



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-22-105
Meeting 22-23
September 28, 2022

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA ITEM 1

AGENDA ITEM

Update on Agricultural Policy Development

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION(S) *dkw*

Receive a presentation from staff on feedback received from outreach and stakeholder engagement, and review and provide feedback on the preliminary framework for the developing Agricultural Policy.

SUMMARY

This agenda item will provide the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board of Directors (Board) with an update on the development of a stand-alone Agricultural Policy (Ag Policy). The Ag Policy will outline the District's role in agriculture within the region and guide its agricultural conservation partnership work and District management of agricultural lands. Outreach to District partners and stakeholders to solicit input extended through the first half of 2022 and included a survey, an Agricultural Producer's workshop, multiple stakeholder meetings, and District staff holding office hours at the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) offices in Half Moon Bay, CA. Based on early Board direction and public feedback received through extensive community conversations, staff have developed a preliminary framework for the Ag Policy for Board review and feedback. Board guidance provided on September 28, 2022 will shape the draft policy language, which will be presented for Board review in winter 2022.

BACKGROUND

At the March 27, 2019 [Board study session](#), staff reviewed existing agricultural uses on District lands, presented existing District policy and guidelines pertinent to the District's role in agricultural preservation, and identified potential gaps in policies and guidelines that the new Ag Policy could address. Below is a list of the various policies and plans reviewed:

- **Basic Policy** (adopted 1999, revised 2008)
- **Agricultural Use Policy Statements** (*adopted 1978*)
- **Service Plan for the Coastal Annexation Area** (*adopted 2004*)
- **Resource Management Policies** (*adopted 1994, revised 2022*)
- **Integrated Pest Management Program Guidance Manual** (2014)
- **Open Space Vision Plan** (*Vision Plan priorities adopted 2014*)
- **Board Policy 4.01** Open Space Use and Management Planning Process (*adopted 1977, revised 2013*)

- **Board Policy 4.02** Improvements to District Lands (*adopted 1978, revised 2017*)
- **Board Policy 4.11** Housing Policy (adopted 2017)

Relevant sections of these documents are summarized and presented with more detail in Attachment 1. The Basic Policy, Agricultural Use Policy Statements, Resource Management Policies, Vision Plan, and other Board-adopted policies together have been guiding the management of agricultural resources and uses on District properties. The San Mateo Coastal Annexation Area Service Plan (Service Plan) and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which were adopted as part of the Coastal Annexation Process, establish the policies, guidelines, and practices by which the District purchases agricultural lands and manages agricultural uses specifically within the San Mateo County coastside area to ensure compatibility with ongoing agricultural activities. Significantly, the Service Plan establishes an expanded mission statement for the Coastal Area that includes agricultural conservation goals:

“To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education”

Following the March 2019 study session, the District focused its initial efforts on updating its Conservation Grazing Policy. This work culminated with Board adoption of the recommended policy updates in February 2021.

With the Grazing Policy update completed, the District shifted its focus in 2021 to the larger Ag Policy development work, which at first proceeded slowly due to COVID-19 restrictions related to social gatherings and in-person interactions. This next phase of work included a series of public workshops to define the scope and potential role for the District in pursuing its coastside mission to *encourage viable agricultural uses of land resources* on the San Mateo County coast.

At a December 15, 2021 Board study session, the Board received a presentation on the successful partnerships that balance the private economic interests and viability of agricultural producers with the resource conservation, agricultural preservation, and open space goals of public agencies and non-profit organizations. On the San Mateo County coast, this agricultural conservation delivery model is based on a partnership amongst three organizations – the District, the non-profit Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) through their Farmland Futures Initiative program, and the public agency San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) who has a long history of supporting farmers and ranchers and preserving natural resources. The District also works with many other groups and a diverse array of private farmers and ranchers who are part of the San Mateo County agricultural community, including the San Mateo County Farm Bureau with whom the District has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which establishes ongoing consultation on a variety of projects affecting the agricultural community.

At the December 2021 study session, staff provided a summary description of the District’s current agricultural role and scope as well as two alternatives for expanding this current role. The Board affirmed their support for continuing within the current agricultural conservation model and commented on the desire to explore opportunities for expanding the District’s connections and partnerships with the agricultural community. Based on Board feedback, this expanded role could include funding partners who take the lead in preserving intensive agricultural lands,

exploring opportunities to further integrate regenerative and other eco-sustainable grazing practices on District lands, and supporting the viability of agriculture on the coast as new challenges arise. Individual Board members also noted the value of educating the public on the importance of supporting agriculture, expressed an interest in engaging more broadly within the county on agricultural planning and policy matters, and highlighted the need to balance the District's agricultural role with the priority of natural resource protection.

This report describes the community connections and conversations that have occurred since December 2021, and the public input received to inform the development of the Ag Policy. Ag Policy development work is also guided by the overarching policy framework discussed above to ensure overall consistency with the District's mission, goals, and objectives.

DISCUSSION

As part of the agricultural policy development process, staff conducted significant outreach to gather feedback from a variety of stakeholders in local agriculture. This effort included a survey to solicit input, one workshop focused on agricultural producers of the San Mateo coast, and multiple presentations and discussions with eleven organizations involved in regional agriculture. In addition, staff created a public-facing [webpage](#) on the District's main website to share information and updates about the policy development process. Staff also held office hours at the San Mateo Resource Conservation District office in Half Moon Bay to be available for in-person discussions with interested members of the agricultural community. The following summary provides a synopsis of each of the outreach components and the feedback received.

Survey

The District distributed an agricultural policy development survey on April 4, 2022, that stayed active through June 30, 2022. The bilingual, in English and Spanish, survey was distributed electronically via a link to organizations involved in agriculture in the region. Staff shared the link and hard copies (for meetings held in person) of the survey at each outreach event as well. The distribution was purposely limited to individuals and organizations with a stake in San Mateo County agriculture. The survey focused on several key topics, including environmentally sensitive agricultural practices, how to support agricultural uses other than grazing (e.g., row crop production), lease structure, and agricultural workforce housing. A summary of the survey results is provided here and more fully in Attachment 2.

Twenty-three surveys were completed. Some respondents did not reply to all questions. For some questions respondents could choose more than one option:

- 55% (11 of 20) of responses identified themselves as the primary decision maker in terms of day-to-day and seasonal operations on a farm or ranch in coastal San Mateo County.
- 25% (5 of 20) indicated that they do not work directly at a farm or ranch but are interested in supporting the agricultural community in coastal San Mateo County.
- 20% (4 of 20) indicated that they provide labor and carry out the basic work of operating a farm or ranch in coastal San Mateo County.
- Nearly half of the survey respondents declined to identify as either conventional or organic operators but among those who did reply to this question, approximately 82% (9 of 11) identified as organic producers.

- Some respondents stated that they were not certified as organic yet implemented environmentally sensitive or regenerative practices in their operation.
- Most respondents (13 of 19) had some involvement in livestock or grazing operations and there were several other types of agricultural operations represented among the survey participants.

The survey included sixteen (16) questions asking how the District could best promote environmentally sensitive agricultural practices; how the District might best support different types of agricultural land uses; perspectives on a desirable lease structure; perspectives on agricultural housing; perspectives on water resource use; and potential roles for the District in marketing, outreach and education related to agriculture. Highlights of responses to the main questions are presented below. Some questions were scaled resulting in ranked results, some were allowed only one response, and some allowed multiple selections resulting in more responses than respondents.

Environmentally Sensitive Agricultural Practices: (Questions 1, 2)

Respondents rated each category from most preferred to least preferred

When asked how the District could best promote environmentally sensitive agricultural practices (i.e., practices that promote wildlife habitat value, carbon sequestration, and efficient resource use on working lands and practices that reduce non-target effects of agricultural chemicals), the highest-ranking response was to offer incentives to implementing these practices. The second highest ranked option was to require such practices followed by supporting partners whose programs promote these practices, supporting research on environmentally sensitive practices, and supporting education and outreach on these types of practices, respectively. The latter four options scored very closely.

Supporting Agriculture without Fee Title or Easement Land Rights: (Questions 3, 4, 5)

Respondents rated each category from most preferred to least preferred

Given that the District does not normally acquire fee title or easements on intensive agricultural lands (i.e., row crops, greenhouses), survey participants were asked how the District could best support these types of agricultural lands. The highest-ranking option was to support partners who implement new infrastructure projects that support environmentally sensitive practices on intensive agricultural lands followed by supporting partners in the acquisition of these lands for agricultural conservation, and lastly, expanding education and outreach efforts on the value of protecting these lands.

Agricultural Lease Terms (Questions 7, 8 choose one)

With regard to the management of agricultural leases, ten (10) respondents (45% of submittals) indicated that preference should be given to an existing operator if they remain in good standing for two lease terms versus soliciting competitive proposals for the lease after the creation of an agricultural plan (4) or after executing one five-year lease term (4). Respondents expressed a preference for longer lease periods with eleven (11) respondents (65% of submittals) indicating that the current arrangement (five-year lease with an optional five-year renewal) is too short and 6 saying it was just right.

Agricultural Workforce Housing (Question 9 choose all that apply)

Twelve (12) responses (37.5% of responses) indicated that the District should explore the feasibility and suitability of working with partners to lease or sell land to non-profit housing organizations for them to build/install new agricultural workforce housing units. Twelve (12) responses indicated a priority for providing housing to onsite agricultural tenants as opposed to eight (8) responses for making housing available to the broader agricultural community. Comments supported both regional housing and onsite housing with statements that regional housing was much better for farm workers so that they are not under threat of losing both a job and housing, while farmers who leased or owned agricultural land preferred housing onsite to meet their staffing needs.

Water Use (Question 10 choose one)

Water is also a major limiting resource to agriculture on District lands and throughout the region. Eleven (11) respondents indicated a priority for investing in water storage, new wells, and/or other strategies on District lands to reduce the dependency on in-stream water use. Seven (7) respondents indicated a priority to partner with funders like the Resource Conservation District who have existing programs to support agriculture practices that promote efficient water use.

Marketing Agriculture (Question 11 choose all that apply)

Regarding marketing, half of the responses (13) indicated a preference for partnering with the District in regional efforts that educate the public about the land conservation and environmental benefits of local agriculture.

The remaining questions in the survey were to obtain information about the characteristics of and practices employed by the survey respondents, including if they were the owner or employee of an agricultural operation, what types of crops they produced, how they grow crops (e.g., conventional or organic), and any other conservation practices respondents were familiar with. Please refer to Attachment 2 for details.

Agricultural Producer's Workshop

On April 19, 2022, the District hosted a workshop in Half Moon Bay focused on the San Mateo County coastal agricultural producers. The workshop provided an opportunity for staff to share an overview of the agricultural policy development process and hear directly from producers about potential regional agricultural roles for the District. Invitation to the workshop was distributed to several organizations involved in regional agriculture with a request to further distribute the invitation among agricultural operators in their respective networks. These groups included the San Mateo County Farm Bureau, San Mateo Resource Conservation District, the San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, Ayundando Latinos A Sonar (ALAS), Puente de la Costa Sur, the San Mateo Food Systems Alliance, and tenants on both District agricultural lands and those on agricultural lands managed by Peninsula Open Space Trust.

The workshop was attended by 17 participants, including several current District agricultural tenants, Farm Bureau members, and other community members involved in local agriculture. A staff member of Puente was the sole representee for farmworker interests. The workshop included an introductory presentation by staff and three breakout group discussions in which

participants were able to provide feedback and ask questions around four topical areas: supporting ecologically sensitive agricultural practices, supporting non-rangeland agriculture, lease structure, and agricultural workforce housing. Discussions of the topical areas were introduced by discussing the survey questions. Participants rotated through the different breakout groups so that everyone had the opportunity to comment on each subject area. Below is a summary of comments shared by the participants.

Regional Needs

- A holistic approach to running a farm or ranch is essential: crops and livestock need to be integrated - they are not separate. Ranching and farming go hand-in-hand. Best practices that are tailored to each operation, site and operator are needed.
- Housing need is a crisis for San Mateo County agriculture. This contributes to labor shortage, which is an important limiting factor for sustaining agriculture.
- There is a major need for water capture and storage for agriculture.
- Producers should help develop resource management plans for grazing and other agricultural uses.
- Young or new farmers cannot afford access to land.

District Opportunities

- Management goals should be communicated clearly to District agricultural tenants.
- Existing District policies (e.g., limitations on which herbicides can be used and how they can be applied) are too restrictive and are impractical for agricultural operations.
- Consider making land available for agricultural workforce housing.
- Encourage and support operators who are actively and demonstrably working toward conservation goals, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions or increasing carbon sequestration.
- Running farms requires equipment. Providing amenities like sheds for tractors and providing maintenance of such facilities would be helpful.
- Create an agricultural advisory board comprised of agriculturalists.
- Agricultural housing on District lands can provide an opportunity to support a particular agricultural property, while regional housing opportunities that are not controlled by an agricultural lease or land holder offer better support for farm workers.
- Lease terms and the selection process for agricultural tenants was of high interest, current tenants and farmers favored longer terms and noncompetitive lease awards to existing tenants, and local preference.
- Participants seeking greater diversity and inclusion of non-traditional groups (farm workers and people of color) favor shorter terms on smaller lease areas, with competition that includes DEI criteria for selection.

Outreach to Partners and Stakeholders

Following the producer's workshop, staff continued to reach out to numerous organizations involved in regional agriculture to gather input on the District's current and prospective roles in agricultural conservation. This included meetings with twelve (12) organizations. The full list of organizations and details from discussions with each group are included in Attachment 3. The following is a brief summary of the feedback from this outreach effort.

Regional Needs

- Housing was frequently identified as one of the most important limiting resources in the agricultural community. This includes general affordable housing available in agricultural communities to meet regional need as well as housing specifically associated with agricultural properties where having a residential presence is valuable to the operation.
- There is a need for engagement directly with agricultural workers (in addition to the operators who own and run local farms).
- There is a community need for programs that create opportunities for empowerment, equity, and inclusion among members of the agricultural labor community.
- There is need for more water storage and basic infrastructure on agricultural properties.
- General support was expressed for a greater understanding and implementation of more environmentally sensitive agricultural practices.
- Consider herbicide trials for brush removal on rangelands as well as other research that support farmers and agriculture on the coast.
- Local operators should be given a priority in the selection process for agricultural leases.
- Create opportunities and to support smaller scale or newer agricultural operators.

District Opportunities

- The process to select tenants for both housing and agricultural land could be an important opportunity to address some of the needs described above.
- Consider how agricultural conservation easements and leases could be tools to promote environmentally sound stewardship.
- Support research on environmentally sensitive agricultural practices.
- Regional partners involved in agriculture, such as POST, the RCD, and the NRCS, have existing programs that address many of the regional needs identified during stakeholder outreach. The District could help address regional needs by supporting these partners and their programs.

