultural use, zoning, site specific non-crop factors, and the nature of the land use proposal are the most significant factors in a determination of significant land use conflict and subsequent mitigation measures.

1. Agricultural Use
 - A. Extent: An evaluation is made if existing agricultural use is of a "production agriculture" scope. This differentiates "hobby farms", "ranchettes", or other smaller non-commercial type agricultural uses.

- B. Type: Farming practices vary considerably by type of agricultural use. Subsequently, land use conflict determinations and recommended mitigation measures are often directly related to the type of agricultural use potentially impacted by the referred land use proposal.
- C. Historical/Current/Future: An evaluation may be made concerning the suitability of a particular parcel or area for certain types of agricultural uses.

2. Zoning

Zoning on agricultural use parcels adjacent/near the referred land use proposal are evaluated. The zoning of the referred parcels and the overall zoning of the area may also be evaluated.

- A. Parcels adjacent to the referral project, zoned agriculture, with an existing or realistic future agricultural use normally provides a basis for a land use conflict determination and subsequent mitigation measures.
- B. Parcels adjacent to the referral project not zoned agriculture may provide a basis for a land use conflict determination only if a "production agriculture" use exists at the time of evaluation.

3. Site Specific Non-Crop Factors

Various site specific factors are evaluated and potentially utilized in land use conflict determinations and mitigation measures. These include, but are not limited to: topography, prevailing wind direction, natural screening (e.g.; vegetation, stream channels), soil type, location of existing roads, and the extent of existing development.

4. Nature of the Proposal

Specific factors related to the referred land use proposal that may be significant include, but are not limited to: parcel size, configuration, density of development, and intended type of land use. Developments, which include dwellings or schools, may need larger buffers than businesses where the presence of people may be limited.

Mitigation Measures

Objective

Building setbacks (buffers) and/or screening techniques (walls, landscaping, etc.), are useful to increase the likelihood of compatibility between development (homes, schools, etc.) and agricultural property. Buffers are the most effective mitigation measure.

Scope

The buffer is placed on the developer's property and will be recorded as a distance from the property line to the proposed occupied structure. However, the total buffer distance calculation and recommendation is measured from proposed occupied structure to the edge of the agricultural operation. The buffer will allow for such land uses as landscaping, barns, storage buildings, orchards, pastures, etc., while protecting the agricultural use and the public's health and safety.

The County does not have the authority to restrict the agricultural land use in order to accomplish the recommended buffer. However, the Agricultural Commissioner does have the authority, and has at times, imposed spray buffers and other restrictions to pest management practices due to development or other potential hazards near agricultural operations.

Agricultural Buffer Distance Determinations

1. General Guidelines
 - A. Determinations are made based on all relevant site and project criteria, practical knowledge of agricultural practices, technical literature, contact with other professionals within the University, industry, government agencies and training.
 - B. "Margin of safety" and "probability" concepts are used in determining setback distances.
 - C. The department's land use reports will identify recommended mitigation measures and will not provide alternatives.
 - D. Existing dwellings adjacent to agricultural use may already negatively impact agriculture. Buffer mitigations address reducing future or additional impacts and aren't necessarily affected by existing dwellings unless the extent of existing development is such that the proposal does not significantly worsen the land use conflict already present.
2. Buffer Distance Ranges by Crop

Agricultural practices associated with the production of crops are the most important contributing factor to land use conflict when development occurs in close proximity to agricultural areas. Since production practices vary considerably by type of crop, buffer distances may vary accordingly. Ranges in distance are necessary due to the influence that site or project specific factors may have.

Buffer Distance Range by Crop
Table 1

Type of Agricultural Use	Buffer Distance Range
1. Intensive Agricultural Uses	
Vineyard	200 - 600 feet
Irrigated orchards	200 - 600 feet
Irrigated vegetables and berries	200 - 600 feet
Irrigated Forage and Field Crops	100 - 400 feet
Wholesale nurseries - Outdoors	100 - 500 feet
Greenhouses	100 - 300 feet
2. Non-Intensive Agricultural Uses	
Dry farm field crops, orchards and vineyards	100-200 feet
Rangeland/pasture	50-200 feet

Site specific non-crop factors (such as topography, prevailing wind direction, and elevation differences) and proposal specifications often affect the final buffer distance recommendation within ranges listed in Number 1 and 2. Significant overriding factors or land unsuitable for agricultural use could justify recorded buffers less than the indicated range.

3. Buffers and Development Potential

Potential development on the referred land use proposal will always be considered. However, with certain types of production agricultural crop uses as defined in Table 2 below on agricultural zoned land, the analysis may lead to a recommendation to alter the project.

4. Zoning and Buffers

A. Affect of Agricultural Use Zoning on Project Mitigation.

The zoning on agricultural use parcels adjacent to the proposed land use referral may affect buffer determinations.

The following table applies to the zoning of parcels potentially affected by proposed projects. These parcels usually adjoin the proposed project, but may also encompass other parcels in the nearby area (regional considerations).

Zoning and Buffer Recommendations
Table 2

Adjacent Parcel			Project Parcel Mitigation
Zoning	Ag Use	Buffers May Be Recommended	Proposed Development Possibly Affected
Ag. Zone	Production Ag. Use	Yes	Yes
Ag. Zone	Prime Soils	Yes	Yes
Ag. Zone	Realistic Future Ag. Use	Yes	No
Non-Ag. Zone	Production Ag. Use	Yes	* Yes
Non-Ag. Zone	Non-production Ag. Use	No	No
Non-Ag. Zone	Realistic Future Production Ag. Use	No	No

*Production agricultural use parcels in non-agricultural zones which have historic agricultural value, prime soils, or other unique agricultural characteristics, will receive the same level of recommended mitigation protection as do agricultural zoned parcels.

B. Use of Project Mitigation on Agriculturally Zoned Parcels

Typically, buffers are not necessary are on parcels zoned agriculture. However, buffers will be recommended on parcels zoned agriculture which are under 20 acres in size (substandard sized lots commonly known as antiquated subdivisions). Maximum appropriate buffer distance within approved ranges will be recommended, but distances may need to be reduced to allow for reasonable home sites on existing parcels.

Specific Situational Issues

1. When buffers are recommended for proposed land use projects adjacent to production agriculture on non-agriculturally zoned property, the report will normally state: "The buffer shall become null and void if future development on adjacent parcel(s) precludes production agriculture." Such a determination shall be made in consultation with the Department of Agriculture.
2. The Agricultural Commissioner will not recommend the specific type of plant material or construction material for a wall or fence for screening purposes, but may state objectives and evaluate the applicants written proposal.
3. Organic farming practices will not typically influence mitigation measures.

4. Proposed industrial land uses adjacent to agricultural areas may also present significant land use conflict. Specific types of industrial use will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis through the normal referral process.
5. Land use conflict may be significantly reduced if the agricultural use and the proposed use is owned/operated by the same party (eg: winery or a roadside stand added to an existing agricultural operation.)
6. Occupied structure(s) that already exist within a "buffer zone" are not affected by the buffer restrictions. Buffers will only affect location of proposed occupied structures. Mobile homes are considered home sites and subsequently can be replaced by permanent home construction within the buffer zone. Permanent home replacement (e.g., fire destruction) would also be unaffected by the buffer.

Disclosure

The agricultural buffer document will be duly recorded in the chain of title of the subject property.

APPENDIX D: RIGHT-TO-FARM ORDINANCE

The following right to farm ordinance is contained in chapter 5.16 of the San Luis Obispo County Code. (Changes adopted January 8, 2002)

CHAPTER 5.16

AGRICULTURAL LANDS, OPERATIONS, AND THE RIGHT TO FARM ORDINANCE

Sections:

5.16.010.	<u>Definitions</u>
5.16.020.	<u>Findings and Policy</u>
5.16.030.	<u>Pre-existing Agricultural Operations not a Nuisance</u>
5.16.031.	<u>Pre-existing Agricultural Processing Uses not a Nuisance</u>
5.16.040.	<u>Disclosure</u>
5.16.050.	<u>Property Tax Bill Disclosure</u>
5.16.060.	<u>Disclosure Upon Transfer of Residential Property</u>
5.17.070.	<u>Discretionary Land Use Permit Disclosure</u>
5.16.080.	<u>Penalty for Violation</u>
5.16.090.	<u>Resolution of Disputes</u>
5.16.100.	<u>Severability</u>

5.16.010. Definitions.

- (1) "Agricultural Land" shall mean all real property within the unincorporated boundaries of San Luis Obispo County currently used for Agricultural Operations, or upon which Agricultural Operations may in the future be established.
- (2) The term "agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof" (herein collectively referred to as "Agricultural Operations") shall include, but not be limited to, the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural commodity including timber, viticulture, apiculture, or horticulture, the raising of livestock, fur bearing animals, fish, or poultry, and any practices performed by a farmer or on a farm as incident to or in conjunction with those farming operations, including preparation for market, delivery to storage or to market, or delivery to carriers for transportation to market.
- (3) "Agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof" includes, but is not limited to the storage or warehousing of any agricultural products, and includes processing of wholesale or retail markets of agricultural products, the canning or freezing of agricultural products, the processing of dairy products, the production and bottling of beer and wine, the processing of meat and egg products, the drying of fruits and grains, the packing and cooling of fruits and vegetables, rendering plants licensed pursuant to Section 19300 of the Food and Agricultural Code, and collection centers licensed pursuant to Section 19300.5 of the Food and Agricultural Code.

- (4) The term "nuisance" shall have the meaning ascribed to that term in California Civil Code Section 3479. California Civil Code Section 3479 reads, in part, as follows: "Anything which is injurious to health, or is indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property ... is a nuisance."

