

DRAFT

# **AN AGRICULTURE ELEMENT**

**PROPOSED FOR**

**THE AMADOR COUNTY GENERAL PLAN**

Developed by:

Adapted from original document prepared by  
the 1997 Amador County Agriculture Roundtable

Under the leadership of

The University of California Cooperative Extension

DATE

August 15, 2006

**NOTE: Throughout this document, there are comments along the right side of the page. These represent issues that were not unanimously accepted at the final Ag Element Planning Meeting on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006.**

## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is vital to the needs of Amador County, California, the nation and the world. Agriculture is one of the largest production industries in Amador County and contributes a significant inflow of money into the County's economy and maintains diversity in the County's economic base. The County, therefore, recognizes the need to protect and maintain an economically viable agriculture. The uniqueness and importance of agriculture in Amador County requires a specific planning document to guide the county government in addressing the future needs of agriculture.

Agriculture is defined as an industry that produces food, fiber, and other plant and animal products. The purpose of this element is to establish policies that ensure the stability, productivity, and viability of the County's agriculture and agriculture-related industries. This element is intended to provide clear guidelines for policies, programs, and measures that promote and protect the current and future needs of the agricultural industry. If future technology requires alternative and as yet unforeseen policies, these should be consistent with the County's commitment to encourage the maintenance of a healthy agricultural sector of the County's economy.

Comment [SO1]: Insert ", fuel, feedstock, medicine,"

Comment [SO2]: Insert "and Sustain"

Agricultural tourism, or agritourism, improves the incomes and potential economic viability of small farms and rural communities. Agricultural and on-farm nature tourism can be characterized as businesses conducted by farmers or ranchers on their *working* agricultural operations for the enjoyment and education of visitors. Agricultural and nature tourism present the potential to generate increased on-farm revenues, and, given strategic management, might increase farm profitability. Additionally, since the majority of the general population may have little or no contact with agriculture, on-farm tourism also is one mechanism by which nonfarmers can learn about agriculture and, in turn, support farm products by increased purchases made directly or indirectly from family farms.

In Amador County, agricultural lands are limited. Some agricultural land has already been lost to residential and commercial development, while others are being converted to non-agricultural uses. This plan (the Agriculture Element), internally consistent with other components of the Amador County General Plan, Right to Farm Ordinance and any other pertinent ordinances must provide for the conservation and protection of Amador County's agriculture which contributes to the overall enhancement of the environment, the preservation of open space, and to the rural nature of Amador County.

Comment [SO3]: Replace "Preservation" with "Protection"

Comment [SO4]: Delete entire paragraph

## LEGAL AUTHORITY

The Agriculture Element is optional under California General Plan law. However, California planning law states that "the general plan may include any elements or address...subjects which...relate to the physical development of the county or city" (Government Code section 65303).

## GOALS & POLICIES

### GOAL 1 Continuation of Agriculture

Amador County shall assure and enhance the continuation of agriculture as a major viable production industry in Amador County. Agriculture shall be encouraged, and expansion and intensification shall be supported. Conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use shall be discouraged.

Comment [SO5]: Delete sentence

**Policy 1A** The use of the Williamson Act (Agricultural Preserve Program) shall be strongly encouraged and supported. Nothing in any provision of this agricultural element shall diminish, or should be construed as diminishing, any aspect of the Williamson Act. The County shall also explore and support other agricultural land protection programs. The County will maintain the maximum amount of land in appropriate parcel sizes within agricultural designated areas that an individual or firm would be willing to lease or buy for agricultural purposes consistent with agriculture in the given area.

Comment [SO6]: Delete sentence

**Policy 1B** As provided for in the County Zoning Ordinance, an Agricultural Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Agricultural Advisory Committee shall have initial review of all matters coming before County Government pertaining to, relating to, or affecting the well-being of agriculture, and shall make its recommendations known to the Board of Supervisors. The majority of the committee shall consist of agriculturists.

Comment [SO7]: Delete "majority of the"

**Policy 1C** Neighboring uses shall not violate the day-to-day management of agricultural operations.

**Policy 1D** The County shall recognize the rights of operation, freedom of choice as to the methods of cultivation, choice of crops or types of livestock, rotation of crops, use of approved chemicals and hours of operation, harvesting, and all other functions within the scope of agricultural management decisions. These rights and freedoms shall be conducted in a manner which is consistent with: 1) sound agricultural practices that promote the long-term viability of agriculture, such as but not be limited to Integrated Pest Management, and 2) applicable laws and regulations

Comment [SO8]: Replace "Chemicals" with "crop care materials"

**Policy 1E** To increase productivity on agricultural lands, the County shall encourage land improvement programs.

**Policy 1F** The County shall recognize that the generation of noise, smoke, odor, and dust is a natural consequence of normal agricultural practices.

