

# Update on Urban Agriculture Assessment

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Small Farm Workgroup Meeting  
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# What is Urban Agriculture?

- The growing of plants and raising of animals for food and other uses within and around cities
- Characterized by closeness to markets, high competition for land, limited space, use of urban resources, low degree of farmer organization, mainly perishable products... (van Veenhuizen, 2006)
- Distinguishing characteristic is that UA is an integral part of the urban economic, social, and ecological system (Mougeot, 2000)

# Importance

*Urban and peri-urban agriculture can provide:*

- fresh and healthful food for urban residents
- local and potentially more affordable foods
- community development opportunities
- green and open spaces within and around cities
- outlets for waste organic waste reuse
- jobs and training opportunities
- outlet for physical activity
- experience with nature & food production
- psychological benefits & spiritual experiences

# Challenges

- *Site-related* (e.g., land tenure, soil contamination, urbanization, land costs)
- *Government-related* (e.g., government regulations; lack of political support)
- *Procedure-related* (e.g., inadequate financial resources; lack of sound business planning);
- *Perception-related* (e.g., negative perceptions of cultivating food in cities, conflicts with non-farming neighbors) (Kaufman and Bailkey, 2000)

# Potential Research/Extension Activities

- Extension of services and opportunities relevant to urban and peri urban food production.

Examples:

- a) resource guides; workshops; soil testing
  - b) technical assistance for mini farming; market planning; *safe* integration of waste
- Networking and information exchange among and between regions

*These need to be developed based on local and actual needs.*

# Primary Research Questions

- a) What are the challenges to long-term sustainability of urban agriculture in Alameda County, CA?
- b) Are there services that could be provided by the Cooperative Extension system that would help address these challenges?

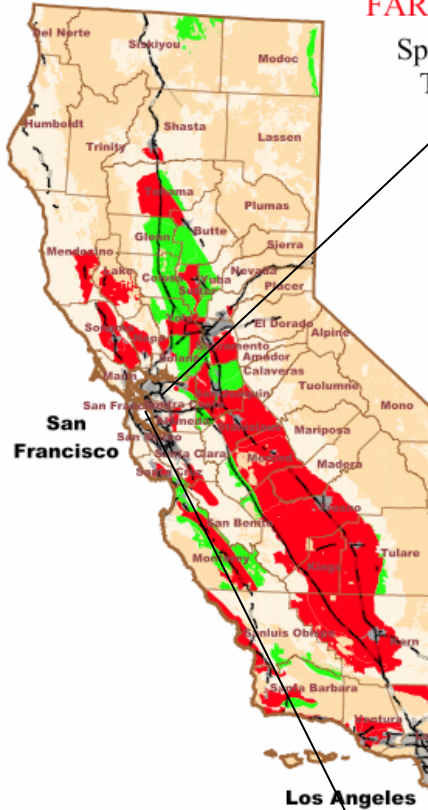
# Research Objectives

- To identify, describe and map urban and peri-urban (UPA) producers in the study area
- To learn the various goals of UPA producers in the study area and what they would need in order to achieve and sustain these goals
- To assess and map regional patterns or networks based on geographic location within the County
- To learn to what extent UPA producers already work with UCCE and if further university research and/or extension activities would be valuable to practitioners
- To assess the potential and willingness of extension employees to engage in research and/or extension for UPA producers