5.16.020. Findings and Policy:

- (1) It is the declared policy of this County to enhance and encourage Agricultural Operations, including agricultural processing within the County. It is the further intent of this County to provide to the residents of this County proper notification of the County's recognition and support through this ordinance of those persons and/or entities right to farm.
- (2) Where non-agricultural land uses occur near agricultural areas, Agricultural Operations frequently become the subjects of nuisance complaints due to lack of information about such operations. As a result, agricultural operators may be forced to cease or curtail their operations. Such actions discourage investments in farm improvements to the detriment of agricultural uses and the viability of the County's agricultural industry as a whole. It is the purpose and intent of this ordinance to reduce the loss to the County of its agricultural resources by clarifying the circumstances under which Agricultural Operations may be considered a nuisance. This ordinance is not to be construed as in any way modifying or abridging state law as set out in the California Civil Code, Health and Safety Code, Fish and Game Code, Food and Agricultural Code, Division 7 of the Water Code, or any other applicable provision of State law relative to nuisances. Instead, it is to be utilized only in the interpretation and enforcement of the provisions of this code and County regulations.
- (c) An additional purpose of this ordinance is to promote a good neighbor policy by advising purchasers of residential property, and owners of other property in the County, of the inherent potential problems associated with the purchase of such property. Such concerns may include, but are not limited to, the noises, odors, dust, chemicals, smoke and hours of operation that may accompany Agricultural Operations and Agricultural Processing. It is intended that, through mandatory disclosures, purchasers and users will better understand the impact of living near Agricultural Operations and be prepared for attendant conditions as the natural result of living in or near rural areas.

5.16.030. Pre-existing Agricultural Operations Not a Nuisance:

- (1) No agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof, conducted or maintained for commercial purposes, and in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, as established and followed by similar Agricultural operations in the same locality, shall be or become a nuisance, private or public, due to any changed condition in or about the locality, after it has been in operation for more than three years if it was not a nuisance at the time it began.
- (2) Subsection (1) of section 15.16.030 shall not apply if the agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof, obstruct the free passage or use, in the customary manner, of any navigable lake, river, bay, stream, canal, or basin, or any public park, square, street, or highway.

5.16.031. Pre-existing Agricultural Processing Uses Not a Nuisance:

- (1) No agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof, conducted or maintained for commercial purposes, and in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, shall be or become a nuisance, private or public, due to any changed condition in or about the locality, after it has been in operation for more than three years if it was not a nuisance at the time it began.
- (2) If an agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof substantially increased its activities or operations after January 1, 1993, then a public or private nuisance action may be brought with respect to those increases in activities or operations that have a significant effect on the environment. For increases in activities or operations that have been in effect more than three years, there is a rebuttable presumption affecting the burden of producing evidence that the increase was not substantial.
- (3) This section does not supersede any other provision of law, except other provisions of this part, if the agricultural processing activity, operation, facility, or appurtenances thereof, constitute a nuisance, public or private, as specifically defined or described in the provision.

5.16.040. Disclosure

- (1) San Luis Obispo County has determined that the use of real property for Agricultural Operations including Agricultural Processing is a high priority and favored use to the County, and those inconveniences or discomforts arising from legally established agricultural activities or operations, as defined.
- (2) Disclosure Statement: "The County of San Luis Obispo recognizes the statewide policy to protect and encourage Agriculture. Section 3482.5 and 3482.6 of the California Civil Code and Chapter 5.16 of the San Luis Obispo County Code protect certain, pre-existing agricultural production and processing operations ("agricultural operation") from nuisance claims. If your property is near a protected agricultural operation, you may be subject to certain inconveniences and/or discomforts which are protected by law. In order for the agricultural operation to be protected, the following requirements of Civil Code sections 3482.5 and 3482.6 must be satisfied:
 - (1) The agricultural operation must be conducted or maintained for commercial purposes;
 - (2) The agricultural operation must be conducted or maintained in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards as established and followed by similar agricultural operations in the same locality;
 - (3) The agricultural operation predated the affected use(s) on your property;
 - (4) The agricultural operation has been in existence for more than three years;
 - (5) The agricultural operation was not a nuisance at the time it began.

If your property is near an agricultural operation in the unincorporated area of the County, which satisfies the above requirements, you may at times be subject to one or more inconveniences and/or discomfort arising from that operation. Such inconveniences may include (depending upon the type of agricultural operation protected), but are not necessarily limited to, the following: noise, odors, fumes, dust, legal pesticide use, fertilizers, smoke, insects, farm personnel and truck traffic,

visual impacts night time lighting, operation of machinery and the storage, warehousing and processing of agricultural products or other inconveniences or discomforts associated with the protected agricultural operations. For additional information pertaining to this disclosure and the Right to Farm Ordinance, or concerns with an agricultural operation, please contact the San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioners Office.”

- (3) The disclosure statement is given for informational purposes only and nothing in this Ordinance, or in the Disclosure Statement, shall prevent anyone from complaining to any appropriate agency, or taking any other available remedy, concerning any unlawful or improper agricultural practice.
- (4) The Disclosure Statement set forth above shall be used as described in sections 5.16.050, 5.16.060, and 5.16.070.

5.16.050. Property Tax Bill Disclosure

- (1) The County of San Luis Obispo may mail a copy of the disclosure set out at 5.16.040 (2) to all owners of real property in San Luis Obispo County with the annual tax bill.

5.16.060. Disclosure Upon Transfer of Residential Property

- (1) Upon any transfer of real property located in the unincorporated area of the County by sale, exchange, installment land sale contract (as defined in Civil Code Section 2985), lease with an option to purchase, any other option to purchase, or ground lease coupled with improvements, or residential stock cooperative, improved with or consisting of not less than one nor more than four dwelling units, the transferor shall deliver to the prospective transferee the written Disclosure Statement required by this ordinance. The Disclosure Statement shall be delivered in the manner set forth in Civil Code Sections 1102.2 and 1102.10. Exceptions to the applicability of this Section 5.16.060 are set forth in Civil Code Section 1102.1. The written disclosure shall be set forth in, and shall be made on a copy of, the following disclosure form:

LOCAL OPTION REAL ESTATE TRANSFER DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

THIS DISCLOSURE STATEMENT CONCERNS THE REAL PROPERTY SITUATED IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA OF THE COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DESCRIBED AS _____. THIS STATEMENT IS A DISCLOSURE OF THE CONDITION OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PROPERTY IN COMPLIANCE WITH CHAPTER 5.16 OF THE SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY CODE AS OF _____.

IT IS NOT A WARRANTY OF ANY KIND BY THE SELLER(S) OR ANY AGENT(S) REPRESENTING ANY PRINCIPAL(S) IN THIS TRANSACTION, AND IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY INSPECTIONS OR WARRANTIES THE PRINCIPAL(S) MAY WISH TO OBTAIN.

SELLERS INFORMATION

The seller discloses the following information with the knowledge that even though this is not a warranty, prospective buyers may rely on this information in deciding whether and on what terms to purchase the subject property. Seller hereby authorizes any agent(s) representing any principal(s) in this transaction to provide a copy of this statement to any person or entity in connection with any actual or anticipated sale of the property.

THE FOLLOWING ARE REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY THE SELLER(S) AS REQUIRED BY THE COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO, AND ARE NOT THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AGENTS(S), IF ANY. THIS INFORMATION IS A DISCLOSURE AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE PART OF ANY CONTRACT BETWEEN THE BUYER AND SELLER.

“The County of San Luis Obispo recognizes the statewide policy to protect and encourage Agriculture. Section 3482.5 and 3482.6 of the California Civil Code and Chapter 5.16 of the San Luis Obispo County Code protect certain, pre-existing agricultural production and processing operations (“agricultural operation”) from nuisance claims. If your property is near a protected agricultural operation, you may be subject to certain inconveniences and/or discomforts which are protected by law. In order for the agricultural operation to be protected, the following requirements of Civil Code sections 3482.5 and 3482.6 must satisfied:

- (1) The agricultural operation must be conducted or maintained for commercial purposes;
- (2) The agricultural operation must be conducted or maintained in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards as established and followed by similar agricultural operations in the same locality;
- (3) The agricultural operation predated the affected use(s) on your property;
- (4) The agricultural operation has been in existence for more than three years;
- (5) The agricultural operation was not a nuisance at the time it began.

If your property is near an agricultural operation in the unincorporated area of the County, which satisfies the above requirements, you may at times be subject to one or more inconveniences and/or discomfort arising from that operation. Such inconveniences may include (depending upon the type of agricultural operation protected), but are not necessarily limited to, the following: noise, odors, fumes, dust, legal pesticide use, fertilizers, smoke, insects, farm personnel and truck traffic, visual impacts night time lighting, operation of machinery and the storage, warehousing and processing of agricultural products or other inconveniences or discomforts associated with the protected agricultural operations. For additional information pertaining to this disclosure and the Right to Farm Ordinance, or concerns with an agricultural operation, please contact the San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioners Office.”

Seller certifies that the information herein is true and correct to the best of the Seller's knowledge as of the date signed by the Seller.

Seller _____ Date _____
 Seller _____ Date _____

BUYER(S) AND SELLER(S) MAY WISH TO OBTAIN PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND/OR INSPECTIONS OF THE PROPERTY AND TO PROVIDE FOR APPROPRIATE PROVISIONS

IN A CONTRACT BETWEEN BUYER AND SELLER(S) WITH RESPECT TO ANY ADVICE/INSPECTIONS/DEFECTS.

I/WE ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF A COPY OF THIS STATEMENT.

Seller _____ Date _____ Buyer _____ Date _____

Seller _____ Date _____ Buyer _____ Date _____

Agent (Broker Representing Seller) _____ By _____
(Associate Licensee or Broker-Signature)

Date _____

Agent (Broker obtaining the Offer) _____ By _____
(Associate Licensee or Broker-Signature)

Date _____

A REAL ESTATE BROKER IS QUALIFIED TO ADVISE ON REAL ESTATE. IF YOU DESIRE LEGAL ADVICE, CONSULT YOUR ATTORNEY.

5.16.070 Discretionary Land Use Permit Disclosure

The County of San Luis Obispo shall include the Disclosure Statement described in Section 5.16.040(2) above on all discretionary land use permit applications administered by the County Department of Planning and Building. These shall include, but not be limited to, applications for the approval of land divisions pursuant to Title 21 of the San Luis Obispo County Code, applications for the approval of discretionary land use permits pursuant to Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code, and applications for the approval of discretionary land use permits pursuant to Title 23 of San Luis Obispo County Code.