**Policy 1G** Water, air and soil resources shall be protected through provisions including but not limited to, the constancy of urban/rural boundary lines, maintenance of buffer areas around agricultural areas, and the promotion of conservation practices.

**Policy 1H** Signs depicting Amador County as an agricultural county should be placed on all major highways at the county borders and will be maintained by county agricultural organizations. Farm trail signs may be placed throughout the county as needed to direct agritourism, /nature tourism.

**Comment [SO9]:** Insert "agrientertainment, and agrieducation."

## **GOAL 2 Protection of Agricultural Lands**

Agricultural lands shall be protected from adverse urban and rural residential influence.

**Policy 2A** Amador County shall require measures designed for the prevention of adverse effects from development or other activities on any property.

**Comment [SO10]:** Delete this policy

**Policy 2B** Amador County shall recognize, and give priority to, the need for protection from trespass, theft, malicious mischief, trash, vandalism, roaming dogs, etc. on all agricultural lands.

**Policy 2C** Amador County shall strongly discourage the extension by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of urban spheres of influence or other non-agricultural development into agricultural lands.

**Policy 2D** Conversion of agricultural lands shall be strongly discouraged. The County shall support programs which encourage the retention and profitability of agricultural lands, such as agritourism, nature tourism, conservation easements, in-lieu fees, or other farmland conservation mechanisms.

**Comment [SO11]:** Insert "agrientertainment, agrieducation,"

**Comment [SO12]:** Delete conservation easements

**Policy 2E** Amador County recognizes the need to accommodate more intensively farmed land and shall support the growth of specialty farms in recognition of their important role in the growth of agritourism, nature tourism.

**Comment [SO13]:** Insert ", agrientertainment, and agrieducation."

**Policy 2F** County shall create provisions in land use ordinances to promote agritourism, nature tourism.

**Comment [SO14]:** Insert "agrientertainment, and agrieducation."

### GOAL 3 Conversion of Agricultural Lands

Comment [SO15]: Insert sentence on what conversion means.

**Policy 3A** Expansion of urban and/or rural residential development and/or urban services into agricultural areas outside of urban limits is to be discouraged.

**Policy 3B** It is a County priority to retain blocks of agricultural land within rural residential and urban areas where reasonable to continue that use, and to recognize the importance of the objectives of the Amador County Right To Farm Ordinance.

**Policy 3C** Where lands adjacent to agricultural or open space lands are to be developed for non-agricultural use, a buffer zone of a minimum 200 feet shall be established on the non-agricultural land to physically separate the non-agricultural development and nonagricultural structures from the agricultural land. It shall be the obligation of the party seeking the land use change to insure that a sufficient buffer is established between the parcels. Secondary non-permanent uses within the buffer shall not conflict with adjacent agricultural operations.

Comment [SO16]: Who maintains buffer?

**Policy 3D** Conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses shall be mitigated and shall not interfere with remaining or other agricultural operations.

**Policy 3E** Mitigation shall consist of preservation in perpetuity of 1 acre of equal or superior quality agricultural land in Amador County for each acre converted.

**Policy 3F** No in lieu fees for mitigation will be allowed. Mitigation shall be purchased by developer before specific plan entitlement is granted.

Comment [SO17]: Delete entire Goal 3 and all Policies

### GOAL 4 Conservation of Natural Resources

Recognizing that agriculture can enhance and protect natural resources, agricultural operations are encouraged to incorporate such techniques as soil and water conservation and sound management practices.

Comment [SO18]: Delete Goal 4

### GOAL 5 Supportive Agricultural Activities

Amador County shall allow areas and facilities for supportive activities needed as an integral part of the production and marketing process on and/or off the farm and for agritourism, nature tourism, agrientertainment, and agrieducation.

**Policy 5A** Amador County shall allow on-site facilities in agricultural areas for accommodating visitors, and product handling and selling. These uses and facilities must be reasonable in scope based on property's size and location; beneficial to the agricultural industry; and compatible with long term agricultural use of the land.

## **GOAL 6 Access to Agricultural Areas**

The County shall make effective provision for access to agricultural areas for the necessary movement of agricultural crops and equipment.

**Policy 6A** Access shall not be restricted on County roads for the type and size of vehicles and/or equipment which are used in the agricultural operations of the area.

