

UCCE Urban Agriculture & Food System Program

Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District Board of Directors Meeting
April 1, 2021



What is Cooperative Extension?

Our advisors, specialists, faculty, and staff are committed to these principles:

- Connecting Californians to their University
- Leading the way to science-based solutions
- Providing information that is trustworthy and not biased
- Sharing research that is practical to use
- Addressing local concerns as part of the community
- Inviting the participation of concerned stakeholders
- Facilitating problem-solving and outreach to address the state's toughest challenges

Santa Clara County Programs

- 4-H Youth Development
- CalFresh Healthy Living
- Composting Education Program
- Livestock & Natural Resources
- Master Gardeners
- Small Farms
- Urban Agriculture & Food Systems
- Urban Integrated Pest Management
- Urban Forestry
- Human-Wildlife Interactions



Urban Agriculture Extension



Outreach & Education

- Developed instructional videos in Spanish in collaboration with UC Master Gardeners and local partners.
- Collaborate with Small Farm advisor on workshops and networking opportunities for small and urban growers.
- Partnered with Fresh Approach, La Mesa Verde, Valley Verde, Veggielution, and Santa Clara University to offer a workshop on food justice.



Collaboration and Convening

- Co-coordinate the Santa Clara County Food System Alliance and the South Bay Food Justice Collaborative.
- Supported the creation of the Santa Clara County Food System Alliance's report, *Small Farms, Big Potential*, on the viability and public value of small farms.
- With County Department of Agriculture, wrote feature on urban agriculture of annual crop report.



Collaborative Projects



SIZE:
22 acres

YEARS IN BUSINESS:
~20

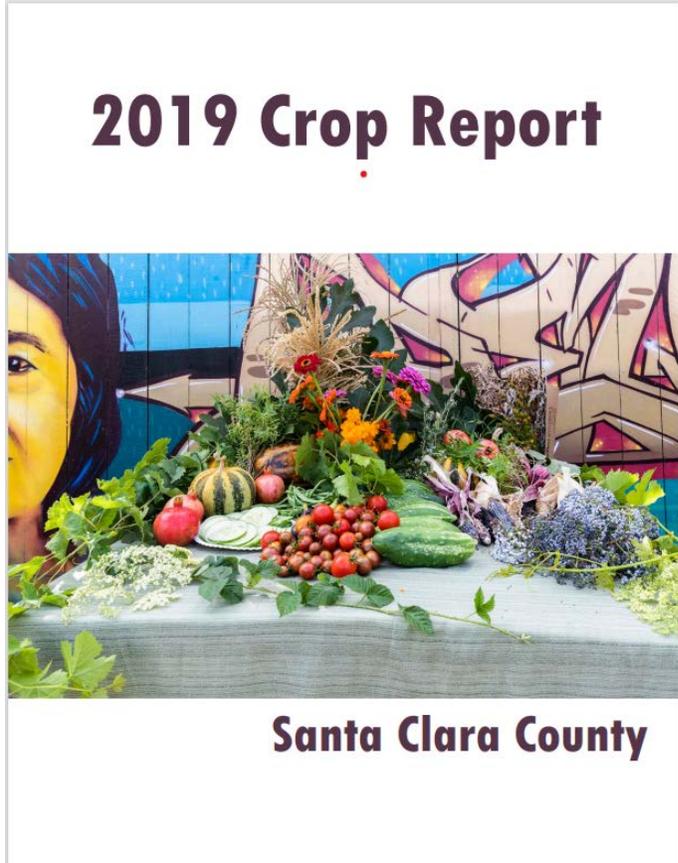
PRODUCTS:
Snow pea tips, bok choy, Chinese mustard, celtuce, edible chrysanthemums

MARKETS:
Restaurant, wholesale

COUNTY:
Santa Clara

Jenny Li's family has been growing vegetables in Santa Clara County for more than 20 years. They are one of roughly 80 Asian-American-owned farming operations that grow Asian vegetables and herbs here, part of a farming tradition that stretches back to the early 20th century.