5.16.080 Penalty for Violation

Any violation of any of the requirements of this chapter shall be handled as a civil matter between the parties affected and shall not be a misdemeanor or infraction.

5.16.090. Resolution of Disputes.

Should any controversy arise regarding any inconvenience or discomfort occasioned by Agricultural Operations (described in Section 15.16.010 (2)(3) above) conducted in accordance with existing laws, ordinances and regulations, then the parties may notify the County Agricultural Commissioner as set forth below in an attempt to resolve the matter:

- (a) The aggrieved party may notify the Agricultural Commissioner within 30 days of the occurrence of the Agricultural Operation giving rise to the controversy.
- (b) Within 15 days after receiving the complaint, the Agricultural Commissioner shall set a meeting with the affected parties and shall attempt to mediate the dispute.

- (c) If the dispute cannot be successfully mediated by the Agricultural Commissioner, then both parties may agree to present the controversy to a professional mediator. The expense of such mediation shall be the responsibility of the affected parties.

5.16.100 Severability

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity or the constitutionality of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

APPENDIX E: AGRICULTURE: LAND, ECONOMY, INDUSTRY

Physical Resource Base

San Luis Obispo County has diverse physical features that affect use of land for agriculture. Physical characteristics, including topography, soils, climate, natural vegetation and water, are strongly interrelated.

Several mountain ranges and intervening valleys transect the county. Geology and topography are key factors in the formation of soils and the use of land for cropland or grazing. The usability of soils for crops depends on their depth, drainage, texture and water- holding capacity. The best soils for crops normally occur on flat or gently sloping lowlands. Soil erosion is generally a problem on moderate to steep slopes. More than 50 percent of the county has slopes exceeding 30 percent, which generally can be used only for grazing.

The climate of the coastal area west of the Santa Lucia Range is very different from that of the interior. Coastal temperatures are moderated throughout the year by humid marine air, including much foggy weather during the spring and summer. The nearly frost-free climate allows year-round production of vegetables (typically, 2 to 3 crops per year) in coastal valleys and citrus, avocados and other subtropical fruits in the foothills. In contrast, the interior of the county has hot summers and cold winters. Such conditions favor production of deciduous fruits and nuts, dry farm grain, alfalfa, and single cropping of vegetables.

The mountain ranges transecting the county create successive rain shadows to the east. The crest of the northerly Santa Lucia Range receives an average annual rainfall of 30 to 50 inches while the Carrizo Plain averages only six to eight inches. The amount of rainfall strongly influences yields of dry farm grain and hay and the growth of range grasses in different areas of the county. Most grain and hay is produced in areas of moderate rainfall such as the north-central part of the county. Open hillsides on the northerly Santa Lucia Range are the best grazing lands in the county, while dry areas and tree and brush-covered areas are the poorest. Moderate to densely-wooded areas primarily occur on the northeasterly slopes of the Santa Lucia Range and the crests and sides of other mountain ranges. Chaparral predominates on dry, southwesterly facing mountain slopes and on the poor granitic soils of the Las Pilitas area.

Irrigated agriculture is dependent on the quantity, quality and depth of groundwater. The most extensive and abundant source of groundwater is the Paso Robles Basin, underlying the northeastern quadrant of the county. The Carrizo Plain Basin is the next largest area, but water quantity and quality is poor. Expansion of irrigated uses in the Cuyama Basin is questionable since the basin is experiencing overdraft and water quality may be deteriorating. The Santa Maria Basin is the largest of the coastal basins; this and other coastal valley basins provide water for row crops and other irrigated crops. Areas of limited groundwater, mostly in the hills on both sides of the Santa Lucia Range used for irrigated orchards and vineyards, must depend on low-production wells and drip irrigation systems to conserve water. The increasing consumption of water by urban, rural residential and agricultural uses is a major issue confronting the future use of groundwater in the county.

Sectors of the Agricultural Economy

Through 1995, cropland and grazing lands involve approximately 1,160,400 acres (including acreage in the Conservation Reserve Program) or 55 percent of the total county area (2,122,240 acres) and account for approximately 74 percent of privately-owned lands in the county. The quality of land varies widely from prime valleys used for intensive vegetable production to arid, mountainous, or tree or chaparral-covered areas limited to grazing and having a very low livestock carrying capacity. The latter areas commonly occur on large cattle ranches with land varying from well-suited to poorly-suited or unusable for grazing.

Figure E-1 shows the harvested acreage of various crops, acreage in rangeland, and numbers of farm animals from 1976 through 1995. The total harvested acreage in any given year is less than the actual production acreage because of such factors as adverse weather conditions that reduce the harvested acreage, crop/fallow rotation, and the Conservation Reserve Program, a federal subsidy program in which participating landowners leave the land idle for ten years to help restore the soils. Total agricultural acreage appears to have declined slightly during the past 20 years, although it is difficult to determine how much from the table.

The figure reflects the physical limitations as well as the agricultural diversity of the county. The total harvested cropland acreage in 1995 was approximately 11 percent of the combined total of cropland and grazing land, and irrigated cropland accounted for approximately 44 percent of the total irrigated and dry farm acreage or about five percent of the combined total for cropland and grazing uses.

Most vegetable production occurs in the coastal valleys, notably the Oso Flaco and Arroyo Grande Valleys. Lettuce and cole crops are the major crops. Irrigated field crops, mostly alfalfa and irrigated pasture, predominate in the interior valleys. The high cost of pumping water is resulting in gradual conversion to higher value crops such as vegetables and wine grapes.

The expansion of vineyards has been a major change in agricultural patterns. Harvested acreage increased from 2,962 acres in 1976 to 8,939 acres in 1995. Most of this acreage was previously used for dry farm grain production. Vineyards occur mostly on gently rolling land east of Paso Robles, west of Templeton and Paso Robles, and in the Edna Valley. Avocados, lemons and some other subtropical fruits are grown in the coastal foothills.

Production of nursery stock and crop seed has steadily increased. Higher value activities include propagation of fruit and nut trees and vegetable seedlings, and the production of cut flowers, indoor decorative and ornamental trees and shrubs. These represent new markets for agriculture as the county population expands.

Most almond and walnut orchards in the county are dry farmed. They occur in areas where the average annual rainfall exceeds 12 inches, notably the east slopes and foothills of the northerly Santa Lucia Range and between Atascadero and Creston. Production acreage is anticipated to decrease because of competition with extensive irrigated orchards in California's Central Valley. Local dry farm production is subject to weather conditions that cause large fluctuations in harvests, and most orchards are located on small parcels whose owners may or may not maintain the orchards. Many of these lands are now being pressured for conversion to rural residential homesites.

Most dry farm grain and hay is produced in the interior valleys and uplands in the northern and eastern parts of the county, including the rural areas between and surrounding Paso Robles, Templeton, Creston, Shandon and the northerly Carrizo Plain. Major crops are barley, grain hay and wheat. Grain and grain hay are also produced in the coastal valleys. It is anticipated that there will be continuing conversion of dry farm lands

to vineyards and orchards where sufficient groundwater is available for irrigation. The actual acreage of land used for dry farm grain and hay is larger than indicated in Table E-1 because of crop/fallow rotation. In addition, a substantial acreage is idle because it is in the Conservation Reserve Program. Some of that acreage will be coming out of the program in the next few years, but it is not known whether the land will be returned to production or what types of crops might be established.

Rangelands for livestock grazing occur countywide. The best grazing land is on the open coastal slopes of the Santa Lucia Range in the North Coast area. Raising cattle and calves is the principal livestock operation. Approximately 75,000 acres of grain stubble land in the county is used as supplemental forage for livestock.

The raising of horses for work, pleasure, racing and show purposes contributes a significant portion of agricultural income in the county. The diversity of animal raising activities has also increased.

Figure E-2 shows the value of major classes of agricultural commodities produced in the county from 1986 through 1995. The increase is substantial even when constant dollars are used to compensate for the declining value of the dollar for the purchase of goods and services. The value of agricultural production during the 10 year period was increased by the intensification of agriculture, including technological improvements in production, establishment of vineyards and orchards on land that was previously used for production of lower value field crops, expansion of nurseries and greenhouses, and the raising of horses. Each of the five categories in Figure E-2 significantly contributes to the county's agriculture economy.

FIGURE E-1: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (HARVESTED ACRES, NUMBERS OF ANIMALS) IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, 1976-1995