## **GOAL 7 Marketing of Agricultural Products**

The marketing and promotion of Amador County's agricultural products shall be supported.

**Policy 7A** The County will support opportunities to promote and market agricultural products grown and/or processed in Amador County.

**Policy 7B** The County will support a labeling program intended to promote Amador-grown agricultural products.

Comment [SO19]: Insert "Voluntary"

**Policy 7C** The County will support agritourism, nature tourism, agritainment and agrieducation.

## **GOAL 8 Agricultural Housing**

Amador County shall support efficient management of local agricultural production activities by the development of adequate amounts of farm family housing and farm worker housing in agricultural areas.

**Policy 8A** The County will support farm operators to provide sufficient housing in addition to housing permitted by applicable density for permanent and seasonal agricultural employees and for family members to maintain production activities.

**Policy 8B** Farmworker housing will be located where it promotes efficiency of the farming operation and has minimal impact on productive farmland.

**Policy 8C** Farm labor and farm family housing units will be located to minimize disruption of farming operations, avoid conversions of productive farmland, and take maximum advantage of existing facilities including utilities and roads. All such dwellings shall be encouraged to locate on lands least impacted for agricultural use and/or in "clustered" configurations to minimize the conversion of agricultural lands to any other uses.

**Policy 8D** A maximum dwelling unit density for the total acreage in the farm or ranch shall be determined on a case by case basis.

**GOAL 9 Exemptions for Non-Agricultural Activities**

The County shall allow non-agricultural operations on agriculturally-designated lands which would not interfere with the potential of normal agricultural operations. Such non-agricultural uses include but not limit: 1) recreational or other activities under the control of the agriculturist which are compatible with open space and natural resources, 2) mining activities when such lands are reclaimed to meet or exceed current agricultural capabilities, 3) water projects which will provide long-term water for the benefit of Amador County, and 4) activities that relate to agritourism, nature tourism, agritainment, and agrieducation.

**GOAL 10 Supportive Programs for Agriculture**

Amador County should assist in formulating and promoting programs that protect agriculture, or provide alternative sources of capital for agricultural production without selling or encumbering the farmland as collateral. These measures include conservation easements, voluntary programs for purchase and/or transfer of development rights; and continued use of Williamson Act Contracts.

Comment [SO20]: Delete sentence

**GOAL 11 Processing of Permits**

The County’s permit processing procedures shall simplify and expedite the process for obtaining permits on agricultural lands.

**Policy 11A** The County shall establish procedures and standards in the zoning ordinance to distinguish uses and activities that may be approved by administrative action.

## II. AMADOR COUNTY LAND USES

There are approximately 363,500 total acres in Amador County, including 78,079 acres in the El Dorado National Forest, 9,191 acres in Bureau of Land Management, 27,485 acres in timber preserve land and 93,949 acres in Williamson Act. According to the 2004 Amador County Agriculture Report, 218,000 acres are classified as farm lands (including pasture and rangeland). Data compiled by the State Department of Conservation, Office of Land Conservation classifies Amador County land as follows (2004):

Prime Farmland (3,832 acres): Land which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops.

Farmland or Statewide Importance (1,850 acres): Land which has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for production of crops.

Unique Farmland (3,755 acres): Land that is used for the production of specific high value crops.

Farmland of Local Importance (1,256 acres): Land that is currently producing crops, or has the capability of production.

Grazing Land (188,219 acres): Land that is suitable for grazing.

Urban and Built-up Land (7,926 acres): Land in urban use.

Other Lands (88,215 acres): Land not included in any other category. Most lands in this category are upper elevation lands or lava caps and other scattered parcels not suitable for agriculture or timber production.

Comment [SO21]: Breakout Timber figures

These figures indicate that there are approximately 10,693 acres of important intensively managed farmland in the county. Most is irrigated, however, this figure includes some dryland wine grapes and walnuts. In addition, there are 188,219 acres of rangeland and non-irrigated pasture.

Each year the Amador County Department of Agriculture / Weights and Measures summarize agricultural production in the county in the Amador County Report of Agriculture. The report summarizes yearly totals compared to previous year and shows agricultural trends in the county.



### **III. MAJOR AGRICULTURAL AREAS**

Amador County has ten major agricultural areas. Following is a brief description of each. Additional information can be obtained from the Amador County Report of Agriculture which is issued annually by the Agricultural Commissioner. These descriptions are for informational purposes only.