Preliminary Agricultural Policy Framework

Based on input received to date, staff identified eleven (11) potential policy areas (see Attachment 4). Many of these topics align with existing agriculture policies, guidelines, and implementation actions in the Coastal Service Plan, such as Permanent Policy PA.3, which emphasizes land protection through agricultural easements and leases with interested farmers and ranchers in the Coastal Annexation Area. In addition, emergent and relevant themes, such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion considerations for leases and partnerships, reflect the diversity and needs of the agricultural community.

As the Ag Policy development moves to the drafting of policies and guidelines, the potential policy areas outlined below are expected to be included in the preliminary draft Agricultural Policy. Each topic is presented in the attached Agricultural Policy Framework (Attachment 5) with a description of the potential issues and opportunities that relate to each potential policy area based on Board direction and feedback received from partners and stakeholders, while also remaining consistent with existing District policies (e.g., Basic Policy, Coastal Service Plan, etc.).

Main Topics/Potential Policy Areas:

- Farmworker Advocacy and Engagement
- Agricultural Housing
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Leases, Solicitations, Support)
- Agricultural Infrastructure
- Agricultural Land Protection
- Agricultural Conservation Easements
- Leases
- Marketing and Promotion
- Partnerships, Representation and Agreements
- Recreation
- Research, Sustainability and Environmentally Sensitive Agriculture

Following the presentation and discussion of the feedback received from partners and stakeholders, the September 28, 2022 meeting will focus on these potential policy areas. The Board will first be asked to confirm whether these are indeed the policy areas that should be covered in the Ag Policy (i.e., confirm any gaps, additions, deletions). Next, the Board will consider the issues and opportunities for each potential policy area and decide which of these are sufficiently outlined per Attachment 5 to set aside, and which require further Board discussion. Time will be dedicated to those potential policy areas that require greater Board discussion. Board guidance and direction received at the meeting will inform the development of a draft Ag Policy, which is expected to be presented to the Board in winter 2022 for public review and input.

FISCAL IMPACT

This update on the process and timeline of the Ag Policy development has no immediate fiscal impact. Depending on the specific components adopted in the final policy, further fiscal impact analysis may be necessary.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

In May 2017, a Board Meeting was held in the Coastsides region to present an overview of the Coastal Service Plan and the progress made in meeting the commitments since its adoption in 2004. Agricultural conservation is a principal element to the District's mission on the coastsides, highlighting the need for an updated Agricultural Policy. The District began working on the Ag Policy in 2019 with a Board study session focused on summarizing existing District policies and guidelines; summarizing existing agricultural uses on District lands; and identifying gaps in policies and guidelines ([R-19-36](#), [minutes](#)).

Closely following this study session, the Grazing Management Policy Amendment also began with a Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting on April 9, 2019 ([R-19-40](#), [minutes](#)).

Another Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting was held on October 22, 2019 ([R-19-139, minutes](#)). This was followed by a final Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting on December 15, 2020 ([R-20-149, minutes](#))

The Science Advisory Panel presented the Grazing Report to the full Board on November 4, 2020 ([R-20-129, minutes](#)). The PNR Committee reviewed and forwarded a recommendation for approval of the Grazing Management Policy Amendment on December 15, 2020 ([R-20-149, minutes](#)).

The Board approved the Conservation Grazing Management Policy Amendment ([R-21-22, minutes](#)) on February 10, 2021. The amendments focused on management actions for mitigating and reducing livestock and predator conflicts that are protective of native wildlife, including mountain lions and coyotes.

A workshop was held on September 22, 2021, to proceed with the broader Ag Policy development process and receive input on the timeline, key remaining steps, and potential topics ([R-21-127, minutes](#)).

On December 15, 2021, the Board received an update on the development of the Ag Policy ([R-21-169, minutes](#)). The Board provided additional direction to staff on the District's potential agricultural role for the San Mateo County Coast.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. In addition, previous attendees to District meetings regarding the Agricultural Policy development were notified.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This policy development is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. The Agricultural Policy will inform future actions that will be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and subsequent environmental review will be conducted at that time.

NEXT STEPS

Following this study session, staff will collate Board input on the scope of the District's role within each of the identified policy elements and the proposed Ag Policy framework. Staff will return to the Board with proposed new policy language for additional feedback. If significant areas are identified where the District's role is expanded beyond the current delivery model, then staff under direction of the General Manager will evaluate what additional resources and staffing may be needed to meet this expanded role and bring this forward to the Board as they consider the recommended Ag Policy.

The *tentative* timeline for the remaining key steps in the process is as follows:

- Winter 2022 - Board Study Session of proposed new policy language
- Spring 2023 - Board consideration for approval of new policy language

Attachment(s)

1. Summary of Existing District Agricultural Policies
2. Agricultural Policy Stakeholder Survey Results
3. Stakeholder Outreach Notes Summary
4. Feedback Organized by Main Topic
5. Agricultural Policy Framework

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Summary of Agricultural Policies

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (District) agricultural policies are covered in several different documents and policies. The value of agricultural lands are addressed in both the Basic Policy and the District's coastal mission statement. More specific policies are included in the Coastal Service Plan (and associated EIR), Resource Management Policies, Housing Policy, Improvements on District Lands, Integrated Pest Management Program Guidance Manual, and Agricultural Use Policy Statements. Relevant policy statements and implementation measures from each of the following documents are excerpted below.

- Basic Policy
- Agricultural Use Policy Statements
- Service Plan for the Coastal Annexation Area and accompanying Environmental Impact Report
- Memorandum of Understanding between the San Mateo County Farm Bureau and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- Resource Management Policies
- Integrated Pest Management Program Guidance Manual
- Open Space Vision Plan
- Board Policies: 4.01 Open Space Use and Management Planning Process, 4.02 Improvements on District Lands, 4.11 Housing Policy

Basic Policy (2008)

The Basic Policy provides general guidance on agricultural use, highlighting the District's role in supporting continued agricultural use on open space land and reliance of sound agricultural land management practices that are consistent with the District's Resource Management Policies:

The District supports the continued agricultural use of land acquired for open space as an economic and cultural resource, including, but not limited to, grazing, orchards, row crops, and vineyards. The District does not consider commercial logging as agriculture. The District requires sound agricultural management practices on land it manages or monitors, in accordance with its Resource Management Policies.¹⁷

- **OPEN SPACE:** • Is land area that is allowed to remain in or return to its natural state. Open space lands may include compatible agricultural uses
- **Agriculture and Revenue-Producing Use**
Section f. The District supports the continued agricultural use of land acquired for open space as an economic and cultural resource, including, but not limited to, grazing, orchards, row crops, and vineyards. The District does not consider commercial logging as agriculture. The District requires sound agricultural management practices on land it manages or monitors, in accordance with its Resource Management Policies.

Agricultural Use Policy Statement (1978)

These Board policy statements reference the District's role to "...sustain and encourage agricultural viability consistent with public use while minimizing the impact on the natural environment" and addresses the District's authority to enter into and use agricultural leases.

Coastal Service Plan (2004)

In recognition of the importance of agriculture to the economy and heritage of the San Mateo coastside area, the District's Service Plan provides guidance on the preservation and management of agricultural uses and protection of natural resources on District lands. Consistent with the purpose of San Mateo County's policies and regulations related to agriculture, the Service Plan defines program guidelines to conserve resources on District-owned lands that could be used for agriculture, and to encourage the sale or leasing of District properties for outdoor agriculture. The Service Plan also establishes guidelines for managing the impacts of District programs that could potentially affect adjacent agricultural operations. In addition, the Service Plan provides for the acquisition of conservation easements from willing sellers over private agricultural properties, to promote the economic vitality of continued agricultural operations. In accordance with the Service Plan, the District can actively pursue agricultural easements and leases. The Service Plan emphasizes working in partnership with other land conservation interests, both public and private, in acquiring land and conservation and agricultural easements.

Coastal Mission Statement

- *District To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.*

Role & Objectives

- "...protect both the agricultural and natural resources of the Coastal Annexation Area. Although the District is not an agricultural preservation district, and does not propose any agricultural subsidy programs, its Service Plan does recognize the importance of agriculture to the economy and heritage of the Coastal Annexation Area."
- "As the District extends its services to the Coast, agricultural preservation will play a larger role in the District's activities than it has within existing District boundaries."

Agriculture

Agriculture is a very important rural land use and open space resource within the Coastal Annexation Area. Consistent with the purpose of San Mateo County's policies and regulations related to agriculture, the Guidelines and Implementation Actions below are directed at:

1. preserving and fostering existing and potential agricultural operations in San Mateo County in order to keep the maximum amount of prime agricultural land and all other lands suitable for agriculture in agricultural production, and
2. minimizing conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses that may occur on District owned or managed lands.

Permanent Policy PA.1: When acquiring lands in agricultural use, the acquisition shall be subject to continued use by the owner or operator until such time as it is sold or leased pursuant to the use and management plan adopted for the property. All agricultural land which is not needed for recreation or for the protection and vital functioning of a sensitive habitat will be permanently protected for agriculture and, whenever legally feasible, the District will offer for sale or lease the maximum amount of agricultural land to active farm operators on terms compatible with the recreational and habitat use. Lands that do not have significant recreation or sensitive habitat values and which can clearly support productive agricultural operations will generally be offered for sale while other agricultural lands will generally be offered for lease. (Reference: Mitigation Measure AGR-3g)

Permanent Policy PA.2: The District shall actively work with lessees of District lands and with the owners of land in which the District has an agricultural easement interest to:

- a. Facilitate the provision of farm worker housing on District- owned lands by providing technical assistance in obtaining permits for such housing from the County of San Mateo.
- b. Seek grant funding for the continuation or establishment of viable agriculture through the California Farmland Conservancy Program and other agriculture grant programs.
- c. Provide technical assistance to secure water rights for the continuation or establishment of viable agriculture consistent with protection of sensitive habitats.

(Reference: Mitigation Measure AGR-3j)

Permanent Policy PA.3: The District shall actively pursue opportunities to enter agricultural easements and leases with interested farmers and ranchers. All agricultural easements and agricultural leases in the Coastal Annexation Area shall:

- a. Be tailored to meet individual farmers and ranchers needs while respecting the unique characteristics of the property;
- b. Specify uses that are unconditionally permitted pursuant to the easement or lease to provide certainty to the farmer or rancher entering the lease or easement with the District;
- c. Include terms that allow farmers and ranchers to adapt and expand their operations and farming practices to adjust to changing economic conditions;
- d. Include terms that ensure farmers or ranchers may provide farm labor housing as defined and approved by San Mateo County;
- e. Ensure compatibility of resource protection and management, low-intensity public recreation and viable agricultural operations; and
- f. In the case of leases, be for a sufficient period of time to gain a return on the investment in the agricultural operation.

(Reference: Mitigation Measure AGR-3k)

Guideline G.3.1: The District shall conduct its land management practices such that they do not have an adverse significant impact on the physical and economic integrity of prime agricultural lands on or contiguous to properties owned or managed by the District (e.g. establishing appropriate buffers on District lands, etc.).

Guideline G.3.2: Improvements or public uses located upon open space lands other than agriculture shall be located away from existing prime agricultural lands and Unique Farmlands or Farmlands of Statewide Importance as shown on Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. All trails and other public facilities should be located so as not to fragment agricultural operations unless no feasible alternative is available. While trails that bisect grazing lands would not be likely to fragment grazing operations, trails that bisect cultivated crops could adversely affect the vitality of agricultural operations and should be avoided. If trails must traverse cultivated lands then they shall be permitted only if adequate buffers, signs, and other measures necessary to ensure that trail use does not interfere with the agricultural operations are implemented." (Reference: Mitigation AGR-3a)

Guideline G.3.3: All lands acquired by the District within the Coastal Annexation Area will be inventoried to identify and prioritize resource management issues. Where there are critical issues, such as the presence of non-native invasive species which threaten the habitat of endangered species or the economic viability of an adjacent agricultural operation, resource management plans will be prepared for these areas even if they remain closed to the public.

The use and management plan shall include an agricultural production plan for District-owned agricultural lands or District lands adjacent to agricultural lands. For district-owned lands, the plan shall describe the crop and/or livestock potential for the property together with the management actions required to protect existing agricultural production (e.g., growing seasons, water requirements, pesticide, manure, and waste management) and the agricultural potential of the land. The plan shall consider the following factors:

- a. Availability of labor, including farm labor housing;
- b. Availability of farm support services and goods;
- c. Necessary capital improvements (e.g. water storage, fencing, land leveling)
- d. Farm operations, including erosion control, the season(s) and times of pesticide or herbicide usage, manure and waste management;
- e. Water use and availability;
- f. Access to transportation and markets; and
- g. Promoting agricultural production on District-owned land.

In the case of District lands adjacent to agricultural production, the agricultural production plan shall develop site-specific measures to prevent activities on District lands from interfering with adjacent agricultural production.