CROP ASSOCIATION & TYPE¹	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
<i>IRRIGATED CROPS</i>																				
<i>Vegetable Crops²</i>																				
Bell Peppers	539	593	605	682	462	584	444	536	599	499	585	1,020	1,134	812	717	1,000	955	1,123	1,227	1,095
Broccoli	3,825	5,270	5,481	5,304	3,909	4,197	5,153	4,315	4,313	4,176	5,510	6,658	6,607	7,363	5,575	6,950	9,952	9,564	10,359	10,578
Cabbage	239	392	632	539	1,019	1,094	770	857	577	526	468	457	563	716	991	1,340	1,457	807	842	463
Carrots	944	240	389	2,236	*	*	897	1,270	1,370	1,422	2,218	3,209	2,813	3,480	3,486	4,244	3,531	2,447	2,897	2,939
Cauliflower	761	645	962	882	625	615	588	1,009	1,234	1,690	2,643	2,547	2,261	1,923	1,854	2,202	2,078	1,500	2,131	1,726
Celery	1,402	1,139	1,547	1,332	1,269	1,267	1,359	638	1,053	890	767	796	1,053	1,156	1,113	1,313	981	1,261	1,393	1,278
Oriental Vegetables	*	*	*	*	*	647	795	812	756	735	724	868	1,261	1,378	1,215	1,399	1,120	1,421	1,009	1,551
Lettuce	6,360	6,972	10,508	9,775	9,302	9,370	9,615	10,937	10,795	10,017	9,097	8,816	9,349	9,705	10,894	10,112	9,341	9,302	8,697	8,556
Peas (edible pod)	808	891	1,228	1,045	950	1,600	2,620	3,730	4,680	3,344	4,500	4,050	3,750	4,260	3,500	2,200	1,650	2,900	2,800	3,350
Miscellaneous	1,595	1,767	2,639	2,766	2,353	2,583	2,077	2,030	2,119	1,960	2,309	2,030	2,312	2,418	2,285	2,445	1,936	1,400	1,300	1,200
Total Vegetable Crops	16,473	17,909	23,991	24,561	19,889	21,957	24,318	26,134	27,496	25,259	28,821	30,451	31,103	33,211	31,630	33,205	33,001	31,725	32,655	32,736
<i>Field Crops</i>																				
Alfalfa Hay	14,900	6,679	8,875	9,762	12,123	11,780	10,619	9,619	9,345	7,245	6,775	5,263	5,100	5,000	4,200	3,480	3,850	3,700	3,800	3,750
Irrigated Pasture	3,100	3,300	5,700	6,000	6,000	5,800	5,500	5,500	5,750	5,900	5,800	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,500	5,400	5,250
Sugar Beets	1,791	982	570	870	1,599	1,547	428	595	761	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Total Field Crops	19,791	10,961	15,145	16,632	19,722	19,127	16,547	15,714	15,856	13,145	12,575	10,863	10,700	10,600	9,800	9,080	9,450	9,200	9,200	9,000
<i>Fruit Crops</i>																				
Avocados	396	320	408	733	737	833	843	1,523	1,523	1,340	1,340	1,300	1,299	1,320	1,220	1,165	1,165	1,135	1,090	991
Grapes (wine)	2,962	3,200	3,405	3,857	3,957	4,374	4,500	4,977	5,477	5,480	6,084	6,459	7,255	7,649	8,150	8,100	8,327	8,676	8,750	8,939
Miscellaneous	1,106	1,208	1,389	1,314	1,469	1,488	1,538	1,686	1,843	1,919	1,966	2,202	2,252	2,297	2,581	2,695	2,844	3,232	3,973	3,122
Total Fruit Crops	4,464	4,728	5,202	5,904	6,163	6,695	6,881	8,186	8,843	8,739	9,390	9,961	10,806	11,266	11,951	11,960	12,336	13,043	13,813	13,052
Seed & Nursery Stock	1,030	930	116	706	1,179	378	582	221	2,672	3,917	3,249	2,020	3,102	2,107	2,225	2,228	2,752	2,266	2,790	2,405
TOTAL IRRIGATED CROPS	41,758	34,528	44,454	47,803	46,953	48,157	48,328	50,255	54,867	51,060	54,035	53,295	55,711	57,184	55,606	56,473	57,539	56,234	58,458	57,193
<i>NON-IRRIGATED CROPS</i>																				
<i>Nut Crops³</i>																				
Almonds	2,796	4,450	4,730	6,394	6,184	6,154	6,079	5,979	5,979	5,949	5,000	4,911	4,782	4,299	3,299	2,799	2,400	2,400	2,200	*
Walnuts	2,623	1,366	1,136	2,727	2,853	2,853	2,853	2,775	2,975	3,054	3,054	2,962	2,962	3,073	2,970	2,770	2,890	2,700	2,700	2,700
Total Nut Crops	5,419	5,816	5,866	9,121	9,037	9,007	8,932	8,754	8,954	9,003	8,054	7,873	7,744	7,372	6,269	5,569	5,290	5,100	4,900	2,700
<i>Field Crops</i>																				
Barley	69,000	65,988	87,000	80,000	82,000	90,000	94,800	96,400	98,700	90,000	83,000	65,000	62,500	45,000	35,000	28,000	30,000	33,200	34,500	25,000
Garbanzos	5,894	2,498	3,485	3,834	3,842	3,600	3,401	2,403	1,100	750	2,500	1,515	715	525	*	*	1,070	1,125	605	883
Grain Hay	48,000	7,000	7,538	7,100	13,500	12,000	14,000	15,000	19,000	35,000	41,000	36,000	32,000	35,000	32,500	30,000	24,000	18,500	22,200	32,000
Safflower	580	*	3,228	4,933	4,161	4,291	2,500	3,615	1,665	2,165	4,225	2,722	2,500	1,500	750	1,600	6,140	6,400	2,040	4,010
Wheat	54,000	32,650	43,000	43,000	66,000	68,000	55,000	27,500	22,000	30,000	32,000	25,000	25,000	12,000	5,025	3,865	6,044	10,465	7,900	4,500
Miscellaneous ⁴	2,654	1,686	4,533	4,415	1,810	1,800	1,820	3,700	3,861	3,800	3,730	2,795	1,500	1,200	1,245	1,600	800	1,500	1,600	1,400
Total Field Crops	180,128	109,822	148,784	143,282	171,313	179,691	171,521	148,618	146,326	161,715	166,455	133,032	124,215	23,225	74,520	65,065	68,054	71,190	68,845	67,793

CROP ASSOCIATION & TYPE¹	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
TOTAL NON-IRRIGATED CROPS	185,547	115,638	154,650	152,403	180,350	188,698	180,453	157,372	155,280	170,718	174,509	140,905	131,959	30,597	80,789	70,634	73,344	76,290	73,745	70,493	
TOTAL ALL CROPS	227,305	150,166	199,104	200,206	227,303	236,855	228,781	207,627	210,147	221,778	228,544	194,200	187,670	87,781	136,395	127,107	130,883	132,524	132,203	127,686	
Grazing Land⁵	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* 1,083,842	1,083,842	1,084,000	1,075,000	1,070,000	1,065,000	1,060,000	1,015,000	1,040,000	1,000,000	1,025,000	1,030,000	1,030,000	
Livestock & Poultry (# of Animals)																					
Cattle & Calves	96,700	111,814	104,000	97,947	72,000	94,000	96,350	92,000	87,000	85,000	80,000	75,000	67,500	62,500	60,000	56,000	50,000	55,000	57,000	58,000	
Hogs	8,731	3,500	8,500	8,750	8,000	7,700	7,500	5,050	6,292	4,275	4,900	3,937	3,654	4,102	4,313	4,019	4,845	3,860	2,934	2,387	
Horses	274	310	290	275	295	700	1,250	1,350	1,845	2,300	2,200	3,000	3,000	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Poultry (meat)	581,000	388,459	356,800	308,824	465,323	414,796	416,954	401,647	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Sheep & Lambs	13,300	7,200	4,800	6,200	11,000	12,600	11,400	10,000	8,750	8,560	7,213	12,345	10,711	7,391	7,807	7,141	7,086	7,271	7,679	7,610	

NOTES: 1. Individual crops involving 1,000 acres or more.
2. Includes double or multiple cropping on same acreage.
5. Grain stubble use for grazing not included since it is a secondary use.

3. Most acreage is non-irrigated.
4. Includes some irrigated field crops.

Source: San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner's Annual Reports

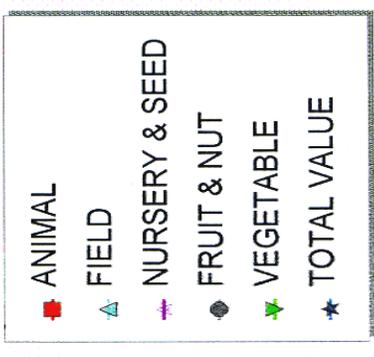
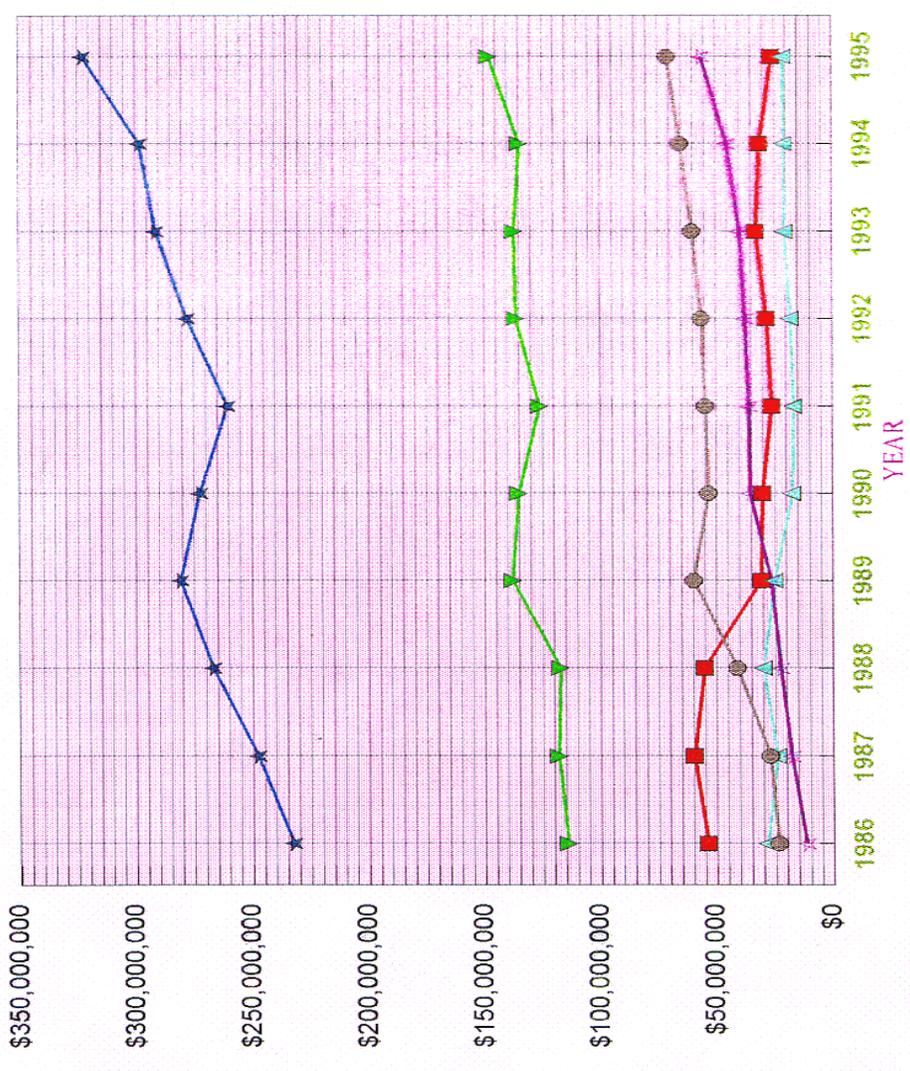
* Not tabulated or included in Miscellaneous