#### **Willow Springs Area**

The Willow Springs area follows Willow Creek along Highway 16 in the northwest part of the county. It includes an area west of Plymouth that follows Indian Creek. Both of these areas have hay and pasture with late season creeks to provide green pasture for cattle and sheep production with some irrigated and some sub-irrigated pastures and vineyards. There is urban pressure with a significant portion in small residential parcels. Much of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

#### **lone Valley**

This area is located to the south and west of the city of lone and generally follows Dry Creek and Sutter Creek. Water is provided from creeks or wells. The lone Valley is the only other area in foothill counties that has class I soil. Crops grown in the area include orchards, vines, berries, row crops, hay, grain, livestock pasture, and Christmas trees. However there is urban pressure and Mule Creek State Prison is located in this valley. Much of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

#### **Jackson Valley**

Jackson Valley is located in the southwestern portion of the county and follows Jackson Creek as it leaves Lake Amador. This area has the only irrigation district in the county with water delivered to some parcels under pressure at a reasonable cost. This valley is unique in foothill counties as it is one of only two areas with class I soil. This means any climatically-suited crop can be grown here. Crops grown in the area include orchards, vines, row crops, hay, grain and livestock pasture. Wineries are located in this area. This area is beginning to feel urban pressures. Most of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

#### **Shenandoah Valley**

The largest and best known farming area in Amador County is Shenandoah Valley. This is an area of gently rolling hills set in a high valley above Plymouth. Soils are deep, and easily support grapes, walnuts, prunes, hay, flowers and livestock. Fields are either dry farmed or drip irrigated with well water. Most of the local wineries are located in this area and as such, attract most of the tourists in an agricultural area. Most of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

### **Fiddletown Area**

Adjacent to Shenandoah Valley, the Fiddletown area sits between 1,500 and 2,500 feet elevation. Crops grown in the area are grapes, nuts, fruits and vegetables; also livestock is raised. Dry farmed and drip irrigation with well water is used.

### **Rangeland**

In between the farming areas is grazing land. Although much of this land is not used for farming, pastures here provide excellent weight gains for livestock. These lands also provide the open space and natural vistas which attract tourism to the county.. There is significant urban pressure. Some of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

### **Ridge Road Area**

Located above Sutter Creek between Highway 49 and New York Ranch Road following Ridge Road. Water for this area is served by the Amador Water Agency and wells. This area is unique with moderately deep soils that support grapes with wineries in the area. Crops grown in this area include orchards, vines and pasture. Portions of the land are under Williamson Act contracts.

### **Clinton Road / Tabeau Road Area**

Located east of Jackson along the south fork of Jackson Creek between Highway 88 and the Mokelumne River. The area receives water from the Amador canal, the south fork of the Jackson Creek and wells. Agricultural commodities grown in the area include, orchards, vines, floriculture, fruits and vegetables, and livestock pasture. There is urban pressure with a significant portion in small residential parcels. Some of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

### **Shake Ridge Road Area**

Located along Shake Ridge Road at elevations between 1,200 and 3,000 feet. Crops include orchards, vines, floriculture, timber, hay and range. There is urban pressure with a significant portion in small residential parcels. Some of the land is under Williamson Act contracts.

### **Timberland**

Located approximately above 3,500 feet elevation are Amador County's privately and publicly owned softwood forests. Much of the larger land holdings are in Timber Production Zone (TPZ), however significant urban pressure exists. Between 2,000 feet and 3,500 feet are softwood forests that have been primarily converted to residential uses.

## IV. AGRICULTURE IN AMADOR COUNTY

### Background

Much of the open space that exists in Amador County today is a result of farm, ranching, and timber families or companies desiring to retain the land in its open condition for generations, with a continuity of knowledge and experience. To continue to do this, they must be able to extract a sufficient return from the land to remain viable. Farms, ranches, and timberlands support a portion of Amador County's non-farm employment and small service businesses. Some of the return is measured in non-economic returns, such as the enjoyment of the lifestyle. This causes farm and ranching families to want to hold the land despite low economic returns and to subsidize it with employment off the farm or ranch.

Comment [SO22]: Delete "in its open condition"

Travelers on local roads can enjoy the scenic values, which help attract residents and tourists. Less visible benefits include absorbing carbon dioxide, returning oxygen to the air, moderating temperatures and winds, accommodating rainfall infiltration and groundwater recharge, providing watershed, reducing fire hazard, and promoting needs of wildlife by supplying habitat. While farmers grow food directly, ranchers can provide food from grass and brush that would otherwise be an unusable fire hazard in an urban setting.