The development of use and management plans will include consultation with the current owner or operator of any agricultural operations on the land, adjoining landowners, the San Mateo County Environmental Services Agency in addition to other opportunities for public involvement (Reference Mitigation AGR-3h and BI0-3)

Guideline G.3.4: In areas where trails would pass potentially hazardous adjacent land uses (e.g., timber operations), trail structures such as fences, barriers, and signs shall be used to deter trail users from leaving the trail and encountering unsafe conditions. Temporary trail closures shall be employed during intermittent operations, such as agricultural spraying, that would jeopardize the safety of an otherwise safe trail. (Reference: Mitigation LU-1a)

Guideline G.3.5: No new buildings or staging areas shall be located on prime agricultural lands or on Unique Farmlands or Farmlands of Statewide Importance as shown on Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. Ranger office/maintenance facilities and staging areas may not be located on prime agricultural lands or on Unique Farmlands or Farmlands of Statewide Importance as shown on Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. (Reference: Mitigation AGR-1a)

Guideline G.3.6: Trails and habitat preservation areas shall either be located to avoid prime agricultural lands and Unique Farmlands or Farmlands of Statewide Importance as shown on Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency or traverse such lands in a manner that does not result in interference with agricultural activities or substantially reduce the agricultural potential of those lands. Owners and operators of agricultural lands shall be consulted to identify appropriate routes on those lands. The agricultural activities and the agricultural potential of traversed lands shall be protected and buffered from trail user impacts by means of distance, physical barriers (i.e., sturdy fences), or other non-disruptive methods. (Reference: Mitigation AGR-1b)

Guideline G.3.7: The District shall provide private property signs where appropriate and provide trail users information regarding private property rights to minimize public/private use conflicts and trespassing. The District shall clearly sign trails adjacent to active agriculture and provide trail users with information regarding property rights to minimize trespassing and conflicts with agricultural users. (Reference: Mitigation AGR-3b)

Guideline G.3.8: Trails shall either be located to avoid prime agricultural lands and Unique Farmlands or Farmlands of Statewide Importance as shown on Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency or traverse such lands in a manner that does not result in interference with agricultural activities or substantially reduce the agricultural potential of those lands. Operators of active agricultural activities on lands owned by or under easement to the District shall be consulted to identify appropriate routes on lands they cultivate. Owners and operators of agricultural lands adjacent to District lands used for non-agricultural purposes shall be consulted to identify routes that will avoid adverse effects on agricultural operations. The agricultural activities and the agricultural potential of traversed lands shall be

protected and buffered from trail user impacts by means of distance, physical barriers (i.e., sturdy fences), or other non-disruptive methods. (Reference: Mitigation AGR-3c)

Guideline G.3.9: The District lands or easements upon which trails are sited shall provide width sufficient for management and/or buffer space from adjacent uses so as not to preclude the viability of those uses. Buffers established to separate recreation and other open space uses from agricultural operations shall be designed and managed in accordance with the following standards:

- a. Buffers shall be designed in relation to the nature of the adjoining land use, potential land uses, and proposed public access;
- b. Buffers shall be designed in relation to the topography and other physical characteristics of the buffer area;
- c. Buffers shall be designed with consideration of biological, soil, and other site conditions in order to limit the potential spread of non-native invasive species or pathogens onto agricultural lands;
- d. Buffers shall be of sufficient width to allow agricultural use of adjoining agricultural lands including application of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals taking into account the likelihood and extent of potential pesticide drift;
- e. All lands used for buffers should be on land or interests in land owned by the District; adjoining landowners shall not be required to provide land for buffers.
- f. The District shall be responsible for the management and maintenance of all lands used as buffers.
- g. If a specific buffer fails to resolve conflicts between a recreational use and adjacent agricultural uses the recreational use shall be moved to a different location.
- h. All buffers shall be developed in consultation with the owners and operators of adjoining agricultural lands

(Reference: Mitigation AGR-3d)

Guideline G.3.10: Where pesticides are used, including pesticides for control of noxious weeds, they must be handled, applied, and disposed of in such a manner that they do not adversely affect adjacent agriculture including organic agriculture. Pesticide use shall be guided by label restrictions and any advisories published by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) or the County Agricultural Commission. These chemicals shall only be applied by a person who is properly trained in their application. (Reference: Mitigation AGR-3e)

Implementation Action G.3.A(i): In acquiring lands and preparing site assessments, the District shall recognize that agriculture in the marketplace is dynamic and that agricultural use practices must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, relative to current marketplace conditions. On a case-by-case basis, the District shall determine how best to continue agricultural uses consistent with protection of rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species and their habitat. See also Guideline G.6.3

Implementation Action G.3.B(i) The development of agricultural policies, preparation of site assessments and preparation of access plans for low-intensity public recreation by the District affecting prime agricultural lands shall include consultation with local agricultural interests such as the San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Resource Conservation District, and the local Farm Bureau, and will be subject to public review.

See also Guidelines G.6.3

Implementation Action G.3.C(i) Where the District acquires conservation easements on agricultural lands, the District will consider as a term of the easement on a case- by-case basis allowing all agricultural uses permitted by San Mateo County.

Forestry

The intent of the following guidelines is to recognize that the District is not in the commercial forestry business but that in limited circumstances the removal of trees is in the best interest of managing the ecological health and public safety conditions of the site.

Guideline G.4.1: The District shall not propose commercial harvest of timber on District-owned property except in the limited cases described in Guideline G.4.3 below.

Guideline G.4.2: On a case-by-case basis, the District may purchase property or an easement that includes approved timber harvest plans.

Guideline G.4.3: On rare occasions, the District may permit limited tree removal on District-owned property where a timber harvest plan does not previously exist, if such actions are shown to be in the best interest of managing the ecological values, protecting public safety, or controlling disease within the property or watershed. In such cases, the timber may be sold.

Guideline G.4.4: The District shall conduct its land management practices such that they do not have an adverse significant impact on the physical and economic integrity of timberland preserves on or contiguous to properties owned or managed by the District and so that the safety of visitors to District preserves is not compromised by timber harvesting (e.g., establishing appropriate buffers on District lands). (Reference Mitigation AGR-3f)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the San Mateo County Farm Bureau and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (2004)

The MOU with the San Mateo Farm Bureau memorializes parts of the Coastal Service Plan and associated environmental review and requires consultation with the Farm Bureau on site specific use and management plans and agricultural production plans in the coastal protection area.

Resource Management Policies (2022) - Conservation Grazing Management Policy Key Points

The Resource Management Policies define the policies and practices that set the framework and general guidance for protecting and managing resources on District lands. Agricultural resources are primarily addressed in goals, policies and implementation measures under Conservation Grazing Management and Climate Change. In the definition of the purpose of open space, the Resource Management Policies state, “[o]pen space may include compatible agriculture uses.”

- **Policy GM-1** Ensure that conservation grazing is compatible with and supports wildlife and wildlife habitats.
 - Inventory and assess sensitive habitats to identify areas requiring special management practices. The conservation of these areas will take precedence over other uses and management practices that are determined to have an adverse effect on these resources.
 - Prepare site-specific grazing management plans by a certified rangeland manager including best management practices (BMPs) for preserves where grazing will be utilized as a resource management tool. The site-specific grazing management plan will be a component of the agricultural production plan developed through the Use and Management Planning process. The Use and Management Planning process provides for public input and Board approval of site-specific grazing management plans.
 - Manage agricultural leases and easements to protect and enhance riparian areas and to maximize the protection or enhancement of water quality. (See WR-4)
 - Per the District’s long-standing policy of protecting native predators, continue to prohibit the lethal take of predators in response to livestock depredation.
- **Policy GM-2** Provide necessary infrastructure to support and improve grazing management where appropriate.
 - Utilize fencing that allows wildlife movement and fosters habitat connectivity (See WM-3:Measure 3).
 - Manage access to existing water features and where needed supply supplemental drinking water through stock ponds and water troughs to preserve clean water for livestock, protect water quality, and enhance habitat for wildlife.
 - Encourage and assist grazing tenants on District land to provide range improvements to restore or conserve wildland resources and to enhance range condition.
 - Inventory and assess roads and trails on District lands to identify significant erosion and sediment sources – abandon and where feasible restore to a natural condition poorly designed or sited roads (See WR-4).
- **Policy GM-3** Monitor environmental response to grazing on District lands.

- Monitor forage utilization and distribution by grazing animals to assure appropriate amounts of residual dry matter (RDM) remain on the ground to achieve desired resource management objectives. In the course of RDM monitoring, evaluate and report on wildland fire fuel levels that may result in an increased risk of wildland fire (See WF policies).
 - Monitor livestock use levels and agricultural infrastructure condition to insure conformity with lease provisions to contribute to improved management.
 - Monitor wildland conditions with an emphasis on documenting the location, distribution and abundance of native grasses, wildflowers, and other native flora and fauna.
 - Monitor water quality in ponds, wetlands, and watercourses with unrestricted livestock access.
 - Monitor non-native vegetation response to grazing with an emphasis on documenting the location, distribution and abundance of target, invasive species.
 - Use information collected from monitoring to annually review rangeland conditions and response to livestock grazing. Use adaptive resource management decision making framework within grazing management plans.
- **Policy GM-4** Utilize different livestock species to accomplish vegetation management objectives.
 - Research the effective use of cattle, goats, sheep, and horses to manage vegetation on District lands.
 - Utilize appropriate species depending on management needs.
 - **Policy GM-5** Preserve and foster existing and potential conservation grazing operations to help sustain the local agricultural economy.
 - Establish longer term grazing leases to promote financial viability for the operators and efficient land stewardship for the District.
 - Seek grants or other economic support for agricultural infrastructure maintenance and improvements.
 - Ensure site-specific grazing management plans are economically feasible and practical for conservation grazing operators.
 - **Policy GM-6** Provide information to the public about the region's rural agricultural heritage. (See PI-1)
 - Install display boards and give presentations highlighting historical and educational facts about ranching families and industry at appropriate sites.
 - **Policy GM-7** Provide public access in a manner that minimizes impacts on the conservation grazing operation. (See PI-1)
 - Conservation Grazing operators on District lands or lands under easement to the District shall be consulted when public access is being planned and considered for the property to minimize conflicts between the public and the conservation grazing operation.

- Prepare and distribute a brochure to educate visitors about etiquette for use of open space property with livestock animals.
- Install signage where appropriate to educate the public about the resource benefits of conservation grazing and to educate visitors about approaching animals, closing gates, and other etiquette appropriate for moving through lands with livestock animals.
- **Policy GM-8** Conservation Grazing operations on District lands in San Mateo County will be managed in accordance with the policies established in the Service Plan for the San Mateo Coastal Annexation Area.
 - Consult with appropriate agencies and interest groups, including the San Mateo County Farm Bureau and San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee in the development of site-specific Use and Management plans and agricultural production plan components in the Coastside Protection Area.
- **Policy GM-9** Safeguard native plants and wildlife while promoting the economic sustainability of conservation cattle grazing as a resource management tool and reducing predation of livestock.
 - Consider the economic impact of predation in setting lease rates for conservation grazing tenants.
 - Provide economic relief for conservation grazing tenants who, as required per conditions of a Board of Directors approved lease, are performing resource management services and are in good standing with the District, in response to confirmed cattle losses from predation to sustain conservation grazing as a viable tool for natural resource management. Require cattle grazing tenants to document annual livestock losses due to both predation and non-predation-related causes.
 - Support and promote scientific research on the effectiveness of wildlife and livestock protection methods, and their influence on wildlife behavior, grazing productivity, and livestock health. Periodically review research results and consider findings in future policy development.

Resource Management Policies (2022) – Integrated Pest Management Policy Key Points

Policy IPM-1 Develop specific pest management strategies and priorities that address each of the five work categories.

- Manage pests in rangelands and on agricultural properties to support existing uses, while also protecting human health and surrounding natural resources.

Policy IPM-2 Take appropriate actions to prevent the introduction of new pest species to District preserves, especially new invasive plants in natural areas, rangelands, and agricultural properties.

Integrated Pest Management Program Guidance Manual (2014)

9 IPM FOR RANGELANDS AND AGRICULTURAL PROPERTIES

9.1 DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

Some District lands encompass rangelands, crop fields, and orchards that are actively managed as grazing or agricultural operations. Rangeland and agriculture activities on District preserves are primarily managed by lessees who typically operate under a Rangeland Management Plan or Agricultural Management Plan that is attached to their lease. These site-specific management plans guide the rangeland and agricultural activities to ensure compatibility with natural resource protection and low-intensity public recreation. This IPMP does not replace the requirements of the individual range or agricultural management plans, nor does it present the full range of agricultural or range management options. Rather, it seeks to provide staff with tools that are consistent with IPM principles to select the safest, least harmful, and most effective treatment options for rangeland and agricultural pests.

Open Space Vision Plan (2014)

The Vision Plan discusses overarching themes, subthemes and goals that guide the District's work. The Viable Working Lands theme includes goals related to agricultural resources for protecting viable working lands that reflect our heritage and provide food and jobs. Subthemes of the Vision Plan: support agriculture and local food producers; model ecologically sound practices and educate.

Board Policy 4.01 Open Space Use and Management Planning Process (2009)

Board Policy 4.01 *Open Space Use and Management Planning Process* describes a systematic approach to the development of management plans and outlines the importance of use and management plans, which include the discussion of current agricultural uses and agricultural preservation needs of a District property, such as grazing and continuation of agricultural activities. The policy also discusses how the presence of active agricultural uses would be a factor in designating areas of preserves as Conservation Management Units which would restrict general public access.

Board Policy 4.11 Housing Policy (2017)

- 2. Agricultural.

- a. Agricultural Lease Holder. District housing offered for agricultural lease holder will either be negotiated in conjunction with an agricultural lease or be market rate.
 - b. Agricultural Labor. District housing offered for agricultural labor is generally governed by a District lease or license. Agricultural housing rents and associated discounts are negotiated on a case-by-case basis and brought to the Board consistent with the policy regarding *Improvements on District Lands* (Policy 4.02). If District housing is made available to agricultural labor outside of a District Lease or License, the agricultural labor tenant is required to work for a District agricultural tenant on District Lands. Rent will either be negotiated in the agricultural lease, market rate, or an affordable housing rate.
- 2. Agricultural. The selection of agricultural residential sites shall be based on their proximity to the District agricultural leases on District Lands. Due to the need for an on-site presence for some agricultural lands, this use may take priority over employees that provide direct services in some cases.

Board Policy 4.02 Improvements on District Lands (2017)

Board Policy 4.02 *Improvements on District Lands* guides the preparation of recommended actions concerning structures and improvements to inform the Board’s decision. The policy states that existing structures and other improvements on District lands are potential resources and as such will be evaluated for potential retention and will be addressed in site planning documents. These structures and resources include agricultural worker housing, agricultural and grazing infrastructure such as water storage facilities, outbuildings, corrals, fencing and etc. The policy states, “[a]s the District acquires agricultural properties, housing is needed for agricultural lease holders and their agricultural workers. Residences on District agricultural properties should be evaluated as potential housing for agricultural labor.”

- C (1) As the District acquires agricultural properties, housing is needed for agricultural lease holders and their agricultural workers. Residences on District agricultural properties should be evaluated as potential housing for agricultural labor.
- C (3) Improvements which Contribute to the Character of the Site:
(e.g., Buildings with Unique Historical or Architectural merit, Barns, Sheds and Fences)
Some structures associated with agriculture or other former uses of the site can contribute significantly to the site without detracting from its open space character. When economically feasible within the constraints of the land management budget, examples of these structures will be retained, maintained, and when possible put to use.
- C (4) Improvements for Agriculture and Other Special Uses:
Agricultural use which is consistent with the open space use of a site is encouraged by the District. Improvements for agriculture or other special uses will be retained or

constructed as approved by the Board and stated in the site planning documents. In the Coastside Protection Area; leases, use, and improvements shall be consistent with the District's Service Plan Policies

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Agricultural Policy Stakeholder Survey Results

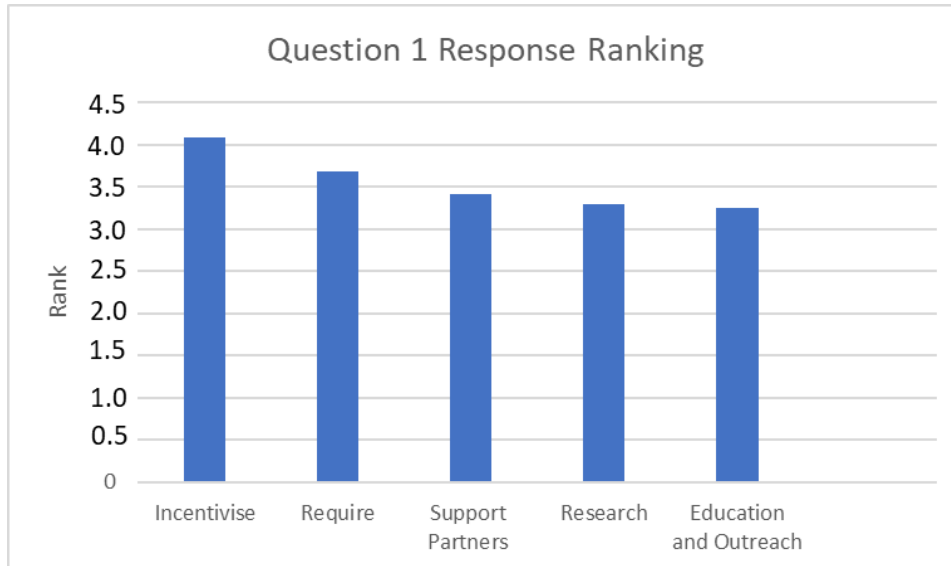
Question 1

Midpen is interested in promoting more environmentally sensitive agricultural practices in our region given the ongoing effects of climate change and Midpen's mission to protect the natural environment and encourage viable agriculture use. For example, practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural systems, practices that increase carbon capture or sequestration within agricultural systems, practices that reduce non-target effects of agricultural chemicals such as fertilizers or pesticides, and practices that promote habitat for wildlife. How might Midpen best support these goals in agricultural regions of the San Mateo Coast? Please rank the following options from 1 through 5 with 1 being the most valuable/preferred and 5 being the least valuable/preferred. If you have other ideas, please add them at the end of this question.