The Li family specializes in snow pea tips, a high-value, specialty crop. This production system involves multiple plantings over the year, interspersed with rotations of bok choy, Chinese mustard, and other Asian leafy vegetable crops. Their primary sales are to wholesalers and restaurants in the South Bay, East Bay, and San Francisco. These marketing channels strike a balance between the smaller volume, higher price sales to restaurants and larger volume, lower price sales to wholesalers. Focusing on these specialty Asian crops, the Li's farm business has expanded steadily over the years, and the size of the land they farm has grown from 5 acres initially to a peak of 26 acres.



Urban Agriculture Research

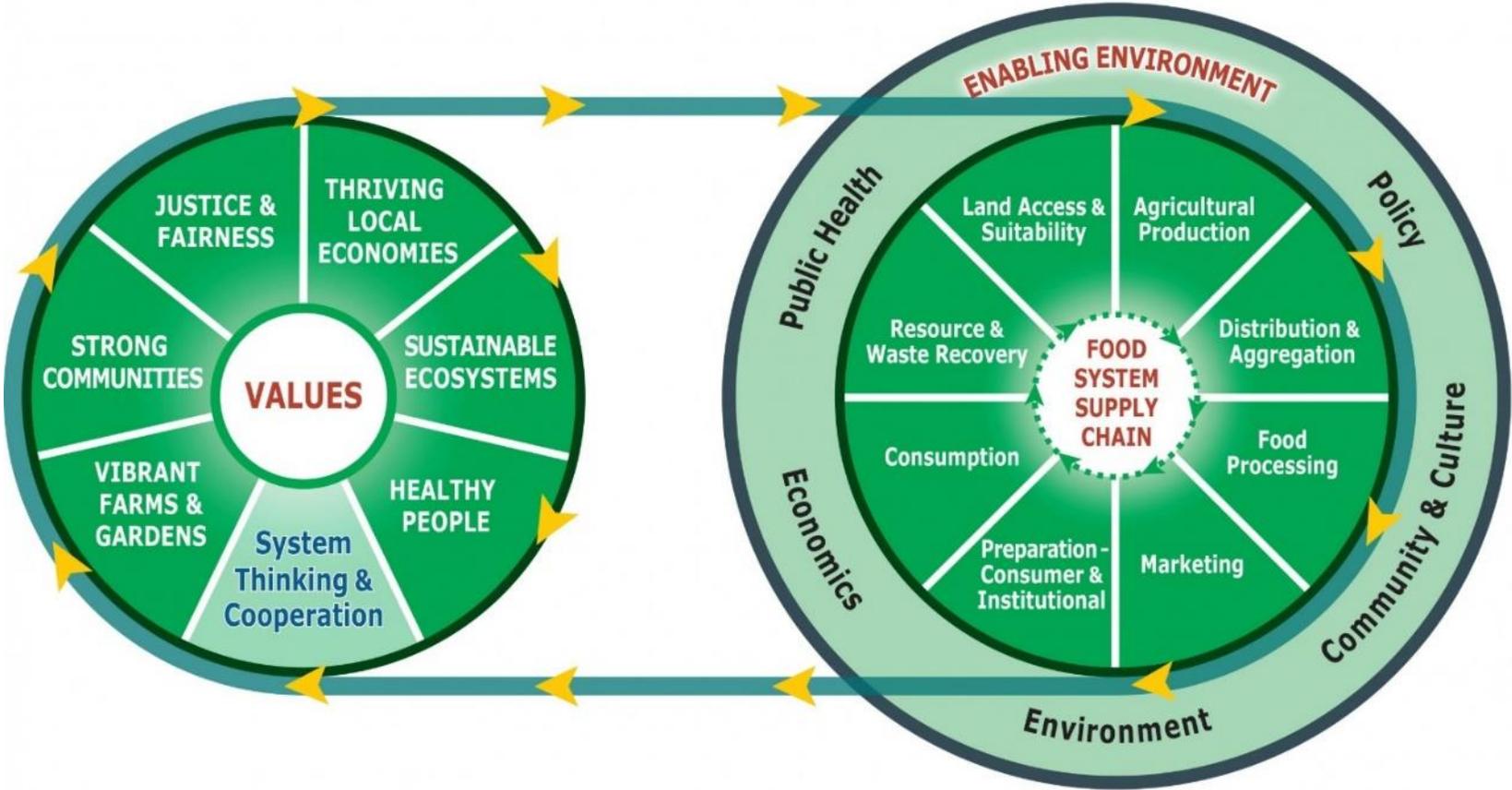


- Drought and urban agriculture
- Urban gardens and food security
- Gardening during Covid-19
- New research plot at Martial Cottle Park