Increasing urbanization with corresponding shrinkage in numbers of people employed in farming has led to a disconnect between the sources of our food and fiber from the consumer. Working farms and ranches can demonstrate those sources. It is anticipated that in the future, consumers may seek locally produced products. Such community needs can provide opportunities for new sources of income for the owners and operators as new markets are exploited. Part of these new markets will be to provide various open space or agricultural experiences for residents and visitors alike. Holdings are expected to become smaller with more intensive and specialized operations as land values increase. Also, farms and timberlands can provide future sources of energy, such as biomass or ethanol, helping to reduce dependency on increasingly scarce and expensive fossil fuels from foreign sources. Preservation of agricultural lands can help provide for the needs mentioned and other future needs.

Comment [SO23]: Replace "Preservation with Protection"

## Issues Facing Amador County's Agriculture Industry

- Increasing regulation and liability concerns, which raise the cost of production and increase the risk of loss. Limited funds often must be allocated to compliance or legal expenses. Much of this regulation is not on a local level, but Amador County can exert some influence by seeking to minimize the effect of local ordinances on the operations.
- International economic trends, which result in increasing competition in products from other countries. Amador County can help with this by encouraging new types of agriculture and marketing, including agritourism, nature tourism, agrientertainment, and agrieducation.
- Urbanization, which increases competition for land, water, and energy. Without careful planning, urbanization can cause conflicts between agricultural uses and urban uses. Water for agriculture is generally in short supply in Amador County, with growing demand from urban areas outside the county as well as potential urbanization within the County. Urbanization increases the need for highways, pipelines, and other utilities to serve the urban uses, while agricultural land can be viewed by project planners as providing less expensive corridors, which may negatively impact the operations or attract further urbanization to the vicinity as well as conversion from agricultural uses of the lands in the corridors. Urban uses, pets, trash and trespassing can negatively affect the operations. Conversely, increasing population can present an opportunity for additional income to the operator who is able to meet certain demands of that population for products or recreational opportunities. This is the one area in which Amador County and local agencies can wield the most influence in protecting agriculture and promoting new markets serving the increased population, through its local policies, ordinances, and relations with other local entities.
- Taxation, especially Estate Taxes can require the succeeding owner to owe a large portion of the escalated land value upon generational succession. Low returns of the operation would likely not support the capital needed to pay the tax and continue the operation. This leads to the need to sell land to pay the tax, and to pay the capital gains tax on the funds raised to pay the estate tax. The sales fractionalize the land base and can cause the operation to be discontinued. This can lead to conversion from a non-agricultural use to obtain the highest return, even where the succeeding owner wishes to continue an agricultural use. Amador County has no direct influence on estate taxes but can recognize the problem and encourage ways to provide cash flow to the owner to help defray the taxes without selling the land and ways to reduce the taxable value. For example, conservation easements have been utilized as one tool to reduce the value base for estate taxes

**Comment [SO24]:** Replace "Conservation Easements" with "farmland conservation mechanisms"

or to help provide funds to the owner to pay the taxes, while maintaining the open space character of the land. Land banking is a related method. Promoting new markets, direct marketing, new types of agriculture, and tourism related to the open spaces or agriculture can tap into disposable income from increasing population nearby to increase the income from the land to assist in meeting tax payments without selling the land.

Comment [SO25]: Delete sentence

- Environmental issues and agricultural pests and diseases cause economic loss and production instability in crops and animals. There is a need to further develop Integrated Pest Management strategies which minimize environmental, human health and economic risks. There also is a need to further protect and improve natural resources, including soil, air and water quality, through best management practices for fertilization, irrigation and other farm cultural practices. The agricultural community has taken the lead on environmental protection. Increased adoption of Integrated Pest Management strategies will go far towards simultaneously reducing environmental impacts and fending off new regulations. Researchers must focus on development of other reduced-risk practices for Amador County, and government must balance the approval of new regulations with the ability of farmers, cattlemen, and other agriculturists to stay in business.
- Ownership succession is a problem for agricultural operators, which can affect whether the operation can be continued and whether the land will be sold or divided. Lack of retirement planning or funding for elder needs lead to some operators viewing the land as a source of retirement funds by selling it.
- Other farmers and ranchers continue the operation long past normal retirement age. Many owners are widowed. Young operators are often unable to meet the high capital needs to buy land or operations in order to enter farming or ranching. A lack of planning can cause difficulties in succession, disputes, additional taxation and legal expenses. The need to obtain and control retirement income and lack of opportunities and management for the younger generation can deter earlier succession. The same lack of opportunities on the operation combined with more remunerative opportunities for children elsewhere can draw the younger generation out of agriculture when they enter their prime working years. Some lack interest because of the uncertainties about the future, strenuous work, high risks, and generally low economic returns compared with the high costs involved. Others who wish to remain in agriculture are unable to raise or support the capital requirements.
- Without plans for consolidation of ownership upon succession, successive division of ranches among succeeding generations has been common in Amador County. These matters come before the County when the ranches are in the Williamson Act. Ultimately a limit is reached under the Williamson Act. If the ownership is not then consolidated, the land could be subject to sale or withdrawal from the Williamson Act, and possible conversion to other uses.