Revised 08/06/96

F Figure F-2

TEN YEAR COMPARISON CROP VALUE

DOLLAR VALUE



A review of the data presented in Figures E-1 and E-2 reveals some important trends about agriculture in this county, as follows:

General Trends:

Shift towards greater intensification which creates the following effects:

- * Increases in the number of acres under irrigation
- * Higher investment and return per acre
- * Creation of more jobs and demand for related support industry
- * Creation of more land use conflicts at the ag/urban interface
- * Shift in market conditions and expansion of foreign markets
- * Rapidly changing technology
- * Improvements in irrigation technology and efficiency

Agricultural Crop Trends

Irrigated vegetables - steady increase in harvested acres and production due to:

- * Increased demand for high quality, fresh vegetables
- * Improvements in technology
- * Fertile coastal valleys and available ground water
- * Ability to hit specialty markets such as oriental vegetables and sugar peas
- * Improvements in irrigation efficiency
- * Greater use of multiple plantings during the growing season

Irrigated field crops - overall reduction in harvested acres due to:

- * Increase in water pumping costs and poor price for alfalfa
- * Loss of local marketing for sugar beets

Irrigated fruit crops - sharp increase in acreage due to:

- * Excellent growing conditions and available ground water supplies
- * Availability of "new ground" not previously used for vineyards or other permanent plantings
- * Agriculturalists' ability to produce high quality products which increase demand
- * Ability of wine grape growers to "vertically integrate" operations
- * Symbiotic relationship between agriculture and tourism
- * Displacement of avocado acreage from Southern California
- * Improvements in irrigation technology and efficiency

Nursery Industry - steady increase in production due to:

- * Excellent and available locations in the county for new operations, especially expanding greenhouses
- * Moderate coastal climate and available, high quality ground water
- * High local demand for products, especially vegetable transplants
- * Availability of natural gas to heat greenhouses

Non-irrigated Nut Crops - reduction in acreage due to:

- * Competition from irrigated acreage in the central valley
- * Loss of local almond processing plant

Non-irrigated Field Crops - reduction in acreage due to:

- * Conservation Reserve Program removed nearly 100,000 acres of dryland grain from production, however, this acreage could be back into production after ten year contracts expire in the late '90's.
- * Poor prices for dryland grains
- * Drought years of the '80's affected yields
- * Disease eliminated garbanzo beans as a major crop

Grazing Land and Cattle - reduction in acreage and number of animals due to:

- * Drought years of the '80's reduced available feed
- * Inconsistent and weak pricing
- * Reduction in dryland grain farming hurt cattle industry

While the above trends are interesting, it must be remembered that the indicated trends sometimes simplify complicated and complex changes in the agriculture industry. Therefore, it may be highly speculative to predict the future utilizing those trends.

A review of statistics compiled at the national level also gives some insight into trends about agriculture in the county. The U.S. Department of Commerce Census of Agriculture is one of the few sources of information for data related to farm operations and farm operators. Figure E-3 summarizes some of the more important data found in the Census for 1982, 1987 and 1992. The Census has altered its definitions over the years, thereby making long term comparisons of loss or gain in the number of farms or acreage somewhat difficult to evaluate. The Census defines a farm as any place of one acre or more from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

- * Approximately 50% of all farms are smaller than 50 acres.
- * Approximately 70% are smaller than 180 acres.
- * Approximately 75% of farms have annual sales of less than \$25,000.
- * Farms with less than \$25,000 in annual sales make approximately 3% of the total annual sales in the county.
- * Approximately 12% of farms have annual sales of greater than \$100,000.
- * Farms with annual sales greater than \$100,000 make up approximately 90% of the total annual sales.

Figure E-3

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE 1982-1992**

1. Number of Farms	'82	'87	'92
	1754	1991	1880
● No significant trends			
2. Farmland Acreage	'82	'87	'92
	1,500,000	1,444,000	1,300,000
● Reduction in grazing and dry farm			
3. Average Farm Size	'82	'87	'92
	873	725	704
● Intensification			
4. Average Value per Farm	'82	'87	'92
	\$827,000	\$723,000	\$1,101,000
● Intensification '87-'92			
5. Average Value per Acre	'82	'87	'92
	\$905	\$994	\$1,519
● Intensification			
6. Farm Labor Expense	'82	'87	'92
	\$20,573,000	\$33,000,000	\$40,000,000
● Intensification			
7. Total Farm Expense	'82	'87	'92
	Not Available	\$127,000,000	\$149,000,000
● Labor, especially contract labor and production inputs, especially electricity			
8. Net Cash Return	'82	'87	'92
	Not Available	\$29,931,000	\$29,043,000

Farm definition: Any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced or sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

Value figures not adjusted for inflation.

The Agricultural Industry and Support Uses

There is a need to provide land for agricultural industry and support uses such as confined livestock and poultry raising, specialized production of food and plants in greenhouses and other structures, and processing and packing of agricultural products in industrial facilities. Associated with agricultural production and processing is a demand for a variety of supplies and services. Supplies include farm machinery and equipment, feed, nursery stock, pesticides, fertilizers, and fencing materials. Services include the maintenance and repair of machinery and equipment, professional services, manufacturing services, and waste handling and disposal. Institutional lenders play an important role in farm economics. The availability of credit, technical advisory services and agricultural services can affect the decision of farmers to remain in agriculture.

The agriculture service industry and support uses are generally best located in urban industrial or service commercial areas, but some uses are also appropriate in agricultural production areas for both the purposes of convenience and avoiding conflict with the public. Such uses and services are essential for agricultural producers, and in turn require a critical mass of agricultural activity to economically sustain their existence.

Most agricultural commodities produced in San Luis Obispo County are packed in the fields and trucked to processing centers or markets in metropolitan areas. Exceptions include the county's wineries and some vegetable processing and packing facilities in Oceano and the nearby Santa Maria and Guadalupe areas. Barley, the leading dry farm crop in the county, is mostly transported to the Central Valley where it is used as feed for dairy cows and other livestock. The use of railroad transportation has declined in recent years due to high rail freight rates and the more competitive cost of truck transportation. Existing railroad freight loading facilities and land zoned for industrial and service commercial uses are located in San Miguel, Paso Robles, Templeton, Atascadero, Santa Margarita, San Luis Obispo, Oceano, and Guadalupe.

Most agricultural commodities produced in the county are sold on the wholesale market and are processed and/or distributed to state and national markets. However, direct local marketing includes on-farm sales of hay and livestock; sales of produce to retail grocers and restaurants; and direct sales to consumers at farmers markets, roadside stands and wine tasting rooms. Direct marketing will become increasingly important because of the potential economic advantages to small-scale farmers of handling all aspects of operations from production through marketing as well as the benefits of increasing and enhancing tourism.

Economists generally agree that the gross value of agricultural production is multiplied through the local economy by a factor of two to three times through involvement by other sectors of the economy, including industry, retail trade and commercial services. At the same time, agriculture is not as growth-inducing as other economic sectors and requires substantially fewer county services than other industries, thus agriculture contributes a net financial surplus to the county.

APPENDIX F: GLOSSARY

This chapter contains definitions and abbreviations for some of the terms used in this plan. The definitions of other terms used in this plan may be found in Framework for Planning - Inland Portion, Part I of the Land Use Element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan; Framework for Planning of the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan; the Land Use Ordinance, Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code; and the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, Title 23 of the San Luis Obispo County Code.

Access, Private

The means of equestrian, pedestrian, vehicular or bicycle entry to or exit from a site belonging to, intended for or restricted to the use of a particular person(s), usually the landowner or caretaker.

Access, Public

The means of equestrian, pedestrian, vehicular or bicycle entry to or exit from a site under the management of a public agency, or non-profit land trust such as The Nature Conservancy, The Land Conservancy, and available for the public's use.

Agricultural Accessory Structure

An uninhabited structure or building designed and built for the repair of agricultural equipment and to house farm animals, implements, supplies or products (not including commercial greenhouses which are included under "*Nursery Specialties*," or buildings for agricultural processing activities) that contains no residential use and is not open to the public. Also includes greenhouses engaged in agricultural research as the primary use. Agricultural Accessory Structures can also include but not be limited to wind and solar powered devices used for direct climate control, and water pumping or other conversion of wind or solar energy to mechanical or thermal power used on-site. Wind energy conversion machines for electric power generation are included under "*Electric Generating Plants*." Includes barns, grain elevators, silos, and other similar buildings and structures.

Agricultural Lands

Land that meets the criteria in Chapter 3, and as further described in Appendix C, for being designated Agriculture in this plan.

Agricultural Processing

Establishments performing a variety of operations on crops after harvest, to prepare them for market on-site or further processing and packaging at a distance from the agricultural area including but not limited to: alfalfa cubing; hay baling and cubing; corn shelling; drying of corn, rice, hay, fruits and vegetables; pre-cooling and packaging of fresh or farm-dried fruits and vegetables; grain cleaning and custom grinding; custom grist mills; custom milling of flour, feed and grain; sorting, grading and packing of fruits and vegetables; tree nut hulling and

shelling; cotton ginning; wineries and alcohol fuel production; and in inland portions of the county, receiving and processing of green material, other than produced on-site (commercial composting). Green materials are any wastes which are derived from plant material, including but not limited to leaves, grass clippings, weeds, tree trimmings or shrubbery cuttings. Note: any of the above activities performed in the field with mobile equipment not involving permanent buildings are included under "*Crop Production and Grazing*." (SIC: 0723, 0724)

Agricultural Soils, Non-Prime

Areas of land that do not contain prime agricultural soils but are classified in the Agriculture land use category by the Land Use Element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan.

