

CONSTITUTION

of the

Ag Futures Alliance

Adopted by Consensus, 15 April 2003
Amended by Consensus, 2 March 2004
Amended by Consensus 5 December 2006

Our Purpose

To support and enhance an interdependent and viable agriculture in Ventura County in perpetuity through an alliance that values dialogue and cooperation and where a diversity of affected views and interests are represented.

Definitions

Viable and Interdependent take into account:

1. Profit
2. Avoidance of harm
3. System-wide planning that makes sense
4. Time frame long enough to know what is “viable”
5. Biologically integrated approach
6. Considers the people next door
7. Mediated problem solving process
8. Flexibility and choice

Viable means can live, satisfies, worth doing, remains competitive, can function, thriving.

Interdependent means every person has value; all components needed; agriculture is not in a vacuum it is subject to the forces which work on it; returns value to different components involved; relies on natural resources, labor, capital; respectful use of resources; enhancement of resources; and subject to global markets.

Sustainable means any actions we take today do not impede our ability to continue acting in the same way into the future.

Principles are:

1. Not platitudes
2. Deeply held beliefs
3. Not prescriptive, they are descriptive
4. Divided into two categories: 1) Organization and 2) Practice

Principles define how we will work together by clarifying:

1. Ethics of how we will behave when we decide we belong together
2. Means and conduct by which the purpose will be pursued

3. Fundamental beliefs against which all subsequent decisions and actions will be judged

Principles of Organization

Recognizing that mutual trust and a common purpose are the basis for reaching consensus, the Ag Futures Alliance has set forth the following principles to guide behavior of the organization's members as they work to set goals and define activities. We recognize that the current process is merely the first step in a series of continuous steps that are needed to achieve our common purpose.

1. In order to develop mutual trust, we respect the right of each individual to have viewpoints, beliefs and values. This means we speak in ways that respect others' opinions.
2. Those participating in the organization represent elements of the community that are integral to the fulfillment of our purpose. They include: agriculture, labor, environmental advocacy, education, media, local government, and other interested community members with a demonstrable commitment to the purpose of the organization.
3. We actively listen to one another with the intention of building mutually acceptable solutions from identified points of agreement.
4. Through mutual learning we seek common understanding of complex problems.
5. We encourage ideas that are new and creative.
6. In order to protect the process, we do not attack or intimidate others.
7. We seek to forge reality-based solutions. Therefore, we precisely identify points of disagreement and common ground.
8. We use open, honest and robust dialogue to achieve consensus in making decisions. Consensus is defined as a mutually accepted group position or an agreement good enough for all members to move ahead. "Good enough" means that there is no strong objection by any one or more group members and those who are not in full accord give their consent to the consensus position established by the balance of the group.
9. In order to provide space for everyone to contribute, we keep our statements as brief and clear as possible and no one person or subgroup will dominate the exchange.

Principles of Practice

Recognizing that we will need to periodically remind ourselves of our core beliefs, that the actions of the Alliance must be consistently implemented over the long-term, that the community's consent is needed to achieve our purpose, we have set forth the following principles to guide implementation of our programming.

1. We believe that all people, across generations, are linked to each other and interdependent through our social, ecological, and economic systems; further, we are accountable for the effects of our decisions on each other and future generations.
2. We believe that all parts are better understood through their relationship to the whole, and that a change in one part may influence other parts, thereby affecting the whole.
3. We will promote policies that ensure that the Earth's resources, including soil, air, and water, are not systematically degraded.
4. We commit ourselves to an ethic of mutual respect and responsibility. We recognize the right of all members of the farming community (e.g. farmers, farmworkers) to fair compensation for their contributions.
5. We will work to create a safe environment for all members of our community. We further recognize that, when we consider safe application of agricultural chemicals, special consideration must be given to those community members who are most vulnerable (children) and most exposed (farm workers).
6. We work to facilitate the dissemination of appropriate information and the understanding of issues and resources, so that in conflict resolution we can attain outcomes which reflect a balance of interests, without any losers. Further, we will educate the public regarding the complexities of interdependent agriculture.
7. We will work to bring about over time, to the greatest extent feasible, biologically integrated farming systems.
8. We encourage practices, behaviors, and uses of technology that are consistent with our Purpose and Principles, and discourage those that are not.

9. We believe in preemptively building partnerships, and working proactively in our community in order to stay ahead of conflict.
10. We seek to create a community in which agriculture is supported because its role is understood.
11. We recognize the shared responsibility as stakeholders in the agricultural community to promote policies that ensure social equity and justice for farm workers and their families.