Comment [SO26]: Replace "Protections" with Stewardship

Comment [SO27]: Delete part of sentence

## **Conclusion**

These problems are not insurmountable, but are traditionally not a concern of local government. Amador County could promote programs to educate the older generations in planning tools available, and assist young persons trying to enter agriculture in procuring means for them to take over operations from the retiring operators. The new operators could obtain a continuity of experience and knowledge from the retiring operators through mentoring programs. At the same time, income from leases or sales of the land and operations to the new operators, or consulting fees from the new operators, can provide a cash flow for retirement to the retiring operators. The same policies of protecting agricultural operations and increasing their income may help keep families in the business and make transitions easier.

To encourage agriculture and open space, Amador County should strive to help keep private owners operating their farms, ranches, and timber operations, using good practices, while maintaining open space. The owners and operators who desire to remain in agriculture are willing to do this at a low cost to the public. The Williamson Act has assisted in large measure in preserving Amador County's agricultural open space. Amador County has enacted a right to farm ordinance to protect agricultural operations. Other measures that reduce the pressures for conversion of the agricultural lands to urbanization should be considered and promoted. The Agricultural Element to the General Plan, while not addressing all the issues, seeks to promote that process.

## Opportunities for Agriculture in Amador County

Agriculture will continue to be a leading source of revenue for Amador County and its residents. As neighboring communities such as Elk Grove and Folsom continue to grow, Amador County's agricultural and business communities will benefit from the resulting tourism dollars these surrounding areas will bring. This type of tourism is commonly referred to as agritourism.

**Comment [SO28]:** Insert “, nature tourism, agrientertainment, and agrieducation”

The majority of the general population has little or no contact with agriculture. On-farm tourism is one mechanism by which nonfarmers can learn about agriculture and, in turn, support farm products by increased purchases made directly or indirectly from family farms. In California, agricultural and on-farm nature tourism has increased in popularity, in both supply—farmers and ranchers—and demand—tourists and consumers of agricultural products and services.

There are three agritourism basics: have something for visitors to see and learn, something for them to do, and something for them to buy. Agritourism, nature tourism, agrientertainment, and agrieducation enterprises may include:

- Outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, panning, wildlife study, horseback riding).
- Educational experiences (mine tours, cooking classes, or wine tasting).
- Entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances).
- Hospitality services (farm stays, farm visits, guided tours or outfitter services).
- On-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).
- Local product packaging and processing
- Other activities and/or operations allowed under the Williamson Act.
- Operations permitted by the Right to Farm Ordinance.

Amador County is uniquely suited to offer visitors a sundry of agritourism, nature tourism, agrientertainment, and agrieducation related experiences. Therefore, it is imperative that the Amador County Board of Supervisors demonstrate their support by promoting these activities so that our open spaces can remain free from development while adding stability to farm and ranch incomes.

## APPENDIX

### DEFINITIONS

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions govern the construction of this document.

**Agriculture** – Shall mean and include, but not be limited to, the production of food, fiber, the growing of plants, the raising and keeping of animals, timber, biomass, and preparation for marketing of products when grown on or off the premises, and the sale of products which are accessory and customarily incidental to the marketing of products grown on or off the premises.

**Comment [SO29]:** Insert “fuel, feedstock, medicine.”

**Agriculturist** – Shall mean and include, but not be limited to, any person or persons involved in agriculture.

**Agricultural Land** – Shall mean and include, but not be limited to, those land areas of the County designated with an agricultural land use category, and/or agricultural or timber zones as defined by the general plan and zone districts.