Answered: 23

Skipped: 0

Scores below represent the overall ranking of each option across the group.



Question 2

Other ideas (not mentioned in Question 1) for how Midpen could promote more environmentally sensitive agricultural practices in our region? Please add them here or attach them as additional pages.

Answered: 13

Skipped: 10

Written Responses

- Have an advisory panel of expert scientists and non-profit advocates that help Supervisors develop countywide policy that requires action on climate change.
- Education and community engagement efforts need to involve the people working the land, as well as the leaseholders. Also, multi-lingual trainings need to be available as needed.
- All education and outreach efforts need to involve the people working the land as well as the leaseholders and multi-lingual trainings need to be available as needed. Support for efforts undertaken through RCD need to have specific goals in mind and benchmarks that anticipate an increase in the number of operators who are following environmentally sensitive practices in a mutually agreed upon time frame. Note: The last item on the list above is a duplicate of the 4th item.
- Work to approve projects such as timed mowing in order to control invasive weeds before the opportunity passes.
- Provide infrastructure, such as perimeter fencing and access to water, so grazers can implement holistic planned grazing methods.
- There are numerous farmers out there who are looking for good land to do good things on. That's a huge oversimplification but its true. The biggest barriers that they face are the cost of land and housing, the next biggest barriers are infrastructure (water, electrical, old storage, etc). Give a farmer and chance with 60% of these things, and many of them are creative and hardworking enough to make it work. Anything that Midpen can do to support these barriers coming down is huge, but a commitment to linking them is game changing. What I mean by linking them is not just giving land access at an affordable rate, but doing so on properties that are feasible for agricultural production because they already have a infrastructure necessary to do so, or if its not existent, for Midpen to commit to supporting that development either independently or along with farmers. POSTS Farmland Futures Initiative is a good example of the beginnings of how this can look to help stabilize and support regional agriculture that is a win win for the land, those on it, and the greater community.
- 1. develop a Carbon Farm plan for each property 2. Develop and implement an Effective rainfall management plan - practices to ensure rainfall infiltrates rather than runs off or is just stored in ponds.
- Do not try to annex the coast again
- Work to support smaller/new livestock operations and not just the same few large operations; increase the diversity of livestock types and give preference to heritage, native, or multi-use breeds (not just livestock raised for food).

- Highlight in newsletter examples of farmers and ranchers who are doing good practices and getting results including economic and science results so people know this is possible. Especially examples from the same Eco-regional (5 Mediterranean ecosystems)
- Require certain such practices on MALs in combo with incentives –
- Treat everyone as individuals- if you can trust them let them do their job. Every ranch has different needs.
- Provide Farmworker Housing

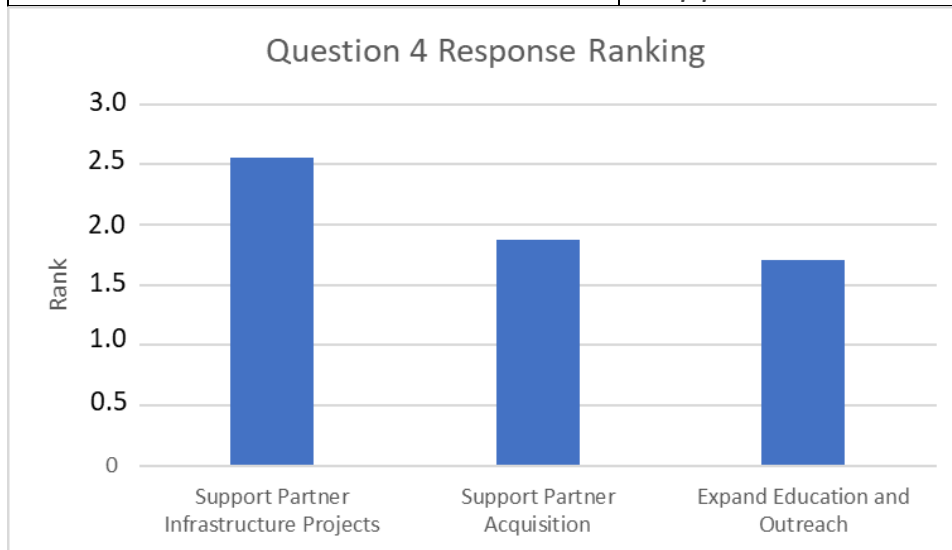
Question 3

Midpen does not normally acquire fee title or easements on intensive agricultural lands (i.e., row crops, greenhouses). Are there other ways Midpen might consider supporting more intensive agriculture that align with its mission and role?	
<i>Answered: 21</i>	<i>Skipped: 2</i>

Question 3 Responses	
Yes	18
No	3

Question 4

If you answered YES to question 3, please prioritize the following ways Midpen might consider supporting more intensive agriculture:	
<i>Answered: 19</i>	<i>Skipped: 4</i>



Question 5

If you have other thoughts or comments (not mentioned in question 4) about how Midpen might consider supporting more intensive agriculture, please add them here or attach additional pages.

Answered: 6

Skipped: 17

Written Responses

- The downside of the MROSD, a public agency, not acquiring easements and fee title on agricultural lands is that there is little oversight on 1. the guidelines for offering and managing leases, 2. the use of environmentally sensitive agricultural practices, 3. the legal, fair and equitable treatment of farm workers and all those who are employed by the operator who holds the lease. (A partial list). I understand that there are regulatory and financial circumstances that make it difficult for MROSD to acquire and manage row crop agriculture but the public needs to have a clear view of the operations that its tax money is helping to finance.
- Support building new infrastructure that works towards sustainable and environmentally responsible intensive agriculture such as growing *and processing* lower intensity crops such as industrial hemp.
- Depending on the operator and the methodology, intensive row cropping and pasture grazing systems can demonstrably benefit both physical and chemical properties of the soil, improve soil organic matter, and support many tons of food production per year that is grown in a manner that is aligned with Midpen's values those of the conscientious consumer. I highlighted some of those burdens above, and they remain evergreen here. Aligning with existing organizations who are already mobilized to provide various types of support could be a good starting place, or starting a panel made up of folks from those organizations could also be fruitful in helping steer this body of work.
- Offer grants or funding to partners to
- Do not try to annex the coast again
- There are climate smart practices that could be applied to intensive ag - including rotation of livestock, compost, cover crops. Carbon Farm Plans can help outline those priorities. Or workshops by farmers/ranchers to show how this works.

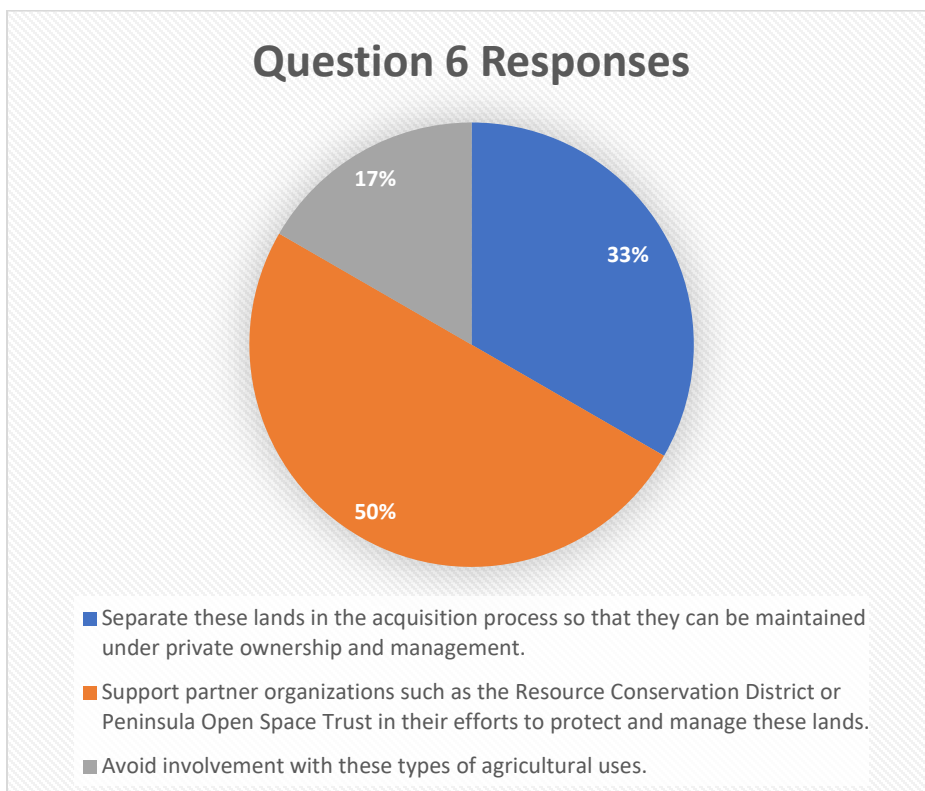
Question 6

Midpen has remained primarily focused on preserving rangelands and maintaining its conservation grazing program as a tool to protect the biodiversity of grasslands, reduce fuels and fire risk, and promote viable agricultural use of land resources. Recognizing this focus, how might Midpen best support the protection of row crop land and other forms of non-rangeland (non-grazing) agriculture on the San Mateo County coast? Please choose one of the following:

<i>Answered: 19*</i>	<i>Skipped: 4</i>
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Separate these lands in the acquisition process so that they can be maintained under private ownership and management.	6
Support partner organizations such as the Resource Conservation District or Peninsula Open Space Trust in their efforts to protect and manage these lands.	9
Avoid involvement with these types of agricultural uses.	3

*One survey respondent selected all except “Avoid involvement with these types of agricultural uses.” This data has not been included in the above table or corresponding graphic.



Written Responses

- The two top options are ideal because getting the lands under the management or ownership of responsible operators from all backgrounds and organizational frameworks (individual, partnership, collective) who can: produce viable ag products, earn sufficient revenue to maintain and expand their businesses, provide fair and equitable pay and working conditions for their employees complete with housing options and follow environmentally sensitive practices -- seems to be the overall goal.
- I can see how both options 1 and 2 could be viable, depending on the specific circumstance and I would have checked both of them if I could. I'm not knowledgeable about the level of experience RCD has in managing active ag operations. I know that POST is experienced. Getting the lands under the management or ownership of responsible operators from all backgrounds and organizational frameworks (individual, partnership, collective) who can: produce viable ag products, earn sufficient revenue to maintain and expand their businesses, provide fair and equitable pay and working conditions for their employees complete with housing options and follow environmentally sensitive practices -- seems to be the overall goal.
- By and large private agricultural landowners tend to be better stewards of these agricultural lands as it is in their best interest. to preserve the areas being used in the best condition that gives them the highest value.
- I think either option 1 or two here would work, POST and RCD are already doing pretty great work on the coast in this regard. Access and considerations for "who" gets access and an opportunity to be on those lands is a recurring opportunity to expand inclusiveness and leaning into supporting growers and ranchers that represent historically underserved communities.
- Investigate how to integrate the grazing operations and the traditionally non-grazing lands. At one time most lands were grazed by undomesticated herds, followed by domestic animal grazing on crop lands. This all ended within the past few decades. Incorporating a rotation of grazing animals into croplands will help promote many ecological functions (public good) which ultimately support the producers also.
- These lands are part of the “matrix” of working lands on the coast. IF climate friendly practices are deployed, these lands could contribute meaningfully to the County’s climate, water and air quality, and food production goals. For example, a farm field could be a fire break. At the same time, if that farm uses climate smart practices, it could help provide local food, sequester carbon, support pollinators, (And not negatively impact water and air quality through fertilizers, smoke from fire) and so on
- Getting the lands under the management or ownership of responsible operators from all backgrounds and organizational frameworks (individual, partnership, collective) who can: produce viable ag products, earn sufficient revenue to maintain and expand their businesses, provide fair and equitable pay and working conditions for their employees complete with housing options and follow environmentally sensitive practices -- seems to be the overall goal.
- I don't see how this question is different from Question 6 so I will copy my answer here. I can see how both options 1 and 2 could be viable, depending on the specific circumstance and I

would have checked both of them if I could. I'm not knowledgeable about the level of experience RCD has in managing active ag operations. I know that POST is experienced. Getting the lands under the management or ownership of responsible operators from all backgrounds and organizational frameworks (individual, partnership, collective) who can: produce viable ag products, earn sufficient revenue to maintain and expand their businesses, provide fair and equitable pay and working conditions for their employees complete with housing options and follow environmentally sensitive practices -- seems to be the overall goal.