Santa Clara County Food System Workplan

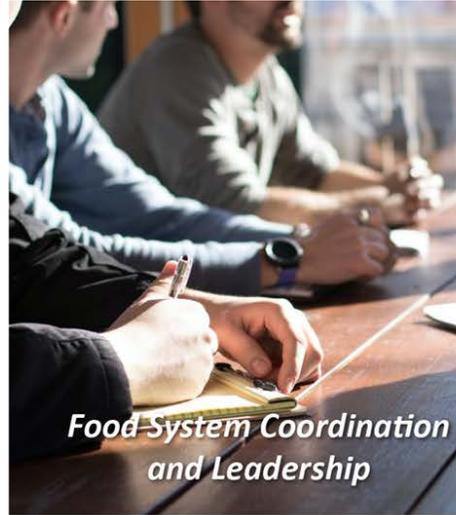
What is the food system?



Purpose

To provide a roadmap for the development of the County's Food, Restaurants, Agriculture and Health Access

Initiative that will support County efforts to cultivate a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system



Our Process

Over the course of five months, our team gathered information and input through:

29

reviews of reports and papers

39

interviews with nonprofit and public agencies

15

interviews with food and ag businesses

4

food system collaboratives engaged

127

responses to recommendation input surveys

Key themes and recommendations were identified and used to create goals and strategies for the Santa Clara County food system workplan.

Food System Vision

A resilient and equitable food system that supports the health and wellbeing of all residents, economic prosperity for communities throughout the county, and the stewardship of our natural resources, while addressing a legacy of inequity and preparing for and mitigating long-term changes to our climate.



Goals

1. Enhance Food System Coordination and Leadership
2. Increase Community Engagement in the Food System Toward Greater Food Sovereignty
3. Maintain Farmland, Increase Agricultural Opportunities, and Enhance Farm Viability
4. Build a Strong Regional Food Economy Where Communities and Individuals Prosper
5. Improve Food Security and Public Health Through Access to Nutritious, Culturally Acceptable and Affordable Food
6. Expand Food Recovery, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Practices
7. Build a Constituency for a Strong Regional Food System By Increasing Food and Agricultural Education



Assessment Findings
Goals – Recommendations
Strategies – Action Steps
Partners
Evaluation Metrics

Goal 1: Enhance food system coordination and leadership

Key Findings

Selected Recommendations and Strategies

Goal 1 - Key Findings

Stakeholders identified three forms of coordination:

- Stronger coordination among County of Santa Clara agencies
- Increased connection between the County and existing collaboratives
- Increased connection between residents, particularly from the most vulnerable communities, and the County



Goal 1 - Recommendations & Strategies

Increase the capacity of County government to support and lead food system change

- 1.1 Create a full-time food system manager position within County government
- 1.2 Institutionalize internal collaboration through the creation of a “Kitchen Cabinet”

Strengthen the capacity for food system coordination among public, nonprofit, and private food system stakeholders

- 1.3 Guide the establishment of an external Food System Leadership Collaborative
- 1.4 Develop a food system resilience plan
- 1.5 Collaborate across industry sectors (e.g., housing, health care) to further the reach of food system work

Promote regional food system development in other sectors and at other levels of government

- 1.6 Advocate for policies at all governments levels that advance food system goals and reduce food insecurity
- 1.7 Embed food system planning and implementation in county policies, plans (i.e., food in all policies)

Goal 2: Increase community engagement in the food system toward greater food sovereignty

Key Findings

Recommendations and Strategies

Goal 2 - Key Findings

To center equity in food system work, stakeholders suggest that:

- Resident food leaders should be engaged in food system policy and planning and have a place in structures for increased collaboration
- Investing in community-based organizations and their work incubating collaborative, community-led and designed projects can increase resident engagement in the food system and plants the seed for a food landscape with community priorities at its core.