Agricultural Soils, Prime

Coastal Zone: Prime agricultural lands or soils means any of the following:

- a. All land which qualifies for rating as class I or II in the Natural Resources Conservation Service land use capability classifications.
- b. Land which qualifies for rating 80 through 100 in the Storie Index Rating.
- c. Land which supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber and which has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal unit per acre as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- d. Land planted with fruit- or nut-bearing trees, vines, bushes or crops which have a non-bearing period of less than five years and which will normally return during the commercial bearing period on an annual basis from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production not less than \$200 per acre.

Inland: Prime agricultural lands or soils means any of the following:

- a. Land with a Natural Resources Conservation Service land capability rating of Class I or Class II (all land to qualify for these ratings must be irrigated); or
- b. Other irrigated lands that have suitable soils, climate and water supply which sustain irrigated crops valued according to one of the following criteria:
 1. Land planted in crops which have produced an annual gross value of \$1,000 or more per acre for three of the previous five years.
 2. Land planted in orchards, vineyards and other perennial crops that would produce an average annual gross value of \$1,000 or more per acre if in full commercial bearing. Value is calculated by multiplying the average production per acre by the average value of the commodity for the previous five years as determined from the Annual Reports of the San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture and Measurement Standards.

Animal Raising and Keeping

The keeping, feeding or raising of animals as a commercial agricultural venture, avocation, hobby or school project, either as a principal land use or subordinate to a residential use. Includes the keeping of common farm animals, small-animal specialties such as rabbit farms and other fur-bearing animals; bee farms; aviaries; worm farms; household pets, etc. This definition does not include grazing, which involves the keeping of grazing animals at densities less than two animals per acre, and is instead included under the definition of "*Crop Production and Grazing*." See also "*Specialized Animal Facilities*."

Archaeological, Cultural and Historic Resources

Areas of unique historical significance and areas of known or suspected archaeological or cultural value that are confirmed by site-specific study during review of land use permit applications. Archaeological resources include sites containing artifacts used by Native Americans. Cultural resources include sites that are sacred to Native Americans, such as places where prayer and spiritual ceremonies have been performed over hundred and thousands of years.

Best Management Practices (BMP)

The definition of best management practices quoted from the Federal Register is as follows:

The term best management practices (BMP) means a practice, or combination of practices, that is determined by a State (or designated areawide planning agency) after problem assessment, examination of alternative practices, and appropriate public participation to be the most effective, practicable (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) means of preventing or reducing the amount of pollution generated by non-point sources to a level compatible with water quality goals (40 CFR Part 130).

Source: *Conservation Districts and 208 Water Quality Management*
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Association of Conservation Districts; Pg 94-95.

Building

Any structure having a roof supported by columns and/or walls and intended for shelter, housing, and/or enclosure of any person, animal or chattel, but not including tents.

Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO)

Title 23 of the San Luis Obispo County Code. The CZLUO contains standards and procedures which regulate development and site design within the coastal zone. The CZLUO, together with the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan, provides comprehensive development standards and review procedures in an integrated land use policy and regulatory system.

Crop Production and Grazing

Agricultural uses including production of grains, field crops, vegetables, melons, fruits, tree nuts, flower fields and seed production, ornamental crops, tree and sod farms, associated crop preparation services and harvesting activities including but not limited to mechanical soil preparation, irrigation system construction, spraying, crop processing and sales in the field not involving a permanent structure. Also includes the raising or feeding of beef cattle, sheep and goats by grazing or pasturing. Does not include cattle feedlots, which are included under "*Specialized Animal Facilities*." The distinction between feedlots and grazing operations is established by the Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 22.08, and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 23.08. See also, "*Animal Raising and Keeping*."

Development

Coastal Zone: Pursuant to PRC 30106, "*Development*" means, on land, in or under water, the placement or erection of any solid material or structure; discharge or disposal of any dredged material or of any gaseous, liquid, solid, or thermal waste; grading, removing, dredging, mining, or extraction of any materials; change in the density or intensity of use of land, including, but not limited to, subdivision pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act (commencing with Section 66410 of the Government Code), and any other division of land, including lot splits, except where the land division is brought about in connection with the purchase of such land by a public agency for public recreational use; change in the intensity of use of water, or of access thereto; construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of the size of any structure, including any facility of any private, public, or municipal utility; and the removal or harvesting of major vegetation other than for agricultural purposes, kelp harvesting, and timber operations which are in accordance with a timber harvesting plan submitted pursuant to the provision of the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (commencing with Section 4511).

As used in this section, "*structure*" includes, but is not limited to, any building, road, pipe, flume, conduit, siphon, aqueduct, telephone line, and electrical power transmission and distribution line.

Inland: Any activity or alteration of the landscape, its terrain, contour, or vegetation, including the erection or alteration of buildings or structures. New development is any construction or alteration of an existing structure or land use, or establishment of a land use after the effective date of the Land Use Ordinance. Excludes crop production, grazing and other standard and acceptable agricultural operations for the production of agricultural commodities.

Driveway

A vehicular access from a road that serves no more than two structures, with no more than three dwelling units on a lot of record any number of accessory structures.

Dwelling or Dwelling Unit

Any building or portion thereof which contains living facilities, including provision for sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation, for not more than one family.

Ecosystem

All the components of a biological community and the physical environment, and the interactions among and between them. Examples are grasslands, forests and sand dunes. Major Ecosystems are important ecosystems that cover large areas, as described in Chapter 5 of this plan.

Environmentally Sensitive Resources

Areas that have high environmental quality and special significance for ecological, biological, scientific, educational, or passive outdoor recreation purposes. Such areas include habitat of rare or endangered plants or animals; sensitive, unique, endemic, exemplary, or representative natural communities or ecosystems; Natural Area Preserves as described in this plan; key wildlife corridors; important watersheds; lakes, wetlands and estuaries; marine habitats; streams and riparian vegetation; important geologic features or natural landmarks.

Estuary

Semi-enclosed, coastal water body receiving open or intermittent exchange with the ocean and fresh water from land.

Farm Equipment and Supplies

Establishments primarily engaged in sale, rental or repair of agricultural machinery and equipment for use in the preparation and maintenance of the soil, the planting and harvesting of crops, and other operations and processes pertaining to work on the farm; also dairy and other livestock equipment. Includes agricultural machinery (except the sale of trailers, tractors and other motorized, self-propelled farm vehicles, which are included under "*Auto, Mobilehome and Vehicle Dealers and Supplies*"), dairy farm machinery and equipment, irrigation equipment, poultry equipment and frost protection equipment; hay, grain and feed sales; retail sales of prepackaged fertilizer and agricultural sprays. Sales may include the final assembly of farm machinery, implements or equipment from component parts received from the manufacturer in a partially assembled state, but not the creation of such components from raw materials.

Food and Beverage Retail Sales

Retail trade establishments primarily engaged in selling food for home preparation and consumption, as well as the retail sale of packaged alcoholic beverages for consumption off the premises, including wine tasting facilities which are not on the same site as the winery.

Food and Kindred Products

Manufacturing establishments producing or processing foods and beverages for human consumption and certain related products. Includes: (1) meat, poultry and seafood products (slaughtering, canning, and curing and by-product processing); (2) dairy products processing; (3) canned and preserved fruit and vegetables and related processing; (4) grain mill products and by-products; (5) bakery products, sugar and confectionery products; (6) fats and oil products, including rendering plants; (7) beverages and liquors (except wineries, which are included under "*Ag Processing*"); (8) and miscellaneous food preparation from raw products (operations on crops subsequent to their harvest are included under "*Ag Processing*"). (SIC: Group 20)

Framework for Planning - Inland Portion

Part I of the Land Use Element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan which contains policies and procedures that apply outside the coastal zone. It defines how the Land Use Element is used together with the Land Use Ordinance and other adopted plans.

Framework for Planning of the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan

Part of the Local Coastal Program of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan which contains policies and procedures that apply within the coastal zone. It defines how the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan is used together with the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance and other adopted plans.

Ground Water Recharge

That fraction of the rainfall that penetrates the earth surface and ends up as storage and/or underflow in the saturated zone at depth.

Ground Water Recharge, Artificial

Recharge resulting from structures and practices that enhance or divert to percolation those surface waters otherwise lost to runoff.

Hazard Areas

Lands that need to be set aside or regulated in order to protect public health, safety and welfare. Hazard Areas include lands subject to flood, fire, geologic, and seismic (earthquake) risks and can also include man-made facilities such as pipelines, landfills, levees, stormwater retention areas, and surface mines.

Irrigable

Land with on-site water sources sufficient to support any crop suited to the soil type and climate of a site without reliance on rainfall. This capability may be inferred where more than 50% of the total land area of lots bordering a site (with equivalent soils and microclimate) are irrigated.

Irrigated

Land having existing wells, water storage, and/or drip irrigation system adequate to support any crop suited to the soil type and climate of a site.

Land Use Category

Any of the districts defined by Chapter 7, Part I of the Land Use Element (Inland and Coastal), which are applied for the purpose of identifying areas of land suitable for particular land uses.

Land Use Element (LUE)

The Land Use Element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan adopted under Section 65302 of the California Government Code. The LUE is a plan describing the official county policy on the location of land uses and their orderly growth and development. The Land Use Element consists of three major sections: Framework for Planning (Part I), the area plans (Part II) and the official maps (Part III).

Land Use Ordinance (LUO)

Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code. The LUO contains standards and procedures which regulate development and site design within the inland portion of the county outside of the coastal zone. The LUO, together with the Land Use Element, provides comprehensive development standards and review procedures in an integrated land use policy and regulatory system.

Land Use Permit or Entitlement

A discretionary or ministerial permit that grants an applicant the authority to establish a use of land only after obtaining additional building or grading permits, as required. Land use permits are the Plot Plan, Site Plan, Minor Use Permit and Development Plan established by the Land Use Ordinance (Title 22) and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (Title 23).