What We Do

Underlying Assumption

Recognizing that AFA lacks official regulatory power, we believe our influence will come from 1) the moral authority earned by the members' dedication to improving the community, 2) respect for others and integrity in our dealings, and 3) rising above traditional adversarial roles. With this in mind, the AFA will undertake the following activities:

Build Consensus within the Alliance and Community at large

1. Define the vision that best ensures the future of agriculture
2. Provide a forum for exploring/illuminating "reduced risk" systems of production
3. Provide a forum for addressing conflicts and solving problems

Supply Information

1. Be a responsible and objective voice for agriculture while speaking out against irresponsible actions.
2. Supply general information or context that enhances the community's sustainability.
3. Be a resource to reporters.
4. Provide continuing education opportunities.

Enhance Sustainability

1. Advocate for systemic changes in local rural and urban cultures and institutions that are needed to help agriculture and local communities in a transition toward sustainability.
2. Remain ahead of and propose long-term solutions to challenges faced by agriculture.
3. Encourage adherence to safe farming practices that respect environmental and social needs.
4. Develop a consensus building process that will generate a blueprint for sustainable communities.
5. Work with our constituencies to help them embrace and to allow collaboration and cooperation with traditional antagonists and thereby alter behavior patterns inside and outside of agriculture.
6. Support the effective enforcement of all labor, health and safety, and pesticide laws to improve access to decent working and living conditions for farm workers.
7. Advocate for increased access to healthcare and childcare for farm workers and their families.

The AFA Round Table

AFA is place for dialogue and synthesis where stakeholders look for common ground from which to define a *next step* to be taken together. Therefore, the core organizational structure is conceived as a round table where each member has equal voice.

The AFA will select one primary issue or topic per year as its focus to be explored in ten meetings of three hours each. The issue or topic may be covered in less than ten meetings and another topic can then be taken up. However, the goal is to create one-year modules that are thematic as a means to facilitate focused actions that might result from a consensus and make it easier for media outlets and the community to hear the messages offered by the AFA.

A *next step* may include the following sequence of activity:

1. Development and distribution of a white paper defining the AFA position on a topic or issue
2. Formation of a sub committee or task force that will seek to spawn action related to a topic or issue
3. Engagement with other organizations or entities – strategic allies – that contribute to implementation of action sought by the AFA.

Guidelines for Membership

Introduction

AFA Guidelines for Membership are intended to provide a consistent and understandable set of policies to guide members of AFA in maintaining the integrity of the AFA process. They are developed in accord with the following assumptions:

1. The Guidelines will be in line with the foundational work of the first year and designed to achieve the purpose of AFA in accordance with the principles set forth in the Constitution.
2. The Guidelines will maintain and enhance the unique dynamic, balance, and pattern of relationships within the AFA resulting from the diversity of affected views and interests at the table.
3. The Guidelines will be generic in design and equitable to avoid individual and /or organizational politics of representation.

Structure

1. **SIZE.** The AFA Round Table will have a maximum size of 25 and a minimum of 20. (If 20 cannot be maintained, AFA needs to question its relevance and continued existence.)
2. **CATEGORIES.** There are five main categories of membership. Within each category, there are specific interest groupings that need to be considered as valuable

perspectives to be represented in AFA. Representation from these interests will ensure the appropriate balance necessary to achieve the AFA purpose.

Agriculture

Agriculture (production and ag-business, including farm labor contractors)

Labor

Employees of farming operations and/or their advocates

Environmental

Environmental
Health and Wellness

Civic

Media
Government (agencies/departments)
Community Service
Education

Distribution

Retail and wholesale

COMPOSITION. There shall be a minimum of eight (8) members from the Agriculture category.-There shall be a minimum of three (3) members from Environment and four (4) from Civic. There shall be a minimum of three (3) members from Labor and two (2) from Distribution. Individuals running for or holding political elected office are not eligible for core group membership, unless the entire group agrees by consensus that the nominee's qualifications, background, and perspective are valuable enough to AFA to warrant an exception to this rule. If accepted for membership, an individual running for or holding public office must agree not to use AFA membership for any political purpose, such as (but not limited to) citing AFA membership in campaign materials or using AFA membership in such a way as to imply AFA endorsement of a candidate or position not explicitly endorsed by the group. Violations of this agreement will constitute grounds for expulsion from AFA upon request by any one member of the group.

Membership Intent

Emphasis should be given to the following membership intents:

1. **INDIVIDUAL BASIS.** Membership and participation in AFA is on an individual basis. There are no group memberships. Members may come from and represent the perspective of a particular interest group, but when involved in the activities of AFA, members balance constituency allegiances with the special obligation to be responsible to the larger AFA process. In AFA, members are expected to pursue group consensus in accordance with the AFA Constitution. Likewise, the individual member's group is not bound by any decision or action of the AFA.
2. **ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONS.** While membership is essentially individual, it is desirable that a high proportion of AFA members come from well-established community organizations. This arrangement is important for purposes of AFA

credibility. It is also desirable that represented community organizations support the purpose and principles of the AFA.