Goal 2 - Recommendations & Strategies

Foster connections between community food leaders and local government officials

- 2.1 Create a Resident Food Equity Advisory Council for food system issues

Strengthen the capacity for neighborhood-level food sovereignty work

- 2.2 Invest in community-based organizations to facilitate food system leadership training and development of collaborative, community-led projects

Food sovereignty: The **right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food** produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their **right to define their own food and agriculture systems.**

Goal 3: Maintain farmland, increase agricultural opportunities, and enhance farm viability

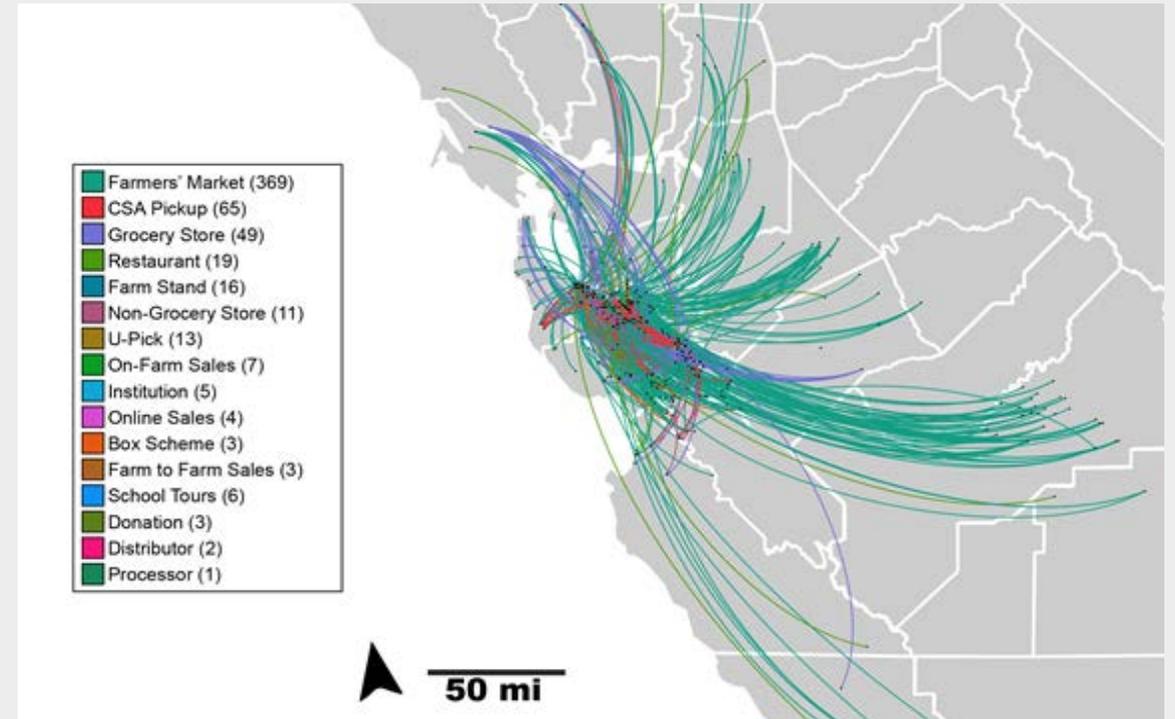
Key Findings

Recommendations and Strategies

Goal 3 - Key Findings

- Demand for locally grown foods has increased during the pandemic as consumers seek out shortened supply chains
- Lack of secure land tenure affected farmers' ability to respond to the crisis
- COVID-19 has exacerbated longstanding and systemic issues with farmworker safety
- Demonstrated the value of bilingual technical assistance. The Small Farm Program helped growers submit 200+ applications for relief funding, yielding \$3.1 million in emergency aid.
- Well networked farms have played a large role in community food security efforts.

Santa Clara County's community food network



Goal 3 - Recommendations & Strategies

Increase access to land, capital, and technical assistance for food production

- 3.1 Address the needs of new entry and socially disadvantaged farmers for secure, affordable access to land and technical assistance
- 3.2 Make suitable public land for new entry and urban farmers and gardeners support access on state lands for livestock grazing

Support farm viability and climate-smart stewardship practices

- 3.3 Support farm business through the permitting process, in regulatory compliance, and accessing other resources (Ag Liaison Position)
- 3.4 Support the establishment of a network connecting farmers, ranchers, and food business to each other and institutional and individual customers
- 3.5 Maintain agricultural water rates and water access
- 3.6 Continue the Agriculture Resilience Incentive (ARI) grant program



Thank you! Questions?