Discretionary Permit: An entitlement that may be issued under the provisions of Title 22 or 23, but requires the exercise of judgement and the resolution of factual issues to determine if the application and requested entitlement conform with the provisions of this title. Generally, a discretionary permit consists of any entitlement that requires a decision to approve, approve subject to conditions or disapprove, based on the judgement of the Review Authority after a hearing.

Ministerial Permit: Any permit that may be issued under the provisions of Title 22 or 23, without review by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors. A ministerial decision involves only the evaluation of a proposal with respect to fixed standards or objective measurements, without the use of subjective criteria.

Local Coastal Plan

The Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, which is a portion of the county's Local Coastal Program as certified by the California Coastal Commission. The Local Coastal Plan consists of the Policy Document, Land Use Element Programs and Standards (Part II of the LUE) and Land Use Element Maps (Part III of the Land Use Element).

Local Coastal Program (LCP)

The LCP consists of (a) the Local Coastal Plan, (b) the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, and (c) other implementing actions for the coastal zone of the county which meets the requirements of the California Coastal Act of 1976 as certified by the California Coastal Commission.

Natural Area Preserve

Areas of land or water that are currently under, or may come under, the management of San Luis Obispo County through purchase from a willing seller, dedication of open space land to mitigate development impacts, or through cooperative agreements with other public agencies. These areas are intended to remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection and possible opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education for present and future generations.

Nursery Specialties

Agricultural establishments primarily engaged in the production of ornamental plants and other nursery products, grown under cover or outdoors. Also includes establishments engaged in the sale of such products (e.g., wholesale and retail nurseries) and commercial scale greenhouses (home greenhouses are included under "*Residential Accessory Uses*").

Open Space Lands

Any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use as designated on a local open space plan as open space for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, for outdoor recreation, or for public health and safety (see California Government Code Section 65560).

Open Space Uses

The variety of uses that are appropriate on open space lands and the variety of functions served by open space. Open space uses and functions include preservation of natural resources (such as plants and animals, streams, wetlands, and watershed lands); managed production of resources (such as forestry, agriculture, commercial fishing, and mining); outdoor recreation; protection of scenic, historic and cultural resources such as archaeological and historic sites; and protection of public health and safety (such as water reservoirs and areas set aside as earthquake fault zones).

Passive Recreation

Non-intensive recreational activities such as riding and hiking trails and nature study that require no more than limited structural improvements such as steps, fences and signs.

Private In-Holdings

Privately owned lands within the boundaries of lands under public ownership, such as privately owned parcels within the boundaries of the Los Padres National Forest.

Review Authority

The individual or group identified by the Land Use Ordinance and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (Title 22 and 23 of the San Luis Obispo County Code, respectively) as having the authority to take action to approve, approve subject to conditions or disapprove a land use permit application pursuant to that title; either the Planning Director, Subdivision Review Board, Planning Commission, or Board of Supervisors.

Riparian

Associations of plant species that grow next to freshwater streams, lakes, springs, and other water features.

Road, Agricultural, Private or Public

Agricultural: Access roads to fields, pastures or similar agricultural use. Does not include a road to an agriculturally exempt building or structure which requires a county construction permit.

Private: Vehicular access to more than one lot of record; access to any industrial or commercial occupancy; or vehicular access to a single parcel with more than two structures or four or more dwelling units; belonging to, intended for or restricted to the use of a particular person(s), usually the landowner or caretaker.

Public: Vehicular access to more than one lot of record; access to any industrial or commercial occupancy; or vehicular access to a single parcel with more than two structures or four or more dwelling units; under the management of a public agency and available for public use.

Right-of-Way

A public road, alley, pedestrian or other access right-of-way with width described in recorded documents. Also includes rights-of-way for electric power transmission, oil and gas pipelines and communications systems utilizing direct connections, such as cable TV, telephone, etc.

Rural Areas

Areas that are outside of urban and village reserve lines as designated in the San Luis Obispo County General Plan.

Salt Balance

An acceptable water quality state in a ground water basin where the inflow of dissolved solids (or concentration of a specific use-limiting constituent) added from natural or man made sources is in equilibrium with that quantity discharged with ground water and/or surface outflow from the basin.

Scenic Resources

Visually unique or outstanding features of the landscape, such as unusual landforms, scenic vistas and viewsheds that are viewed from public places such as a street, highway, park, or the coastline.

Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) Combining Designation

A mapped designation in the LUE that identifies areas having high environmental quality and special ecological or educational significance and that have public value. These special features create a need for more careful project review within SRAs.

Specialized Animal Facilities

Intensive agricultural and other animal care or keeping establishments including: hog ranches, dairies, dairy and beef cattle feedlots (the distinction between a grazing operation and a feedlot is established by the Land Use Ordinance and by the definition of "*Animal Raising and Keeping*"); livestock auction, sales building and sales lot facilities; chicken, turkey and other poultry ranches; riding academies, equestrian exhibition facilities and large scale horse ranches; veterinary medical facilities and service, animal hospitals and kennels; zoos. See also "*Animal Raising and Keeping*," "*Crop Production and Grazing*."

Species, Rare, Threatened or Endangered

Rare: A species whose existence meets either of the following criteria: (a) although not presently threatened with extinction, the species is existing in such small numbers throughout all or a significant portion of its range that it may become endangered if its environment worsens; or (b) the species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range and may be considered "*threatened*" as that term is used in the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Threatened: A species whose survival and reproduction in the wild is in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes, including loss in habitat, change in habitat, over harvesting, predation, competition, disease, or other factors.

Endangered: A species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Stream

A body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks and supports fish or other aquatic life, including watercourses having surface or subsurface flow that supports or that

supported riparian vegetation. "*Blue line*" streams are mapped as dotted or dashed blue lines on the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle maps, and are shown on the Combining Designation maps of the Land Use Element.

Structure

Any artifact constructed or erected, the use of which requires attachment to the ground, including any building, but not including fences or walls six feet or less in height.

Structure, Accessory or Principal

Accessory: A structure, the use of which is incidental to that of a principal structure on the same lot. May be either detached, or attached if part of the principal structure.

Principal: A building where the principal use of its lot and/or building site is conducted.

Urban Reserve Line (URL)

A boundary separating urban/suburban land uses and rural land uses that is based upon the needs of individual communities for areas of additional growth during the 20-year term of the Land Use Element. Urban reserve lines are mapped in the Land Use Element.

Village Reserve Line (VRL)

A boundary around settlements of greater density than surrounding rural areas and that are not self-sufficient communities. The boundary distinguishes those developed areas from the surrounding rural countryside. Village reserve lines are mapped in the Land Use Element.

Watershed

The total land area that contributes water to a river, stream, lake, or other body of water. Synonymous with drainage area, drainage basin and catchment.

Water Quality

Those physical and chemical constituent criteria that determine and/or limit the uses of water for municipal, industrial, recreational and agricultural purposes (i.e. temperature, turbidity, total dissolved solids, specific dissolved chemicals, biological constituents, etc.).

Wetland

Lands that may be permanently or seasonally covered by shallow water and supports specially adapted vegetation. Wetlands may be seasonal, such as vernal pools, alkali seeps and seasonal freshwater marshes; or they may be perennial, such as tidal salt marshes, bogs and perennial freshwater marshes.

APPENDIX G: PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE DETERMINATION

Introduction

The need for the Agricultural Commissioner's Office to make a determination if an agricultural operation is of an adequate scope and size to be considered "production agriculture" occurs in the context of providing buffer protection, evaluating agricultural subdivisions, lot line adjustments, general plan amendments (zoning), planning area standards, and occasionally with grading permit issues. The need for such a determination has been proposed for the Agriculture Element in order to determine the applicability of open space policies to property with agricultural uses.

Lands zoned agriculture, or in a conservation program, or lands currently committed to a sustained productive agriculture practice are eligible for a production agriculture determination. This determination is to be made by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office based upon production agriculture criteria utilized during review of project referrals.

Utilization of criteria: Production agriculture criteria provide for general considerations when making a determination. It should be stressed that each site/operation is unique and some level of professional judgement is necessary when utilizing the criteria and making a determination.

Production Agricultural Criteria

- **Agricultural Use Parcel Size**
 - ▶ U.C. Cooperative Extension literature and acreage guidelines.
 - ▶ Agricultural preserve program minimum acreage eligibility criteria.
 - ▶ Consideration of the type of crop or cropping pattern.
 - ▶ Unique site and geographic features.

- **Agricultural Practices**
 - ▶ The use of heavy equipment or other substantial power equipment.
 - ▶ The use of employees, contract or lease agreements.
 - ▶ The use of agriculturally labeled pesticides (i.e., restricted materials permit or operator ID number).

- **Zoning**

Agriculture (AG), Rural Lands (RL), or Residential Rural (RR) land use categories rather than residential type categories.

- **Natural Resources**

Availability of resources, such as agriculturally productive soils, irrigation water, climatic conditions, access, size necessary for agricultural production.

- **Marketing**

The marketing of agricultural products vs. personal use. Marketing outlets include farmers' markets and direct sales from the property.

- **Capital Outlay**

Consider the extent of capital outlay necessary for the successful establishment of a commercial agricultural operation.

- **Agriculture Preserve or Conservation**

Land that is enrolled in the agricultural preserve program, a conservation reserve program or designated with an agricultural or open space easement.

Agricultural criteria and application may differ: While certain criteria may apply to all types of agricultural determinations, other criteria may be unique to a specific application. For example, when evaluating an agricultural subdivision, the criteria may focus on the agricultural capability of a parcel to allow for it to be a "stand alone" unit to support a family of four as an agricultural operation. Consequently, when evaluating a buffer adjacent to an existing smaller scale agricultural operation (which may be supplemental to other ag or non-ag business), the criteria may focus on protecting the existing use. Both projects need an agriculture use determination but the criteria may vary considerably.