Selection of Members

1. When a vacancy occurs, filling the seat is initiated by nomination from a sitting member. A departing member may suggest a nomination. There must be group consensus in order to decide on the nominee. The above membership guidelines shall be followed.
2. A minimum of two AFA sitting members shall then meet with the nominee to discuss and ascertain both willingness/commitment to serve and the willingness and capacity to subscribe to the purpose and principles of AFA.
3. The AFA sitting members shall then report back to the group at its next regular meeting. The nominee must be approved by group consensus. The new member begins service at the following regular meeting.

Process of Renewal

Periodic rotation of membership is desirable to allow a fresh infusion of new ideas and perspectives, which is necessary to keep the organization relevant and responsive to the needs of the wider community. Accordingly, members are expected to commit to a cycle of 10 meetings a year for a term of three years. Members wishing to remain on the roundtable beyond three years may do so if granted permission by group consensus, up to a maximum of seven years. The seven-year service limitation may be waived by group consensus for members representing core AFA constituencies, including (but not limited to) Farm Bureau of Ventura County, UC Hansen Trust/UC Cooperative Extension, Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, League of Women Voters, California Rural Legal Assistance/United Farm Workers and Environmental Defense Center.

Termination

The effective functioning of the Round Table is absolutely dependent on the commitment and regular participation of its members. Therefore AFA shall have a termination of membership policy as follows:

1. A member who misses 2 consecutive regularly scheduled meetings shall be considered to have resigned.
2. A member who misses 3 meetings in a calendar year shall be considered to have resigned.
3. A member who is deemed by the core group to have failed to live up to the purpose and principles of the AFA Constitution may be terminated by group consensus, less the affected member.

In the event of A or B, *on an exceptions basis* a resigned member may be re-instated by group consensus at the following meeting. Meeting attendance shall be reviewed regularly by the facilitator and reported to the group.

The facilitator shall notify an affected member of his or her effective resignation or termination.

Criteria for Advocacy

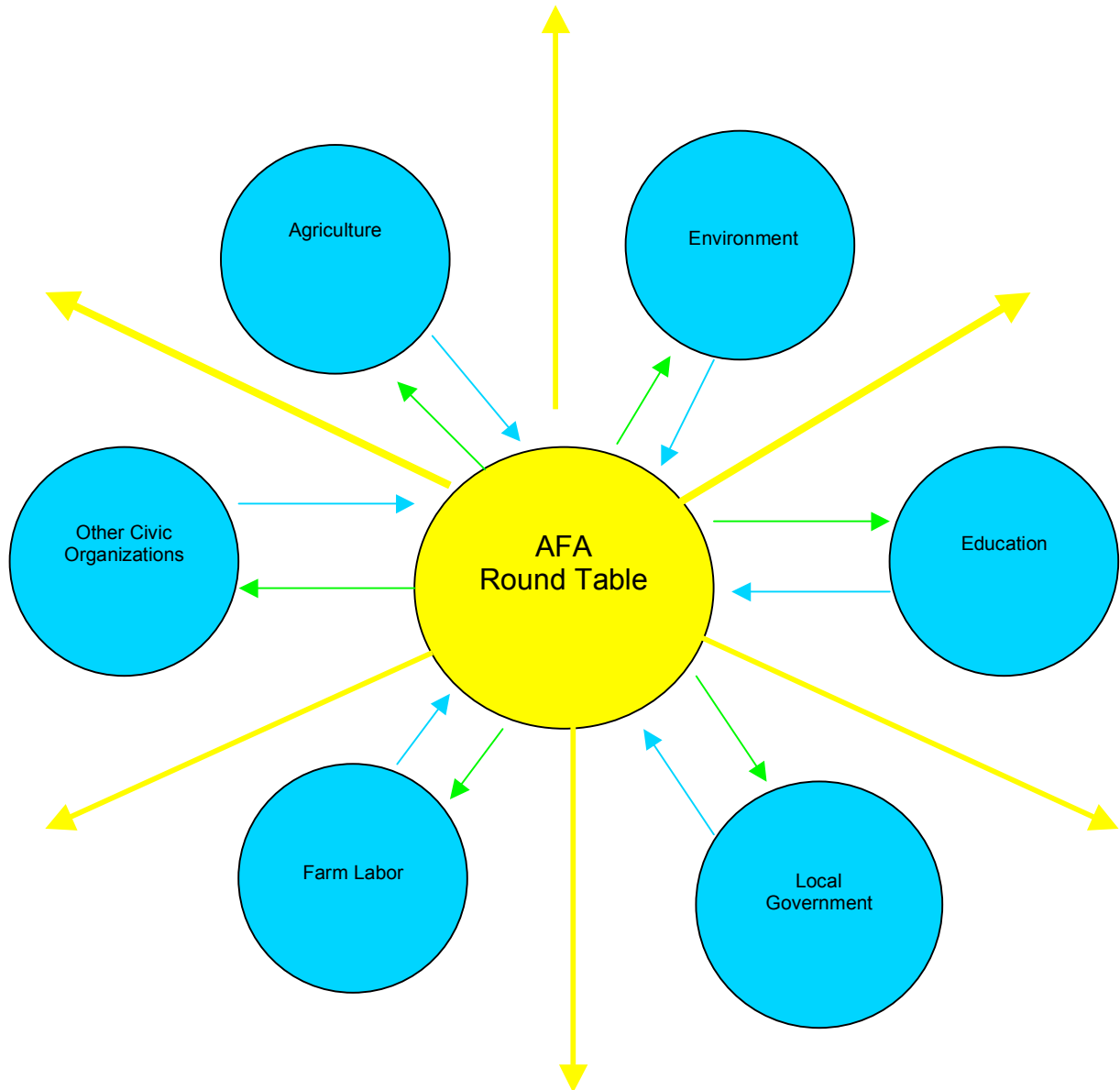
In order to maintain AFA's credibility in the community as well as to respect its unique role, for AFA to take an advocacy position on any issue:

1. The issue must be of major significance to the future of agriculture in Ventura County.
2. The position must be consistent with AFA's Purpose and Principles.
3. There must be a very high degree of consensus amongst the group for the position and any proposed action.
4. There must occur sufficient prior analysis and study by AFA on the issue to provide for the development of a cogent, credible, and fact-based position.
5. There must exist a sufficient opportunity for AFA's influence to make a significant difference.

In the event AFA has an appointed representative to another body or group, that person should be free to vote in such group according to his or her individual judgment, while still making all best efforts to stay consistent with AFA's Purpose and Principles. Whenever practical, the representative should first review the issue with AFA before a vote is required.

The AFA Round Table: A Graphic Image

Blue arrows symbolize the influence on the AFA of the round table participants who represent sectors of the community dedicated to the mission. The green arrows symbolize the influence the AFA will have on those same members, who in-turn will effect the organizations they represent. The yellow arrows are reaching out into the community at large and represent the impact AFA will seek to have on the community's perception and understanding of agriculture in Ventura County.



AFA Round Table Participants

Doug Adrianson, Los Angeles Times
Eric Barragan, Heritage Valley Harvesting
Jake Blehm, Pacific Agribusiness Alliance
Ron Bottorff, Friends of the Santa Clara River
Ellen Brokaw, Brokaw Nursery
Eric Cardenas, Environmental Defense Center
Jim Churchill, Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Rob Corley, Community Service
Sandy Curwood, Ventura Unified School District
Scott Deardoff, Deardorff-Jackson Company
Ralph De Leon, SAMCO Labor Contracting
Lolita Echeveria, Environmental Defense Center
Dulanie Ellis, Walk Your Talk Productions
Marty Fujita, Environment
Vanessa Frank Garcia, California Rural Legal Assistance
Santos Gomez, California Rural Legal Assistance
Gus Gunderson, Limoneira Co.
John Grether, Grether Farming Company
Cesar Hernandez, Coastal Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy
Janel Huff, Economic Development Collaborative Ventura County
Claudia Jensen, MD, Community Service
Susan Johnson, Ventura County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner
Sue Kelley, League of Women Voters Ventura County
Sheri Klittich, UC Hansen Trust
John Krist, Ventura County Star
Rex Laird, Ventura County Farm Bureau
Leslie Leavens-Crowe, Leavens Ranches
Ann Gist Levin, League of Women Voters of Ventura County
Barbara Macri-Ortiz, Labor Attorney
Craig Mason, Agriculture
Eileen McCarthy, California Rural Legal Assistance
Phil McGrath, McGrath Family Farms
Maricela Morales, Coastal Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy
Richard Pidduck, Santa Paula Creek Ranch
Josh Pinkerton, Agriculture
E.J. Remson, The Nature Conservancy
Rob Roy, Ventura County Agricultural Association
Chris Sayer, Agriculture
Lori Schiraga, Environmental Defense Center
Karen Schmidt, Save Open-Space and Agricultural Resources
Steve Sprinkle, The Farmer and the Cook
Kim Uhlich, Local Agency Formation Commission
Henry Vega, Coastal Harvesting Incorporated
Elise Wright, Community and Children's Advocates Against Pesticides Poisoning
Larry Yee, University of California Cooperative Extension

Michael Dimock, AG Innovations Network
Joseph McIntyre, AG Innovations Network
Process Facilitators
www.aginnovations.net