- Find good stewards who are as invested in preserving and improving the lands the District does own and foster long term relationships that will encourage responsible stewardship by making long term leases available rather than having short term leases of 7 years which has the opposite effect.
- Easements and infrastructure support are the key to this being successful long term. Easements for agriculture to reduce the cost to the grower or rancher and then infrastructure support to ensure it is viable for those producers. Writing into contracts wording that ensures the land stays in meaningful production (not hobby farms) and giving producers options of renting to own or outright purchase, (with easements in perpetuity) would be a foundational cornerstone to supporting the long term success of agriculture in the region.
- RCD does really good work. RCD could use support to have more staff trained in regenerative, climate smart practices so they can coach producers on what practices and resources are available to them

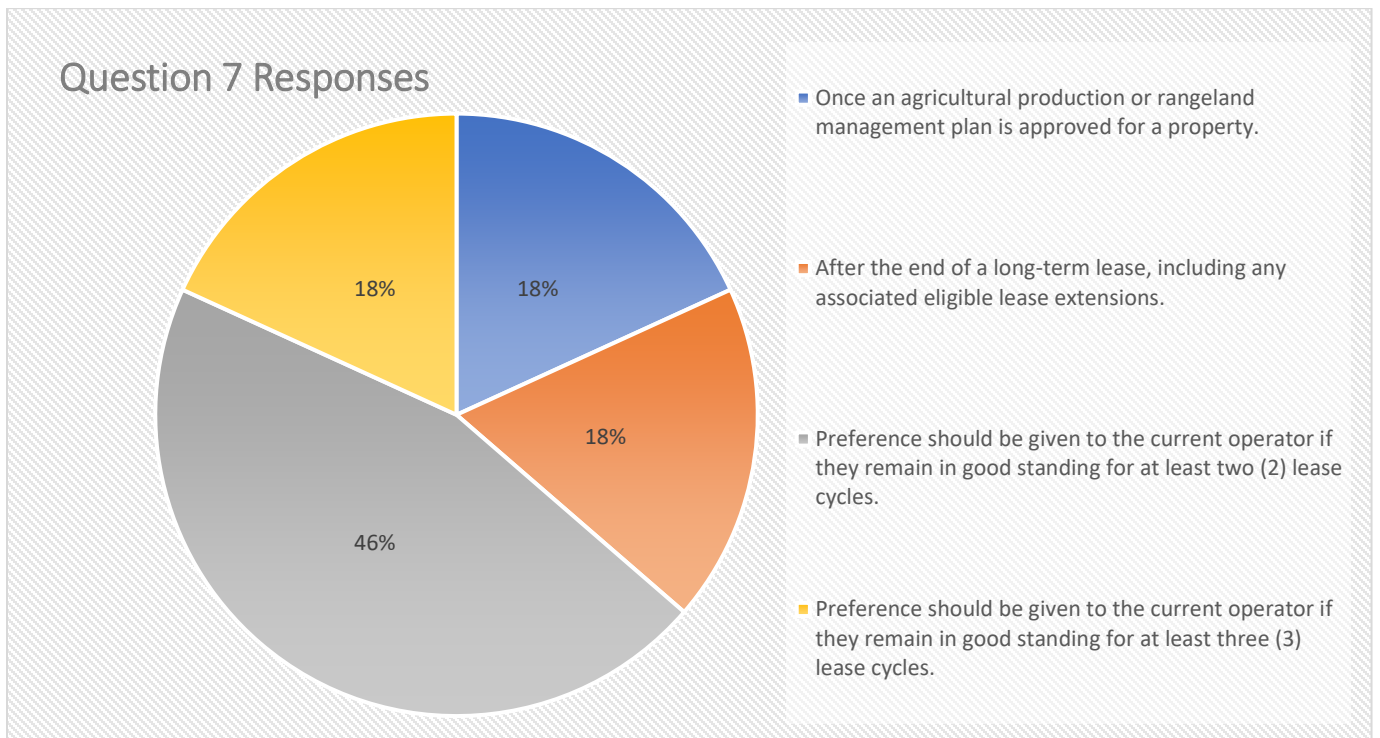
**Question 6 was inadvertently repeated in the electronic survey as question 7. Responses for the two questions are combined here under question 6.*

Question 7

When Midpen acquires an agricultural property, and there is an existing agricultural operator on site, our practice has generally been to work with the existing operator and to enter into a long-term lease with them (typically 5 years with one option for a 5-year extension at Midpen’s discretion). How and when might Midpen consider providing the opportunity for other ranchers/farm operators to compete for a lease on Midpen lands? Please choose one of the following:

Answered: 22 | *Skipped: 2*

Answer Choices	Responses
Once an agricultural production or rangeland management plan is approved for a property.	4
After the end of a long-term lease, including any associated eligible lease extensions.	4
Preference should be given to the current operator if they remain in good standing for at least two (2) lease cycles.	10
Preference should be given to the current operator if they remain in good standing for at least three (3) lease cycles.	4



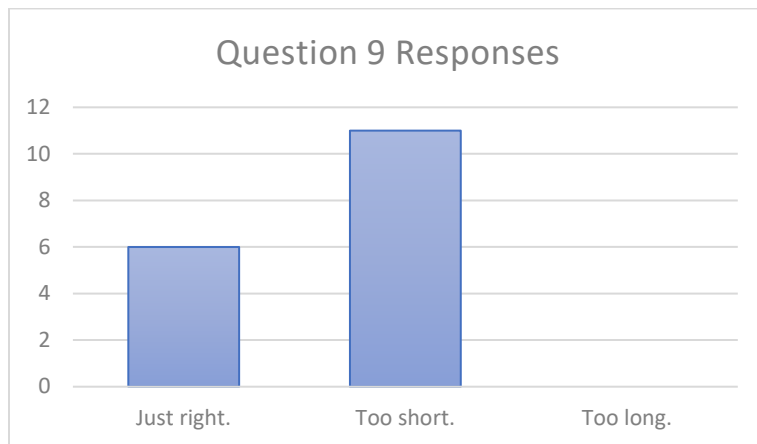
Question 8

Agricultural Leases: Currently, Midpen conservation grazing leases are typically set for a 5-year term with one option for a 5-year extension at Midpen's discretion for a total of 10 years. Please choose one of the following. Do you consider these terms:

Answered: 17

Skipped: 6

Answer Choices	Responses
Just right.	6
Too short.	11
Too long.	0



Written Responses

- Encouragement of private ownership makes the most sense for the ongoing success of the farm.
- What is standard? It needs to be long enough so that the operator can adjust their model/practices to maximize their ability to see a profit but not so long that other interested parties are precluded from competing for the lease. MROSD needs a complete inventory of all the land you own and are planning to acquire complete with acreage, on site resources, current activity and allowable uses.
- 5 years does not provide enough time for an agricultural operator to invest in the property if they are only going to have it for 5 years. 20 years would be a more reasonable term. Also allow for the families or partners of these lease holders to take over the lease in the event that the lease holder is unable to continue.
- However, when acquires an agricultural property, that agricultural lease should be based on ecological outcomes that show their grazing practices are improving the health of the

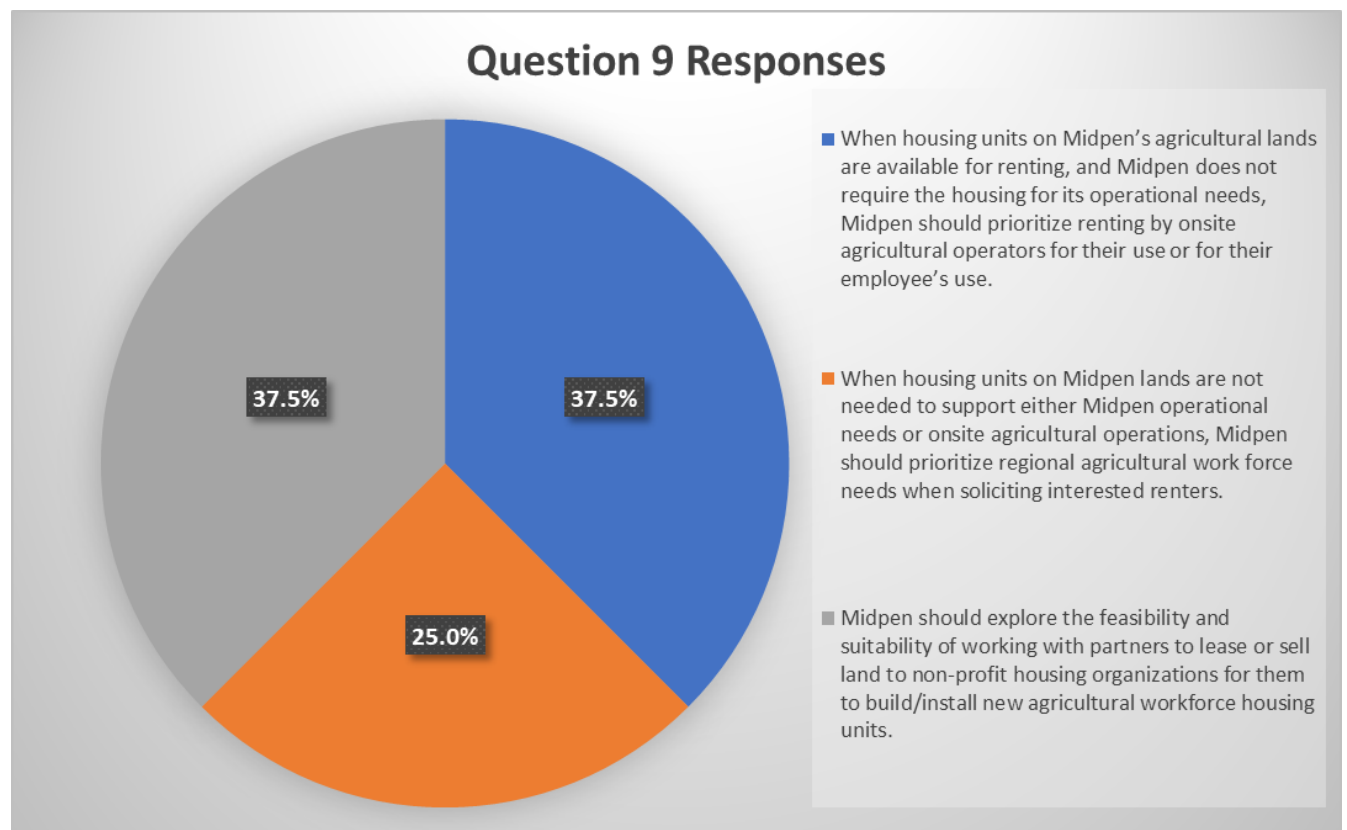
landscapes. If they do not demonstrate this or the land declines in health, their lease is then terminated.

- Does Midpen have clear land goals for the lessee that can be quantified? If appropriate progress is made in moving the landscape toward Midpen's goals then the lease and lease option are the right length. If the goals are not being reached then the extensions should not be granted unless extraneous circumstances.
- Do not try to annex the coast again
- Need leases to be long enough that the grazer feels invested in the land and making it better. Some will work to improve the land just because it's the right thing to do, others will if they stand to benefit from the work they put in.

Question 9

<p>Agricultural Housing: Midpen currently provides one (1) discounted agricultural work force house for onsite labor. It also rents housing to agricultural operators (lessees) at two (2) other sites. What are your thoughts about Midpen’s role in agricultural work force housing?</p>	
<p>Answered: 22</p>	<p>Skipped: 1</p>

Answer Choices	Responses
When housing units on Midpen’s agricultural lands are available for renting, and Midpen does not require the housing for its operational needs, Midpen should prioritize renting by onsite agricultural operators for their use or for their employee’s use.	12
When housing units on Midpen lands are not needed to support either Midpen operational needs or onsite agricultural operations, Midpen should prioritize regional agricultural work force needs when soliciting interested renters.	8
Midpen should explore the feasibility and suitability of working with partners to lease or sell land to non-profit housing organizations for them to build/install new agricultural workforce housing units.	12



Written Responses

- The following ideas for farmworkers having housing available on sites where they are not currently employed that help make it more equitable: **Owners and operators will not treat their workers like modern day slaves forcing them to accept unfair and unsafe working conditions under the threat of losing their jobs AND their housing. **Support the need for agricultural workforce housing throughout the region, not just on a farm by farm basis. **Encourage the development of housing on sites with the most land suitable for that purpose. It would be much easier to reach full occupancy when workers from all neighboring farms could rent any of the available units.
- Making housing available on sites where farm workers are not currently employed is: 1. one way to discourage owners/operators from treating their workers like indentured servants: forcing them to accept unfair and unsafe working conditions under the threat of losing their jobs AND their housing 2. an important way support the need for agricultural work force housing throughout the region, not just on a farm by farm basis 3. a way to encourage the development of housing on sites with the most land suitable for that purpose. It would be much easier to reach full occupancy when workers from all neighboring farms could rent any of the available units.
- Having the agricultural lease holder or their work force housed on or nearby the leased agricultural lands allows them to better monitor what is going on on these properties. The farther away from the property the lease holder lives the more difficult it is for them to be able to monitor it and to respond to issues when the need arises.
- Housing is one of the biggest challenges facing producers. Low income affordable onsite housing ameliorates so many issues but also provide logistical and administrative challenges. Both should be taken into consideration. To me, housing should be prioritized for the operators on any given site of production. Excess housing -if there even is such a thing- should be apportioned to the next adjacent producer and their labor teams.
- All agriculture housing should be discounted and not rented at market rate.
- If a grazer is on site, MidPen should consider priority going to housing for the grazer as Livestock require 24 hour care at times. Also it might be considered that the grazer who lives on the Property will feel most invested in caring for.
- Midpen should prioritize the regional agricultural operators and workforce when considering rental of Any and ALL available housing on Midpen agricultural lands. Why would Midpen need to use housing for its own "operational needs"?

Question 10

Water use: Midpen manages water consumption to balance operational/agricultural and environmental/ecological needs. How might Midpen best support agricultural water needs while maintaining this balance? Please choose one of the following:	
<i>Answered: 22*</i>	<i>Skipped: 1</i>

Answer Choices	Responses
Expand financial support to agricultural operations on Midpen lands for actions that facilitate water efficient practices.	2
Fund partners like the Resource Conservation District who have existing programs to support agriculture practices that promote efficient water use.	7
Invest in water storage, new wells, and/or other strategies on Midpen lands to reduce dependency of in-stream water use.	11

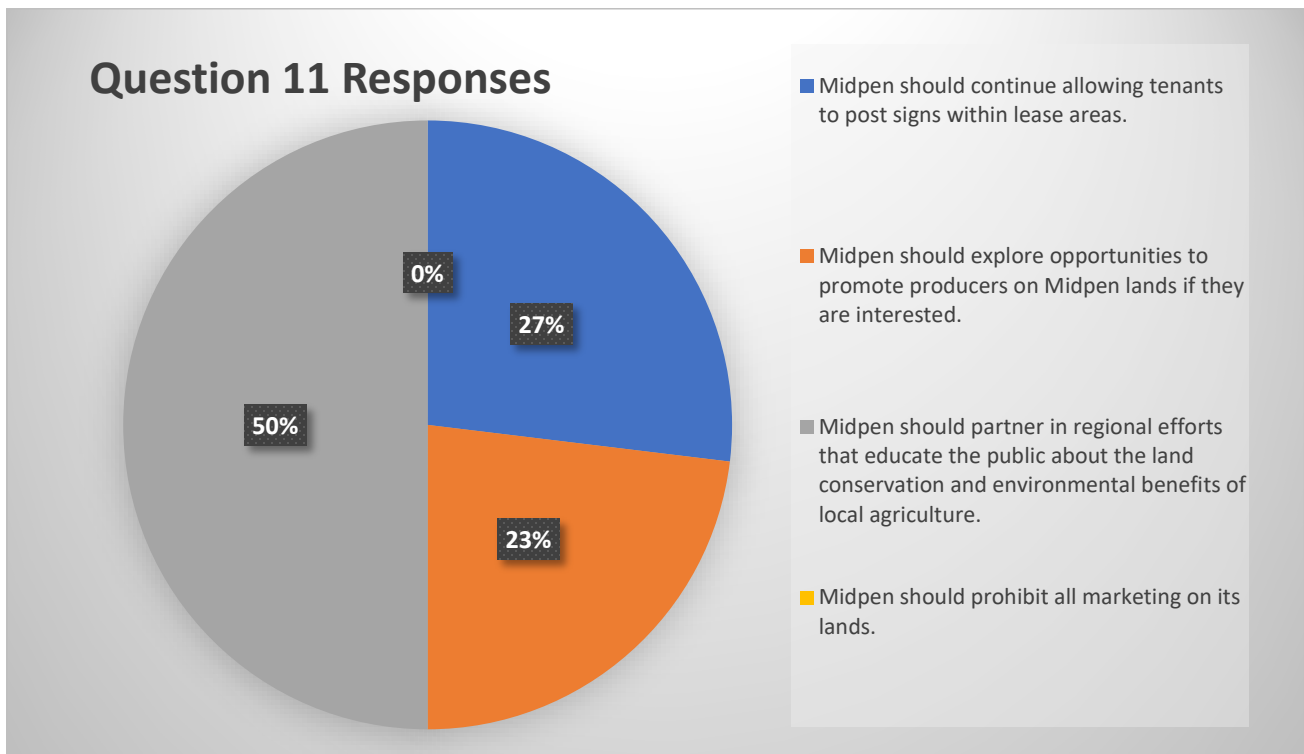
*Two survey respondents selected all answer choices. This data has not been included in the above table.