Mitigation may vary: Mitigation (such as a buffer recommendation) may vary depending on the type of determination. For example, smaller scale agricultural use, such as a ten acre kiwi farm in the RR zone, may have less buffer protection than a "production agriculture" use such as a 600 acre vineyard in the Ag zone.

APPENDIX H: IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Summary of Implementation Measures

The following Table H-1 is a summary of the measures that will implement the goals and policies in this plan. The implementation measures include a variety of amendments to the Land Use Ordinance (LUO), Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO), other parts of the County Code, Framework for Planning and the area plans in the Land Use Element (LUE) of the County General Plan or other county plans or programs. Those documents should be revised as shown in the following table through subsequent general plan and ordinance amendments. All of those amendments will be subject to advertised public hearings. In addition, various programs are proposed in order to implement the goals and policies in this plan. Implementation will depend upon future priorities and available funds and personnel.

TABLE H-1

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES FOR THE AGRICULTURE ELEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 1: Public education				Provide public education about the agricultural industry in the county.	On-going	
AGP 2: Public and private lands				Ag policies and implementation measures apply equally to public and private projects.	On-going	
AGP 3: Right-to-Farm Ordinance	Existing right-to-farm and disclosure provisions in Title 5			Continue implementation	On-going	
AGP 4: Ag use of small parcels				Public information program directed towards real estate industry, maintained by Department of Agriculture	12 months	
AGP 5: Residential density	22.08.167: Amend to allow two primary dwellings per existing legal parcel 20-acres or larger; one primary and one farm support on existing legal parcel less than 20-acres; density on new land divisions per AGP 21.			Through public contact encourage crop specialties and special animal facilities.	On-going	
					12 months	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 6: Visitor serving and retail commercial uses & facilities	22.08, 23.08: Monitor and if necessary amend performance standards for visitor serving & incidental retail uses as accessory uses				On-going	
AGP 7: Service commercial-type uses	22.08.048, 23.08.048: Review/amend performance standards for Ag Processing, Farm Equipment and Supplies, Food & Kindred Products, Small Scale Mfg., Warehousing, Wholesaling & Distribution				12 months	
AGP 8: Intensive ag facilities	22.08, 23.08: Amend to add performance standards for intensive ag facilities, breweries similar to wineries in "Food and Kindred Products"	Chapter 7: Amend definition of "Food and Kindred Products" to include breweries			12 months	
AGP 9: Soil conservation				Assist in identifying appropriate locations for these uses, compatible with agriculture Educational efforts using all available information sources	On-going On-going	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 10: Water conservation				Support mobile irrigation lab program; encourage continued public information and research by U. C. Cooperative Extension and other organizations; facilitate approval of water conservation, recharge and retention facilities	On-going	
AGP 11: Ag Water Supplies		Chapter 7: Amend guidelines for general plan amendments to reference policy for potential effect of GPAs on groundwater supplies			18 months	
	22.04, 23.04, Real Property Division Ordinance (Title 21): Establish standards for new land divisions and land use permits so they don't adversely affect ag water supplies. watershed yields or water quality.			Env. Health initiate information program re: beneficial uses/potential hazards of reclaimed water.	24 months	
				Co. Engineering and Agriculture Depts. and other agencies advise Planning Dept. re: ag water supplies, demand and quality effects on crops	On-going	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
				Prepare work programs for groundwater basin/resource capacity studies	12 months	
				Recommend to LAFCO denial of annexations to cities or special districts where adversely affect existing ag water supplies.	Ongoing	
AGP 12: Pest vertebrate and weed management				Support continued funding of pest control programs on county properties/facilities to prevent impacts on agriculture or public health; encourage participation in these programs by other agencies and property owners; provide public education information re: pest mgmt. programs.	On-going	
AGP 13: Agricultural Material Composting				Encourage voluntary composting by landowner and operators	Ongoing	
				Env. Health Dept. develop recommendations whether and under what circumstances bio-solids can be used on ag lands.	12 months	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
				Participate in public education programs re: issues associated with land application of bio-solids.	Ongoing	
AGP 14: Ag preserve program				Timely processing of land use permit applications for ag-related development and subsidy to processing fees.	On-going	
				Amend Co. Rules of Procedure to provide for creation of "farm security zones" per 1998 amendments to state Land Conservation Act.	12 months	
AGP 15: Transfer of Development Credits (TDC's)				Continue to implement the adopted voluntary TDC program.	Ongoing	
		Amend Coastal Framework to allow use of TDC's.			18 months	
AGP 16: Ag land conservation programs				Assist ag and conservation organizations in implementing ag conservation programs, including information re: advantages of participating in programs.	12 months	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
				Explore protection of ag lands through purchase of development rights, conservation easements, or other programs.	To be determined by Board of Supervisors.	
				Pursue grants under Ag Land Stewardship Program Act of 1995 for overall implementation of this element.	Ongoing	
AGP 17: Ag buffers				Review applications for land division, lot line adjustments, land use permits and proposed general plan amendments against Board-adopted Agriculture buffer policies.	Ongoing	
				Amend buffer policies to add disclosure requirements similar to Right-to-Farm ord.	24 months	
AGP 18: Location of improvements	T22 & T23: amend to add standards for location of improvements to protect ag lands.	Amend to limit uses to those most directly related to ag production.			24 months	
		Amend to limit uses to those most directly related to ag production			As part of scheduled updates, or 18 months for those not scheduled in that timeframe.	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 19: Consolidation of public and private land holdings				Prepare inventory of parcels under federal, state or county ownership suitable for ag use and consolidation and transfer from public to private ownership	36 months	
AGP 20: Agricultural land divisions	22.04 and 23.04: Amend to allow conventional division, but consider designated building envelopes as well as limitation on number of dwellings.			Through CEQA review of projects, weigh value of environmental resources against value of agricultural production.	Ordinance amendments: 18 months. CEQA review: ongoing.	
AGP 21: Minimum parcel size criteria for division of ag land	22.04.024 & 23.04.024: Amend to eliminate basing land division on existence of specialized animal facilities, ag processing; delete averaging test; minimum parcel size 40 acres for NRCS Class I and II lands, or 20 acres if specified criteria are met; amend minimum parcel size for preserve contracts; revise Co. Rules of Procedure; require CC&R's notify subsequent owners of Co. Right-to-Farm Ord.				18 months	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 22: Major ag cluster projects	22.04: Amend to eliminate mandatory EIR; eliminate minimum acreage required to file an application but require resulting ag parcel to meet minimum parcel size criteria of AGP 21, be covered by permanent agricultural open space easement and placed under Williamson Act contract; add Santa Maria urban reserve line around which clusters can be proposed; where portions of project site are more than 5 miles from specified URL's, allow clustered lots anywhere on project site.			Refer proposed land divisions to Ag Commissioner re: whether proposed parcels can be sustainable ag parcels	On-going 18 months	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 23: Minor ag cluster projects	22.04, 23.04: Amend to establish standards to allow minor clusters countywide, including coastal zone; 25% maximum increase in number of parcels over conventional division; resulting ag parcels must meet minimum parcel size criteria of AGP 21, covered by permanent agricultural open space easement and placed under Williamson Act contract; all resulting parcels limited to one dwelling unit each.				18 months	
AGP 24: Conversion of ag land		Establish standards re: when appropriate to convert ag lands to non-ag uses			24 months	
				LAFCo adopt conversion criteria per county general plan	18 months from amendment of general plan as described above	
				Refer general plan amendments, proposed annexations and expansions of service districts to Ag. Dept. and community groups if involves conversion of ag lands.	Ongoing	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 25: Unique or sensitive habitat				Encourage property owner protection/preservation of unique or sensitive resources; through project review site development to avoid impacts; if significant impacts, implement county-approved mitigations measures per CEQA.	Ongoing	
AGP 26: Streams and Riparian Corridors				Prepare public information materials re: preserving and/or restoring riparian corridors.	18 months	
		Amend T21, T22, and T23 to establish criteria for stream/riparian protection.		Review "blueline streams" on USGS quad maps to determine which should be in Sensitive Resource Area combining designation.	24 months	
AGP 27: Natural Area Preserves				Establishment of natural area preserves per OSP 19 and 20 to not interfere with ag uses on private lands; offer ag lands within preserve for continued ag use; prevent trespass and damage to adjacent property.	Ongoing through implementation of Natural Areas Plan	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
AGP 28: Major Ecosystems				Establishment of major ecosystems per OSP 11 and 12 to not interfere with ag uses on private lands; encourage range and farmland management programs that enhance the land and protect habitat and ecosystems; follow CEQA to guide types of uses and intensity of development consistent with biological diversity and natural processes.	Ongoing
AGP 29: Wildlife Corridors				Designation of corridors not to interfere with ag uses; encourage range and farmland management programs that will not interfere with wildlife migration; protect on-site wildlife corridors through CEQA review process.	Ongoing

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 30: Scenic Resources				Designations of scenic corridors not to interfere with ag uses; discretionary permits to balance protection of scenic resources with ag resources; minimize visibility of development from corridor; use landforms for screening; blend structures with landscape; encourage voluntary actions by landowners establishing uses exempt from permits or need only ministerial permits.	Ongoing	
AGP 31: Recreational use of ag lands				Encourage recreational uses on private lands compatible with ag uses; encourage voluntary actions by landowners for uses exempt from permits or need only ministerial permits.	Ongoing	
AGP 32: Trail access to public lands				Trails established consistent with County Trails Plan to not conflict with ag or environmentally sensitive resources; provide sufficient policing and maintenance of trails so to not result in trespass or damage.	Ongoing through implementation of adopted County Trails Plan.	

TABLE H-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES						
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)	
AGP 33: Archaeological and cultural sites				Protect sites by avoidance where possible; mitigate impacts to maximum extent feasible.	Ongoing through county, state and federal standards, and through CEQA review of projects.	
AGP 34: Historical resources				Protect resources by implementing recommendations in Historic Element of the Environment Plan; encourage voluntary protection by landowners.	Ongoing through voluntary property owner actions and CEQA review of projects.	