# Study Site: Alameda County

## FARMING ON THE EDGE

Sprawling Development  
Threatens America's  
Best Farmland



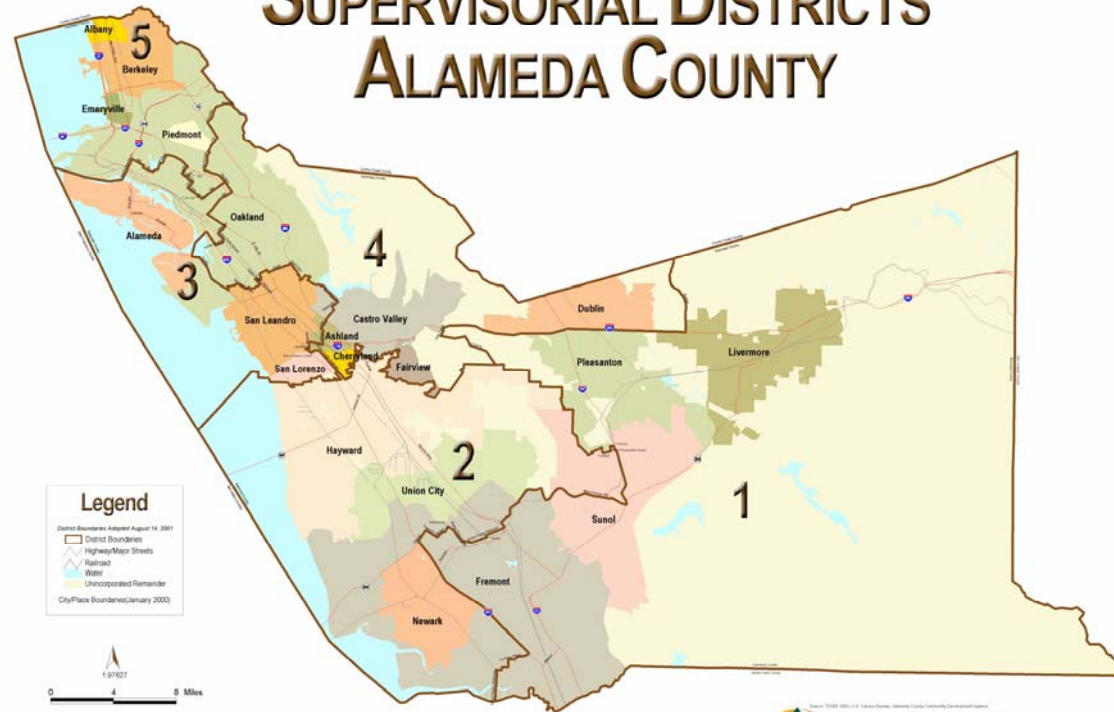
### Legend:

- High-Quality Farmland & High Development
- High-Quality Farmland & Low Development
- Federal & Indian Lands
- Urban Areas
- Other Lands

Los Angeles

American Farmland Trust  
www.farmland.org

## SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS ALAMEDA COUNTY



### Legend

- District Boundaries
- District Boundaries
- Highway/Major Streets
- Railroad
- Water
- Unincorporated Remainder
- City/Place Boundaries (January 2002)



Alameda County Community Development Agency, November 2007

0 20 Miles

# Alameda County

- Decreasing farm numbers and retailers, increasing specialty stores
- Ethnically diverse; no one group in majority
- 340,000 (of 1.4 M+) residents vulnerable to food insecurity
- One study identified 27 community gardens and 7 small-scale peri-urban farms (Cozad et al., 2002)
- *UCCE Alameda*: Food System, School Garden, and Master Gardener programs/staff

# Operation Types Included in this Study

- Urban and peri-urban operations that produce food for consumption beyond household as a major part of activities, (e.g., small-scale farms/ranches, community food security projects, urban homesteads.)
- Including, but not limited to, community gardens.
- Not private backyard gardens, unless meeting above criteria
- Not school/educational gardens, unless meeting above criteria

# Components of Study

- Small Farm Workgroup Tour (2006)
- Interviews, site visits, consultations ('07-08; About 60 conducted to-date)
- Outreach
- Identify/consult with other UA extension programs in California, nationally
- Dialogue about UCCE agricultural programs for urban/peri-urban producers

# Tour, Fall 2006



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# Outreach

- Newsletters
- Client requests (statewide)
- *Potential outreach results of study:*  
Resource guide, Best Practices, SWOT team/informal working group...other ideas?

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# Other UA Extension Programs

- UCCE LA (Common Ground), Ventura (Victory Grower), Master Gardeners...
- Ohio State
- Cornell- NYC
- University of New Hampshire
- Michigan State
- New Mexico State
- University of Wisconsin
- Penn State
- University of Georgia

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# Group Discussion

1. How many here have urban farmers in your county/region? Peri-urban farmers?
2. How many currently work with urban farmers? With peri-urban farmers?
  - What types of activities/outreach do you conduct?
3. What types of urban research and extension activities would be feasible in your region?
4. Ideas for more regional or statewide resources?