Question 11

Marketing and Promotion: Midpen allows agricultural tenants to post signs within the lease areas that identify/promote the agricultural producer and educates visitors about the role of agricultural lands in protecting open space and natural resource values. What might Midpen’s role be as a public agency with regards to the marketing and promotion of agricultural uses/operators. Please choose from the following:

Answered: 22 | *Skipped: 1*

Answer Choices	Responses
Midpen should continue allowing tenants to post signs within lease areas.	7
Midpen should explore opportunities to promote producers on Midpen lands if they are interested.	6
Midpen should partner in regional efforts that educate the public about the land conservation and environmental benefits of local agriculture.	13
Midpen should prohibit all marketing on its lands.	0



Written Responses

- In addition to allowing tenants to post signs within their lease areas, MROSD can join local and countywide efforts to promote agricultural products. There have been discussions for decades on how best to do this and the As Fresh As It Gets marketing program from 15-20 years ago is one attempt that met with some success. Public education about land conservation and the environmental benefits of local agriculture are also important but in order to stay in business, operators need to sell what they produce for a profit. The regional reach of MROSD's influence can be a real asset. A robust digital and social media marketing campaign should be considered if it isn't already in existence or planned. Successful operators like Jacobs Farm/Del Cabo can be consulted about distribution best practices and overall marketing strategies.
- Midpen should allow and even help facilitate producers to provide educational opportunities for the public on District lands. Having agricultural workshops and tours would be one way to do this.
- Unless it has great import to funding and resource generation for Midpen, I think this is the lowest priority issue here. I think outreach is key for community support, but the growers will be able to market and promote their operations just fine independently of Midpen.
- The more education is available the better as the public generally doesn't know or understand what livestock can do for the land. Or why they are on MidPen lands. If they understand livestock are playing an important role, they may be more supportive of them.
- And Midpen should partner in regional efforts that educate the public about the land conservation and environmental benefits of local agriculture.

Question 12

How might Midpen better preserve the rural character and promote viable agricultural use on the San Mateo coast while continuing to protect and restore the natural environment and provide opportunities for public enjoyment and education?	
<i>Answered: 14</i>	<i>Skipped: 9</i>

Written Responses

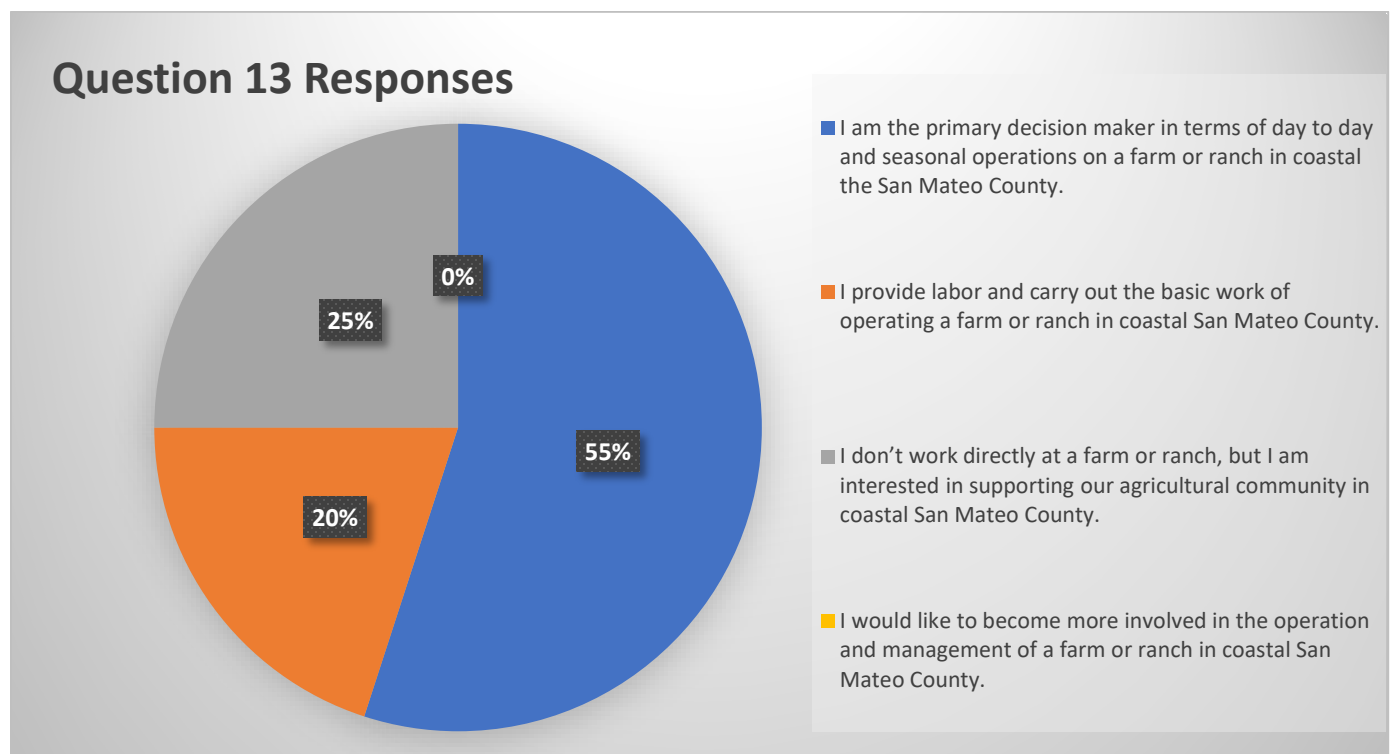
- Midpen should partner in regional efforts to educate the public about the environmental benefits of local agriculture.
- Meet, engage and speak with the farmworkers and ag operators. Listen and ask them for ideas, you will be surprised how knowledgeable they are of the environment. San Mateo County is dedicated to advancing equity! Equity is the goal of just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. To achieve equity, we must create the conditions that allow all to reach their full potential. This agency needs to get out of their comfort zone, bubble for the status quo and evolve to the 21st Century. Explore proposals from ag collectives and create ways to make ag land available to a more diverse group of farmers and ranchers. MROSD needs a liaison with the farmworker community to build trust and ensure that their interests, as well as those of the operators, are a priority. In celebration of MROSD's 50th anniversary, this is an outstanding opportunity to evolve and expand its vision to update your policies and re-imagine the possibilities for a productive, protected and accessible landscape for the next 50 years and more.
- Talk with the farm workers and multiple generations of ag operators, listen and ask for ideas from them. Explore proposals from ag collectives and create ways to make ag land available to a more diverse group of farmers and ranchers. MROSD should identify a staff member to become a liaison with the farm worker community to ensure that their interests, as well as those of the operators, are a priority. This 50th year anniversary year provides an outstanding opportunity for MROSD to expand your vision, update your policies and re-imagine the possibilities for a productive, protected and accessible landscape for the next 50 years.
- I am unaware of ANY areas within the District that are not and have not been subjected to the impacts of Man... it needs to be understood that the "rural character" INCLUDES farming. Man's footprints are indelible, whether that is visible in the invasive noxious weeds growing throughout District lands or it is cattle grazing or crops growing. Until and unless the District is able to understand these realities there is little that can be done to improve the situation.
- By educating the public on the value of grazing.
- Utilize a lease guide (see TomKat Ranch's lease document) to ensure leaders employ climate-smart, environmental practices to protect our agricultural landscapes and create resilient agricultural lands.

- In addition to my above comments, the key priority here to ensuring this happens in my opinion is proper vetting. Both of the land for agricultural feasibility, and in determining the producers who will come onto the land to implement and land management plan, Whom are aligned from an ecological perspective, and whom are capable and have the bona fides to actual do what they say they want to. There are ample opportunities for Ag-Tourism and community engagement around all facets here, conservation, ecological stewardship, and sustainable food production, and the secondary effects of this could be further amplification of the need to support Midpen and other organizations whom aim to achieve a similar goal. We tend to think of the world as having shapes and boundaries, and not as the relationship between features. Continuing to support ecologically sound conservation, and adding in greater support of sustainable agriculture on the coast could be a shining example of the latter notion, that everything is connected and we need to support the whole system, and not just aspects of it, if we want to fight climate change, grow healthy food, and have beautiful and meaningful and educational outdoor spaces for people to enjoy.
- Be more flexible – everything can't be the same for all the different ranches. Support local regenerative Ag that heals soils.
- Support and promote local organic AG!
- Provide farmworker housing

Question 13

Please help us understand your role in local agricultural production by selecting from the following (choose all that apply)	
Answered: 19	Skipped: 4

Answer Choices	Responses
I am the primary decision maker in terms of day to day and seasonal operations on a farm or ranch in coastal the San Mateo County.	11
I provide labor and carry out the basic work of operating a farm or ranch in coastal San Mateo County.	4
I don't work directly at a farm or ranch, but I am interested in supporting our agricultural community in coastal San Mateo County.	5
I would like to become more involved in the operation and management of a farm or ranch in coastal San Mateo County.	0



Written Responses

- Operate programs in support of agricultural worker health.

- I live in Pacifica, and a former farmworker from the Salinas Valley, in essence a farmworker advocate. As a public relations professional and community leader, I work closely with Coastside community based organizations that serve the farmworker community. Furthermore, I am the Chair of the Farmworkers Affairs Committee, a group that originally organized as a standing committee of the San Mateo County Democratic Party. Our activities are mainly non-partisan and we frequently collaborate with ALAS, Coastside Hope and Puente de las Costa Sur, the community based organizations who provide services to farmworkers and their families on the San Mateo Co Coastside.

NOTE: This committee was formed because when COVID hit, the same Farmworkers who were declared to be essential workers by the federal government were left out of the conversation and had to continue working without protective gear. Yet they are the driving force that keeps the nation's grocery stores stocked. The various issues farmworkers face especially with housing have always existed. But COVID exposed these inequities to the overall community that pay taxes and contribute billions to our economy and feed the country. Our Mission is to amplify the voices of farmworkers, advocate for and achieve equity and gain access to resources and representation.

- I'm a member of the Farm Workers Affairs Committee, group that originally organized as a standing committee of the San Mateo County Democratic Party. Our activities are mainly non-partisan and we frequently collaborate with ALAS, Coastside Hope and Puente de las Costa Sur, the community based organizations who provide services to farm workers and their families on the San Mateo Co Coastside. I'm a former member of the SM Co Ag Advisory Committee and was one of the organizers of the 1998 Measure F campaign, an advisory measure that was approved by local voters and started the political process to expand the boundary of MROSD to the Coast.
- My name is James Nakahara and I work for Kitchen Table Advisors, which supports the viability of small scale family farms and ranchers throughout the bay area. We currently support over 100 farms in 16 counties around the SF Bay. My region of support is north Santa Cruz County, SMC Coastside, and the East Bay. I used to farm on the coast from 2014-2017, and have deep connections to numerous farms there, almost all of whom are current KTA clients or alumni from our business advising program. I have also sat on the board at EcoFarm (currently on planning committee and diversity advisory group). I currently sit on the board at the Friends of the Farm and Garden, which supports the UCSC Center for Agroecology, the premier agricultural apprenticeship program that has been running from over 50 years, and where I was an apprentice in 2013. I care deeply about the future of agriculture on the coastsides in particular. I have worked in multiple ways with POST over the last year, presenting with Dan Olstein on a POST webinar about coastal grower challenges as well as feasibility studies for several properties that POST has considered putting out RFP's for. I am well connected with the local agricultural network of advisors, mentors, and regional organizations like RCD, PUENTE, CAFF, UCCE, and more.
- We educate people about the benefits of livestock grazing done in a holistic manner with the primary goal of mimicking nature to improve the health of the ecosystems.