**Agricultural Operation** – Shall mean and include, but not be limited to, cultivation and tillage of the soil; burning of agricultural waste products; lawful and proper use of agricultural chemicals including, but not limited to, the application of pesticides and fertilizers for sound agricultural practices; protection against frost; protection against damage; irrigation, pruning, growing, harvesting, processing and storing of any agricultural commodity, including horticulture, silviculture biomass, viticulture, apiculture, the raising of livestock, fish, poultry, and commercial practices, structures, appurtenant facilities, vehicles or equipment incident to or used in conjunction with such agricultural operation; and agritourism, nature tourism.

**Comment [SO30]:** Replace “chemicals” with crop care materials”

**Comment [SO31]:** Delete “including, but not limited to, the application of pesticides and fertilizers “

**Comment [SO32]:** Insert “agrientertainment, and agrieducation”

**Agricultural Support Use** – Shall mean and include, but not be limited to, uses such as the sorting and processing of fruits and vegetables, wineries, feed distribution, commercial practices, structures, appurtenant facilities, vehicles or equipment that are a part of maintaining on-premise production and marketing, and that are directly associated with on-site agricultural or ornamental crop, or animal raising operations. Any non-agricultural use, such as mining, permitted by a Conditional Use Permit in an agricultural district, is not to be construed as an agricultural support use.

**Comment [SO33]:** Insert “Activities that relate to agritourism, nature tourism, agritainment, and agrieducation shall also constitute an agricultural support use.”

**Comment [SO34]:** Delete sentence

**Agritainment** - Providing the public with fun on-farm or on-ranch activities, including but not limited to cowboy campfires, haunted houses, mazes, miniature golf, horseback riding, hayrides, and the like.



**Agrieducation** - Formal and informal education about agriculture through signage, tours, hands-on classes, cooperative farming, seminars, and other methods.

**Agritourism** – A specific kind of rural tourism. It is a business conducted by farmers or ranchers on their working agriculture, horticulture, or agribusiness operation for the enjoyment and education of visitors. It is intended to promote farm products and to generate additional farm income. In the process, agritourism provides visitors with entertainment, recreation, participation, and education. Agritourism also includes room and board for the public on an agricultural operation where visitors may watch or assist with farming tasks or enjoy other cultural and educational activities. Tourism based on the natural attractions of the area is referred to as nature-tourism.

For the purposes of this document the use of the term agritourism is intended to encompass agricultural, natural, cultural, and historical tourism, as they are closely interlinked parts of the experience sought by urban visitors in a rural area. To preserve and enhance the local resources the agritourism activities should offer positive experiences for visitors, hosts, and the local community as well as financial benefits.

**Buffer** – Shall mean a physical separation between non-agricultural land use and non-agricultural buildings, and agricultural or undeveloped land. The buffer shall be located on the non-agricultural land. The buffer may be based upon some topographic feature, a substantial tree stand, a water course or similar existing feature.

**Farm Stays** – The activity of visiting a farm for overnight stays and for the purpose of participating in or enjoying farm activities, including agrieducation and/or other attractions offered.

**Farm Visits** – The activity of visiting a farm for short periods of time for the purpose of participating in or enjoying farm activities, including agrieducation and/or other attractions offered.

**Feed Distribution** – Shall mean and include, but not be limited to, the storage and dispersal of animal feed for the purpose of supporting the primary on-site animal raising activities. The use may include, for secondary purposes, the off-site sale of feed by the Agriculturist.

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** – The use of different techniques in combination to control pests, with an emphasis on methods that are least injurious to the environment and most specific to the particular pest. For example, pest-resistant plant varieties, regular monitoring for pests, pesticides, natural predators of the pest, and good stand management practices may be used singly or in combination to control or prevent particular pests.

**Nature Tourism** – Is another kind of rural tourism. It entails a commercial operation working toward its visitors' enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of natural areas while at the same time conserving the local ecological, social, and cultural values and improving the local economy. Examples of nature tourism-based activities include but not limited to: hospitality services, equipment rental, tours, demonstrations, exhibits, lectures, participatory activities, entertainment, festivals, hunting, fishing, photography, bird watching, and visiting parks.

**Open Space** – Any parcel or area of land or water that is improved or unimproved, and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (1) the preservation of natural resources, (2) the managed production of resources, (3) outdoor recreation, or (4) public health and safety. Open spaces include functional open space, agriculture, retention/detention areas and floodways and floodplains. Open space may be publicly or privately owned and maintained.

