



**Food and Agricultural Focus Group
Meeting #5 Summary
February 19, 2009**

The fifth meeting of the Focus Group was held on February 19, 2009 at the Sutter County Health Department Auditorium. Members that were present include: Casey Hoppin, Brian Fedora, Ann Chesini, Sam Nevis, Amerjit Sohal and Matt Conant. Members that were absent include: Steve Danna, James Akin, Jack Poukish, and Ram Dhanota.

The fifth meeting focused on a discussion of the Draft Agriculture Element Goals and Policies. The Focus Group reviewed and commented up to and through Policy 2.4.

There was considerable discussion with regard to Policy AG 1.8, Homesites, particularly with item (b) which places limitations on the ownership of the homesite parcel. Staff described the current General Plan homesite parcel policies, provided a diagram showing an example of how a homesite parcel is created, and noted there are currently no restrictions in place that prohibit an owner from selling off the homesite parcel as soon as the map is recorded. Some members liked the proposed restrictions but wondered if the County could legally place a time requirement that the homesite parcel is owned before it is sold. Some members thought the policy should be modified to allow creation of the homesite parcel for a family member or that new homesite parcels should be required to be clustered next to existing neighboring homesite parcels. Others expressed that, regardless of the parcel's initial size, only one homesite parcel should be allowed to be created, or that the County may want to consider allowing homesite parcels to only be created within AG-20 designated areas.

At the conclusion of the homesite parcel discussion, all six members present were supportive of retaining provisions to allow homesite parcels to be created. Staff suggested the possibility of only allowing one homesite parcel to be created for every current legal parcel (using a baseline year). Five of the six members present were supportive of staff researching this option further.

Staff then explained the process of creating AP/APR parcels. Unlike homesite parcels, creation of APR parcels requires approval of a General Plan Amendment and Rezone, with the parcels intended to be sold off as residential homesites (instead of a homesite for the owner or his/her son or daughter involved in the farming operation). The members present decided that it was preferable to do away with the existing provisions that allow for the AP/APR designation. It was the Group's consensus that the policies of section 1 reflect their general goals.

The Group discussed Policy AG 2.2, Right to Farm, and suggested that it be amended to specifically require that the Right to Farm notice be recorded on the deed of trust on transfers of applicable properties in addition to noticing landowners along with tax bills.

Regarding the creation of buffers, the Group directed staff to revise Policy AG 2.3 (b) to specifically state that the buffer should not be located on the agricultural parcel. This would allow the use of roads and right of way as part of the buffer. There was discussion regarding requirements for maintenance of the buffer, AG 2.3(e), and determining what type of development that the buffer needs to apply to.

The Food and Ag Focus Group decided to address the remaining policies for Goals 3, 4 & 5 at its April 2, 2009 meeting.