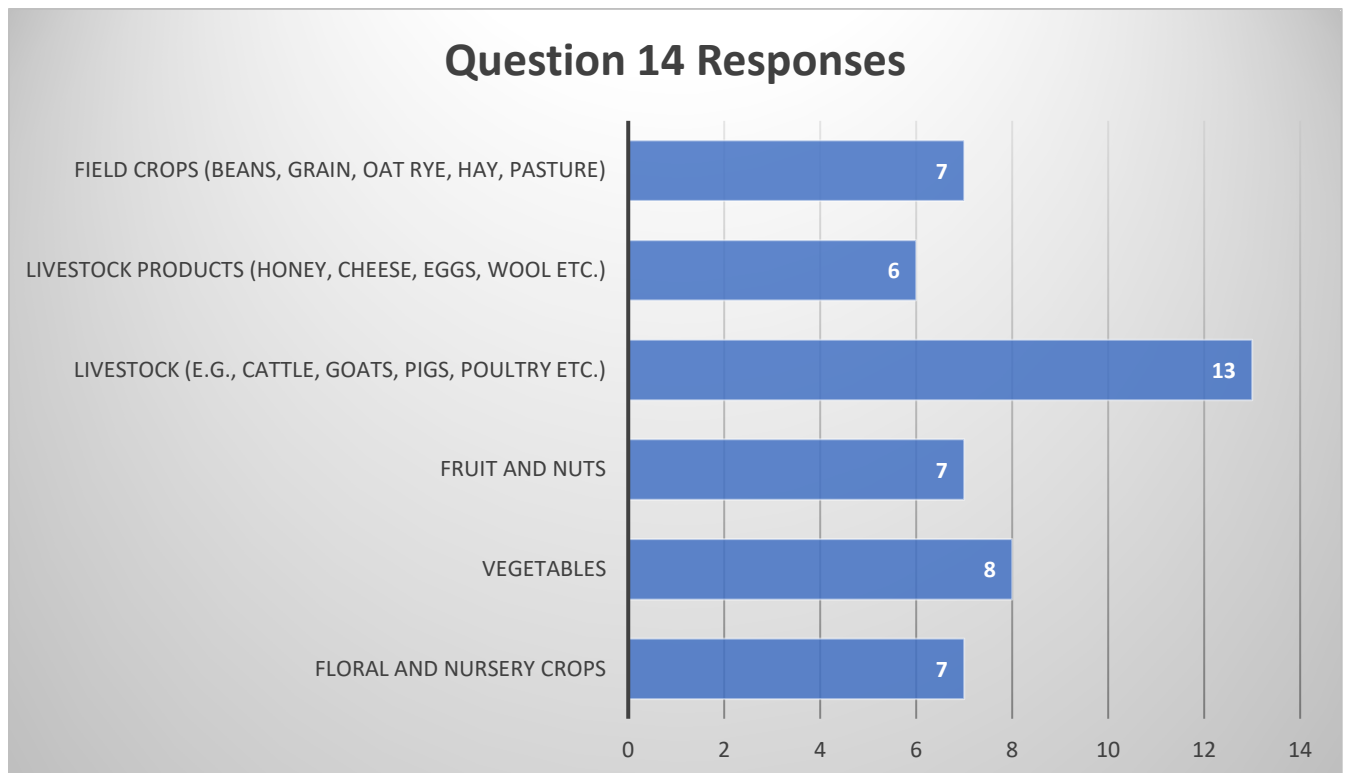
Question 14

Please help us understand your role in local agricultural production by selecting from the following (choose all that apply)

Answered: 19

Skipped: 4

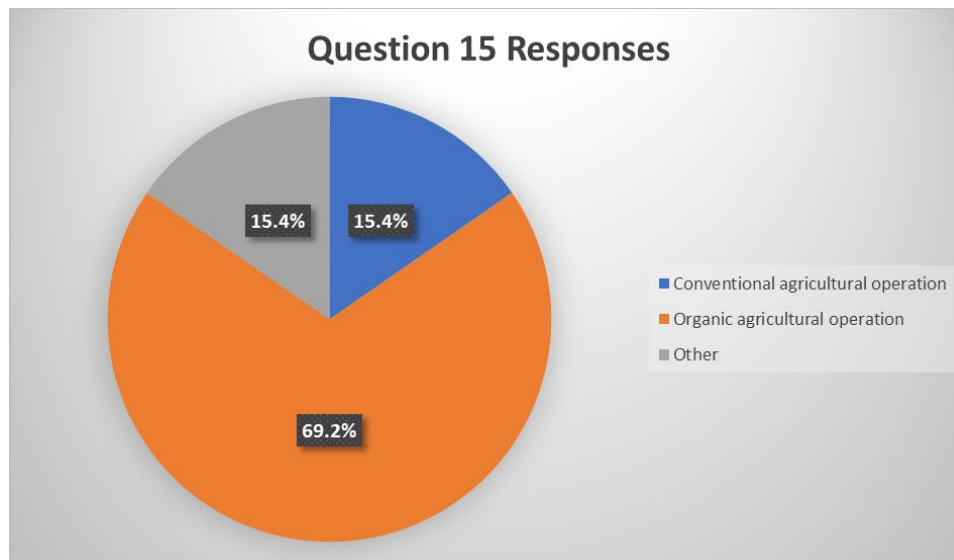
Answer Choices	Responses
Floral and Nursery crops	7
Vegetables	8
Fruit and Nuts	7
Livestock (e.g., cattle, goats, pigs, poultry etc.)	13
Livestock Products (Honey, cheese, eggs, wool etc.)	6
Field Crops (Beans, grain, oat rye, hay, pasture)	7



Question 15

If you are an agricultural operator or work for an agricultural operation, please indicate the type of operation you engage in:	
<i>Answered: 13</i>	<i>Skipped: 10</i>
Answer Choices	Responses
Conventional Agricultural Operation	2
Organic Operation	9
Other	2

*Respondants could choose "Other" in addition to Conventional or Organic



Written Responses to "Other? Please explain:"

- I have infrastructure on land that is meant for field crops and want to see that farm thrive. Educating farmland owners about leasing practices and the benefits of organic farming might be beneficial.
- N/A
- Not applicable to me.
- I have not become USDA Certified Organic due to the costs and managing the paperwork, but all of the practices on the property are organic.
- regenerative ranch
- Regenerative / climate smart
- Beyond organic AG
- Regenerative Rancher
- I am no longer certified organic, but employ NOPA standards across my operation, and participate in a number of conservation programs

Question 16

To expand our understanding of current practices, please let us know what practices, if any, your operation uses to reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon capture and/or sequestration, reduce non-target effects of agricultural chemicals, and/or protect habitat for wildlife.

Answered: 17

Skipped: 6

Written Responses

- We have added water tanks this year, have introduced dry-farming techniques this year; and we are removing invasive species in the wild lands of our farm, planning to restore a pond and planting native species of plants and trees.
- N/A
- Not applicable to me.
- I manage and operate the Chestnut orchard (Incerpi property). Chestnut trees are one of the more efficient species in terms of Carbon Sequestration. I am eager to start growing nursery trees and planting more chestnut trees on the property if possible. This is an extremely high impact to benefit ratio (low impact, high benefit).
- We use deep water hydroponic greenhouse techniques, to vastly reduce land foot print, tractor and machinery use. We use about 1/16th to 1/32nd of the amount of water compared to field ag. Any chemicals used are within enclosed spaces
- By practicing low intensity grazing
- pollinator strips, no till, mulch, cover crops
- We use regenerative, holistic land practices with the use of multi-species livestock to sequester carbon, build and create healthy soil, support wildlife and biodiversity (above and below ground), while providing healthy food for our community.
- Grazing operation: have a Carbon farm plan. Use an Adaptive Grazing plan to maximize for water infiltration, plant biodiversity- especially the native perennial grasses and forage production, address (balance) invasive plants through targeted grazing rather than chemical applications. Multi species - cattle, goats, sheep to increase the percentage of local plants that can be consumed as forage generating more protein and reducing fuel for fires (carbon release).
- We have "wildlife corridors" throughout our lands. We water if needed at night. Our livestock live outside and we provide natural habitat for them to breed and we do not allow the public on the farm to disturb them. We have planted a continue to plant thousands of trees.
- Certified bird friendly by Audubon Show increase in soil organic carbon every year
- on farm composting, compost applications to row crop fields, cover cropping, crop rotation, organic system plans.
- Transitioning to no-till; implementing a complete Carbon Farm Plan (thank you, RCD); planting hedgerows and buffer strips to increase wildlife habitat and corridors.
- We practice Regenerative organic practices including planned grazing, compost, cover crops, no-till (where we do any crops) and stacked agriculture as a natural way to provide nutrients to the soil.

- Hedgerows to provide habitat & alternative forage & water resources for wildlife, compost application on pastures, rain catchment, mechanical removal of invasive species (jubata grass & broom) and ceded riparian corridor on west property line to wildlife habitat.
- Audubon Certified for regenerative. Includes carbon sequestration practices!
- Audubon Certified & Common Sense

Summary of notes from the agricultural policy stakeholder outreach organized by group.

Notes on Group Meetings: Comments were from individual participants and do not necessarily reflect the interests or position of a larger group or the majority of the participants; summary only includes comments that are directly relate to the policy development work.

Producer's Workshop,

Held on April 19, 2022 at the Senior Coastsider's Center in Half Moon Bay attendance was primarily from District tenants and Farm Bureau Members and one representative from Puente.

- Many participants commented that agricultural leases need to be longer so that operators can capture a return on long term investments related to agricultural operations.
- Some participants expressed interest in having agricultural leases be multigenerational.
- A participant expressed concern that longer term leases and non-competitive awards to existing operators would lock out workers/prospective ranchers and farmers who have not had access to owning or leasing agricultural lands.
- Some participants expressed interest in the formation of an agricultural advisory committee that includes producers to inform agricultural policy and decision making.
- Many participants expressed an interest in having a preference for local tenants in the selection of agricultural tenants.
- Some participants wanted more communication about the District's land management goals.
- Several participants commented that if an agricultural tenant is performing well in stewarding the land, that their lease should be renewed.
- Some participants expressed a need for agricultural housing.
- Some indicated that there should be a priority for available housing to be used to support onsite operations as opposed to being used to meet regional needs.
- Some stated that housing should be developed to meet regional needs rather than be dedicated or assigned to an underlying agricultural lease holder.
- Some participants felt the District would benefit from having more in house expertise in agriculture.
- Many participants felt that some of the District's policies and procedures around resource management were a burden to agricultural operators (for example restrictions on pesticide use or protections for sensitive species). Some of the concerns were around requiring compliance with existing law.
- Several participants communicated that it would be valuable to have agricultural producers involved in developing rangeland and agricultural production plans.
- Several participants expressed interest in seeing more trials of new resource management strategies on District lands (such as integrated pest management approaches).

Ayudando Latinos a Sonar (ALAS), March 29, 2022, Phone call.

- Consider how the lease structure for agricultural lands might facilitate access/entry for small-scale or newer producers who may not have the same resource base or tenure as compared to larger or longer standing ranchers and farmers.

Puente, June 1, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Consider the role and needs of farmworkers in the policy.
- Availability and access to housing for farmworkers and the agricultural workforce is a major need in the agricultural community.
- Lease terms should allow for competition and should not be so long as to reinforce current exclusion of farmworkers from operating and leasing farms.
- Leases should consider treatment of farmworker's health, pay, and housing conditions.
- The Request for Proposals (RFP) process for housing and agricultural leases is an important opportunity to address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) aspects of the agricultural policy.
- DEI criteria should focus on the inclusion of people of color and farmworkers.

Farmworker Affairs Coalition, June 17, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Consider the role and needs of farmworkers in the policy.
- Availability and access to housing for farmworkers and the agricultural workforce is a major need in the agricultural community.
- The RFP process for agricultural leases is an important opportunity to address DEI aspects of the agricultural policy.
- Even if there is just an opportunity for a few additional agricultural workforce housing units, an allocation of some housing is important.

San Mateo Food Systems Alliance, June 28, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Staff provided an informational briefing on the agriculture policy development process.

Sustainable Pescadero, July 6, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Provide clarification on why the District has focused on grazing land (as opposed to cropland) in its land conservation and management work.
- Consider outreach specifically focused on farmworkers as a stakeholder group.
- Consider re-introducing agricultural uses on parts of Cloverdale that are not currently active.
- Consider partnering with State Parks to help add grazing management to some State Park lands that are adjacent to District lands.

Environmental Conservation Group, July 7, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Expressed support for the District's ownership of grazing lands.

- Consider how agricultural conservation easements could ensure more than just keeping land in active production, such as also promoting environmentally sensitive agricultural practices.
- Consider how fencing on grazing lands could be designed or modified in anticipation of potential future tule elk presence.
- Consider moving toward the District owning cattle for land management rather than leasing lands to profit-driven operators.

Farm Bureau Executive Committee, July 8, 2022, San Mateo Farm Bureau Office, Half Moon Bay

- Top priority is to establish a regional marketing effort for San Mateo County agriculture.
- Does not see the need for additional Farm Labor housing.
- Promotes the inclusion of a local preference criterion for agricultural leases.
- Requests that the District not comment on agricultural practices that occur on adjacent land that could affect District lands.
- District agricultural leases should be longer, up to 50 years.
- Avoid favoring organic agriculture over conventional agriculture.
- Participants asked about opportunities to build equity on District ranchlands similar to POST's work on farmland.
- Wilder Ranch (State Parks, Santa Cruz County) was mentioned as an example – where ranchers can buy leases from other ranchers if they decide not to ranch anymore or that year.
- Consider herbicide trials for brush control and other research that would support farmers and agriculture on the coast.
- Members expressed that the District and POST should not be allowed to subdivide property. Agricultural properties that include both grazing and row crops should be managed as one parcel even if they have separate operators.
- The Farm Bureau specifically asked for the following to be considered in the Ag Policy:
 1. Members expressed that the District needs to more strongly vocalize its support for farmers. They would like to see the District consider a more robust marketing campaign of agriculture on the coast.
 2. Members expressed interest in expanding the branding of agriculture.
 3. Members would like to see more scientific research that assists agriculture.
 4. Members would like an additional study of coastal farm labor housing and did not necessarily see a need for more regional farm worker housing.
 5. Members would like locals to be considered for grazing and agricultural leases first before outside operators are solicited for future opportunities.

San Mateo Agricultural Advisory Committee, July 11, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Suggestion that the District re-acknowledge its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the San Mateo Farm Bureau.

- Farmworker housing is one of the biggest challenges for agriculture in San Mateo County.
- Consider how the District could support development of more agricultural work force housing.
- Housing is one of many issues facing farmworkers. Another overarching issue is the availability of economic opportunities outside of agriculture for farmworker families. Would the District supporting/allow other economic opportunities compatible with agriculture and open space uses?
- Expressed support for more environmentally sensitive agriculture.
- Consider how the District can stay up to date as environmentally sensitive agricultural practices, systems, and technology develop over time.

Pescadero Municipal Advisory Committee, July 12, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Staff responded to several questions about District funding and land ownership.
- Staff responded to questions about how conservation easements might work in an agricultural context.
- Members expressed concern about the potential impact of District land ownership and easements on local tax revenue that supports schools.
- Staff addressed questions about how the District handles infrastructure improvements on its agricultural lands.

San Mateo Resource Conservation District/Natural Resource Conservation Service, July 13, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Lease Terms – Short term leases can be problematic for farmers to participate in grant programs that typically need ‘land-control’ for a period of 3-5 years, 7-10 years preferred.
- One solution could be to include clause in lease terms that allows flexibility to partner for grants, i.e., - if grant requires 5-year land control, allow lease extension to meet 5-year grant requirement.
- Expressed support for the sustainability and security of agricultural operations.
- Integrated farming systems with diversified operations/crops have proven to be successful on the coast. These tend to be primarily organic operations.
- Not owning land contributes to the insecurity of farmers.
- Contiguous land use opportunities – could the District consider giving preference to neighbor proposals that expand adjacent agricultural operations.
- In the San Mateo County coast, slopes over 8% are generally highly erosive and therefore not suitable for cultivation.
- Responsiveness to timely requests for action is important for farmers.
- Agricultural funding/grant programs are covering less and less of the total cost to implement conservation practices. This highlights the need for and importance of cost sharing by the District.

Peninsula Open Space Trust, July 14, 2022, Virtual meeting.