**Right to Farm Ordinance** – refer to Amador County Right to Farm Ordinance.

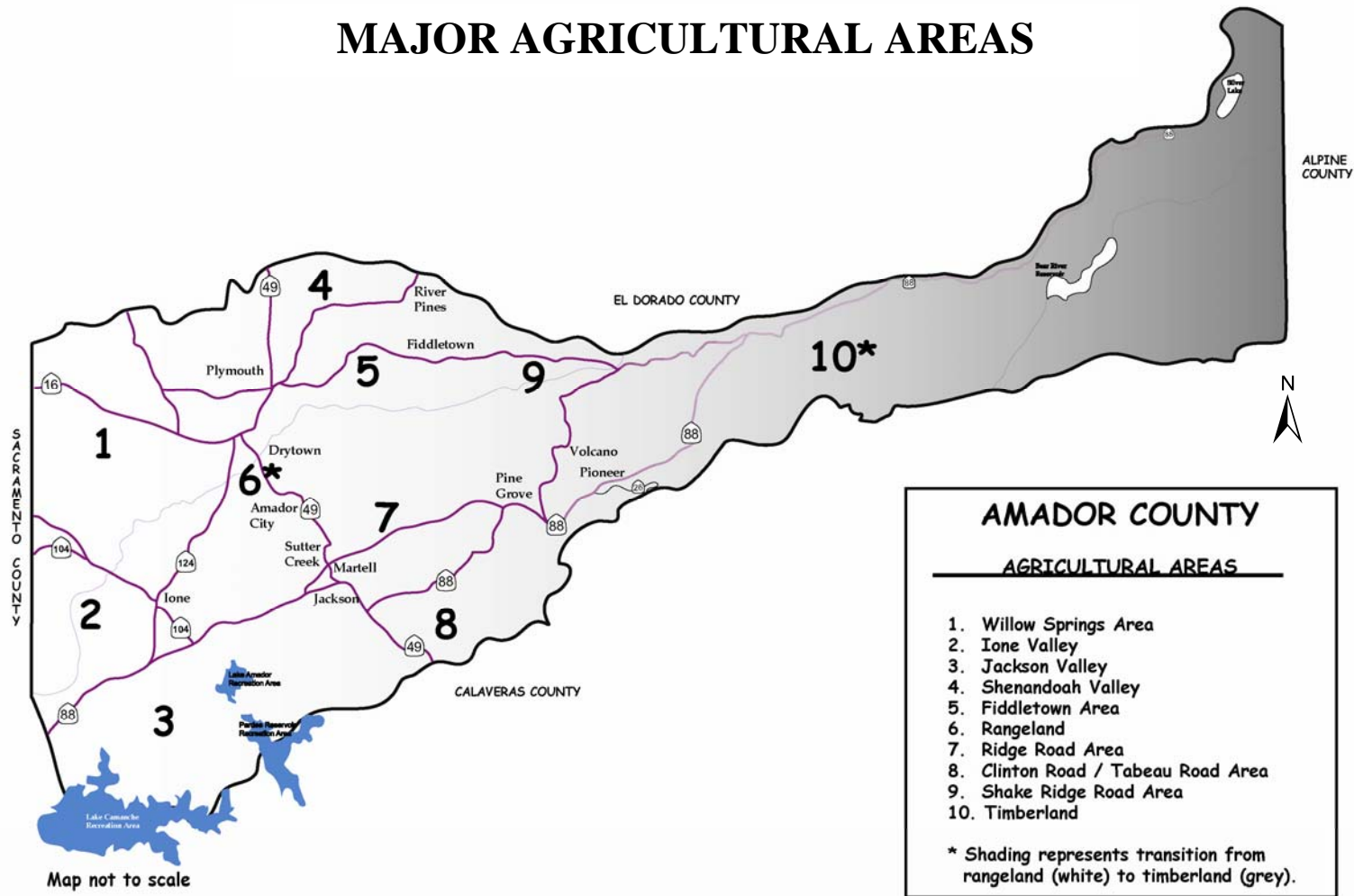
**Roadside Stands** – Also known as farm stands, refers to any activity where the farmer sells agricultural and value added products from his farm directly to consumers at a stand or kiosk located on or near his farm or along a road near the farm.

**Rural Residential** – Non-agricultural housing parcels and/or residential subdivisions located outside of an incorporated or unincorporated urban location.

**Rural Tourism** – Recreational experience involving visits to rural settings or rural environments for the purpose of participating in or experiencing activities, events or attractions not readily available in urbanized areas. These are not necessarily agricultural in nature.

**U-Pick or Pick-Your-Own Operations** – These are fruits and farms or orchards where the customers themselves harvest the fruits or products.

# MAJOR AGRICULTURAL AREAS



Map not to scale

## **Participants**

The following individuals were instrumental in the development of this document.

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