- Agricultural Workforce Housing is important for the sustainability of farms. Would the District allow tenants (farmers and/or workers) to expand housing with use of mobile homes/trailers?
- POST's work to conserve farms and retain farmer ownership has highlighted the need to consider the viability of an agricultural operation. This is often related to the size of the cropland. How will the District determine the adequate size of an agricultural field for a sustainable operation?
- Can the District provide financial support for agricultural conservation projects that do not result in real property land rights?

Feedback on the Development of the Agricultural Policy Grouped by Main Themes

Topic <i>(listed in random order)</i>	General Feedback/Comments ¹
Advocacy, engagement with and support of farmworkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District needs to more strongly vocalize its support for farmers. • Consider the role and needs of farmworkers in the agricultural policy development. • A large overarching issue is the availability of economic opportunities for farmworker families outside of agriculture. What is District policy for supporting/allowing other economic opportunities compatible with agriculture and open space uses? • Consider outreach specifically focused on farmworkers as a stakeholder group. • There is a need for engagement directly with agricultural workers (in addition to operators who own and run local farms).
Agricultural Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmworker housing is one of the biggest challenges for agriculture in San Mateo County. • Availability and access to housing for farmworkers and the agricultural workforce is a major need in the agricultural community. • Conduct an additional study of Farm Labor Housing along the Coast. • Consider how the District could support the development of more agricultural workforce housing. • Housing need is a crisis for San Mateo County Agriculture. This contributes to labor shortage, an important limiting factor for sustaining agriculture. • Consider making land available for agricultural workforce housing. • Housing was frequently identified as one of the most important limiting resources in the agricultural community. This includes general affordable housing available in agricultural communities to meet regional need and housing specifically associated with agricultural properties where having a residential presence is valuable to an agricultural operation. • Housing has repeatedly been identified as a need limiting the viability of agriculture in the region. • The District should explore the feasibility and suitability of working with partners to lease or sell land to non-profit housing organizations for them to build/install new agricultural workforce housing units. • Prioritizing housing to onsite agricultural tenants as opposed to making housing available to the broader agricultural community. • Farm workers advocates, value regional agricultural housing independent of a particular operation. • Having onsite housing for agricultural operators and workers provides 24-hour stewardship and shorter response time when issues arise on agricultural lands.

Feedback on the Development of the Agricultural Policy Grouped by Main Themes

Topic <i>(listed in random order)</i>	General Feedback/Comments¹
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Request for Proposals (RFP) solicitation process for housing and agricultural leases is an important opportunity to address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) aspects of the agricultural policy. • There is a community need for programs that create opportunities for empowerment, equity, and inclusion among members of the agricultural labor community. • Agricultural workforce housing is key aspect in which social equity can be addressed.
Agricultural infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how fencing on grazing lands could be designed or modified to better facilitate the movement of native wildlife, including the potential future presence of large mammals (e.g., tule elk). • Running farms requires equipment. Providing amenities like sheds for tractors and providing maintenance of such facilities would be helpful. • There is a need for more water storage and basic infrastructure on agricultural properties.
Agricultural Land Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clarification on why the District has focused on grazing land (as opposed to crop land) in its land conservation and management.
Agricultural conservation easements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how agricultural conservation easements could ensure more than just keeping land in production such as promoting environmentally sensitive agricultural practices • Provide more education on how conservation easements might work in an agricultural context. • Concern about the potential impact of District land ownership and easements on local tax revenue that supports schools. • There could be important advantages in the District acquiring fee title or easements on intensive agricultural lands, including providing more oversight on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guidelines for offering and managing agricultural leases. 2. Use of environmentally sensitive agricultural practices. 3. Legal, fair and equitable treatment of farmworkers and all those who are employed by the operator who holds the lease.
Leases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how the lease structure might facilitate access for small-scale or newer producers who may not have the same resource base that larger or longer tenured producers may have. • Opportunity for tenants to build equity on District ranchlands similar to POST's work on farmland. • Ranchers at Wilder Ranch State Park can buy leases from other ranchers if they decide not to ranch anymore or that year. • Locals should be considered for grazing and agricultural leases first before outside operators are solicited for future [lease] opportunities.

Feedback on the Development of the Agricultural Policy Grouped by Main Themes

Topic (listed in random order)	General Feedback/Comments ¹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lease Terms – Short term leases can be problematic for farmers to participate in grant programs that typically need ‘land-control’ for a period of 3-5 years, 7-10 years is preferred. • Possible for other people to have access to land (e.g., not <i>exclusive</i> land control). • One solution could be to include a clause in the lease terms that allows flexibility to partner for grants (e.g., if grant requires 5-year land control, then could reset lease term to make lease term be 5-years at time of grant application) • Responsiveness to timely requests for action is important for farmers. • Young or new farmers cannot afford access to land. • Management goals need to be communicated more clearly to District tenants on agricultural lands. • Existing District policies (e.g., limitations on which herbicides can be used and how they can be applied) are too restrictive and are impractical for agricultural operations. • With regard to management of agricultural leases, preference should be given to an existing operator if there is one during acquisition of an agricultural property (as opposed to starting with a competitive request for proposals). • Preference for longer lease periods, with 11 of 17 responses indicating that the current arrangement of a five-year lease with an optional five-year renewal is too short. 6 of 17 responses indicated that the current arrangement is just right. • Several respondents highlighted the importance of a lease being long enough for an agricultural operator to see returns on investments and that this is generally much longer than five years. • Renewal of a lease should be contingent on performance and stewardship of the land.
Marketing and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a more robust agriculture marketing campaign on the coast. • Expand branding of agriculture in the District. • Preference for partnering with the District in regional efforts that educate the public about the land conservation and environmental benefits of local agriculture. • Marketing should be the business of the operator, not the District and marketing is among the lowest priority issues for District involvement in the agricultural community. • There is value for the District to partner in regional efforts that promote and raise awareness around local agriculture.

Feedback on the Development of the Agricultural Policy Grouped by Main Themes

Topic <i>(listed in random order)</i>	General Feedback/Comments¹
Partnerships, representation and agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider partnering with State Parks to help add grazing management to some State Park lands that are located adjacent to District lands. • The District should re-acknowledge its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the San Mateo Farm Bureau. • Create an agricultural advisory board comprised of agriculturalists. • Regional partners involved in agriculture such as POST, the RCD, and the NRCS have existing programs that address many of the regional needs identified during stakeholder outreach. The District could help address regional needs by supporting these partners and their programs.
Resource management and restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a major outlying need for water capture and storage for agriculture. • Water is also a major limiting resource to agriculture on District lands and throughout the region. • Prioritize investing in water storage, new wells, and/or other strategies on District lands to reduce dependency on in-stream water use followed by funding partners like the Resource Conservation District who have existing programs for supporting agricultural practices that promote efficient water use. • Agricultural funding/grant programs are covering less and less of the total cost to implement conservation practices. This highlights the need and importance of cost sharing by the District.
Research, Sustainability and environmentally-sensitive agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support more environmentally sensitive agriculture. • Consider how the District can stay up to date as environmentally sensitive agricultural practices, systems, and technology develop. • More integrated farming systems that have diversified their operations/crops have been successful on the coast. These tend to be primarily organic operations. • Not owning land contributes to the insecurity of farmers. • Contiguous land opportunities – could the District give preference to neighbor proposals that expand adjacent agricultural operations/access? • In the San Mateo coastside area, slopes that are generally over 8% are highly erosive and therefore not suitable for cultivation. • A holistic approach to running a farm or ranch is essential: Crops and livestock need to be integrated; they are not separate. Ranching and farming go hand-in-hand. Best practices are needed, tailor each operation to site and operator. • General support for understanding and implementing more environmentally sensitive agricultural practices. • More scientific research that assists agriculture is needed. • Support research on environmentally sensitive agricultural practices. • Consider herbicide trials and other research that would support farmers and agriculture on the coast.

Feedback on the Development of the Agricultural Policy Grouped by Main Themes

Topic (listed in random order)	General Feedback/Comments ¹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support operators who are actively and demonstrably working toward conservation goals such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions or increasing carbon sequestration. • Provide more education about how the District handles infrastructure improvements on its agricultural lands. • When asked how the District could best promote environmentally sensitive agricultural practices (e.g., practices that promote wildlife habitat value, carbon sequestration, and resource use efficiency on working lands and practices that reduce non-target effects of agricultural chemicals), most respondents preferred options that provide incentives for voluntary adoption of specific practices rather than requiring such practices. The option of requiring such practices on District lands was the second most popular option. • Supporting partners (such as the Resource Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service) who promote environmentally sensitive agricultural practices ranked as the third most popular option and scored very close to the option of investing in research on scientifically validated practices for environmentally sensitive agriculture. • Investing in education and outreach about environmentally sensitive agricultural practices ranked the lowest among these options. Several respondents provided additional comments. • Create an advisory panel of scientists and advocates to guide policy on addressing climate change in agriculture. • Education and outreach around environmentally sensitive agricultural practices needs to involve the people working the land as well as leaseholders. • Barriers to adopting environmentally-sensitive agricultural practices include the cost of land and housing and infrastructure (water, electrical, cold storage, etc.). POST's Farmland Futures initiative provides as a good example of addressing these barriers.
Support for row crops, greenhouses, and other intensive agricultural land use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer grants to partners who are implementing new infrastructure projects that support environmentally sensitive practices on intensive agricultural lands followed by offering grants and/or funding contributions to partners who are actively acquiring easements and fee title to preserve intensive agricultural lands (highest ranking option). • Expand community education and outreach to help build awareness and appreciation for local intensive agriculture among the general public (lowest ranking option) • Several respondents pointed to specific practices that the District could support on more intensively managed agricultural lands such as rotation of livestock (and integrating livestock and cropping systems) and using compost and cover crops.

Feedback on the Development of the Agricultural Policy Grouped by Main Themes

Topic <i>(listed in random order)</i>	General Feedback/Comments¹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Farm Plans are a way to help outline those priorities; workshops by farmers/ranchers can show how these practices work could be helpful. • Need for supporting alternative crops (such as industrial hemp) and heritage livestock breeds. • In terms of protecting row crop land and other forms of non-rangeland (non-grazing) agricultural lands on the San Mateo County coast, respondents preferred the option of supporting partner organizations such as the Resource Conservation District or Peninsula Open Space Trust in their efforts to protect and manage these lands followed by separating these lands in the acquisition process so that they can be maintained under private ownership and management.

¹Feedback noted above is based on Agricultural Producer Survey, Agricultural Producers Workshop and input received during engagement activities.

Agricultural Policy Framework

Staff assembled the main topics that emerged through conversations with stakeholders and partners (see Attachment 4, Feedback Organized by Main Topic). These topics, such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion considerations for leases and partnerships; have been identified to reflect the diverse participants and needs within the local agricultural community.

This Agricultural Policy Framework document presents the potential policy areas that potentially could be incorporated into a preliminary draft Agricultural Policy. Each potential policy area (numbered AG-1 through AG-11) is presented with both a key issue as well as potential opportunities for how the District could address the policy area. These potential policy areas were identified based on the early Board direction and the feedback received from partners and stakeholders and remain consistent with existing District policies (e.g., Basic Policy, Coastal Service Plan, etc.).

Potential Policy Area AG-1: Farmworker Advocacy and Engagement

Issue: Community-wide need for direct farm worker engagement and support (in addition to operators who own, lease, and run local farms and ranches).

Opportunity:

- Partnering with organizations that are focused on supporting local agricultural workers through grants and periodic staff consultation.

Potential Policy Area AG-2: Agricultural Housing

Issue: Housing availability for operators and farm workers to retain the local workforce that sustains agricultural operations.

Opportunities:

- Partner with and support regional partners that provide affordable agricultural work force housing.
- When housing supports an agricultural use on District lands, consider leasing an onsite (or nearby) residence to the operator/lessee or farm/ranch worker who is actively working on the land.
- Consider discounted rates for District housing that is occupied by a farm/ranch worker.

Potential Policy Area AG-3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Issue: Community need for programs that create opportunities for empowerment, equity, and inclusion among members of the agricultural labor community.

Opportunities:

- Partnering with local organizations that are focused on addressing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion that affect the agricultural community.
- Consider how DEI issues could be addressed in the solicitation process for agricultural leases.

Potential Policy Area AG-4: Agricultural Infrastructure

Issue: Investments in basic infrastructure are needed to keep lands in active agriculture and to build capacity for good stewardship.

Opportunities:

- Future investments in basic infrastructure on District lands for fencing to contain and manage livestock, water development, storage and distribution, and access roads.
- Financial contributions and/or grants to partner organizations such as the Resource Conservation District that have existing programs to support investments in infrastructure and environmental sensitive practices for intensive agricultural uses (e.g., row crops, greenhouses).

Potential Policy Area AG-5: Agricultural Land Protection

Issue: Conservation Grazing continues to be the primary agricultural use on District lands given the role and contribution of conservation grazing for achieving multiple District goals. Intensive agricultural uses, like grazing, are equally under threat from redevelopment/change in land use and discontinued use.

Opportunities:

- Current model allows for the protection of both rangelands and intensive agricultural lands with the District focused on retaining and managing rangelands in perpetuity and with intensive agricultural lands retained or transferred over to private ownership via partnerships with organizations like Peninsula Open Space Trust.
- Consider keeping agricultural uses within the same or contiguous properties together when grazing and intensive agricultural uses are run by the same operator and are intrinsic to their business model.

Potential Policy Area AG-6: Agricultural Conservation Easements

Issue: Effective tools are needed to ensure agricultural lands stay in production and to reduce barriers to entry for prospective agricultural operators.

Opportunity:

- Partnerships to acquire and manage agricultural conservation easements provide an effective means for protecting agricultural lands and uses by preventing conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses.
- Other entities and partners, including POST, are better equipped and have existing resources, tools, and frameworks to receive, hold, and monitor agricultural conservation easements.
- Agricultural conservation easements can be structured to protect the environmental quality, historic significance, and wildlife habitat and open space values of agricultural lands.

Potential Policy Area AG-7: Leases

Issue: Lease terms need to be long enough for operators to see returns on investments in agricultural lands yet also allow opportunity for entry of new operators into the agricultural economy.

Opportunities:

- Consider how the lease structure might facilitate access for small-scale or new/early-career producers who may not have the same resource base compared to larger producers.
- Consider how to balance lease terms to motivate operators to invest in the land and their onsite operation yet at same time provide opportunities for competition to choose a qualified operator who best meets District goals and selection criteria.
- Consider the possibility of allowing competition for additional lease cycles to tenants who have demonstrated good stewardship practices and have effectively implemented Board-approved resource management plan(s) for District agricultural site(s).
- Consider selection criteria pertaining to local preference, DEI, and environmental sustainability when soliciting proposals for agricultural operations.

Potential Policy Area AG-8: Marketing and Promotion

Issue: Local agricultural viability depends in part on effective marketing and promotion. The District, as a public agency, is restricted from using public funds to promote a private interest. In addition, the District depends on maintaining a high level of public trust in how it communicates and what information it puts forward for public knowledge and consumption.

Opportunities:

- Partnering in regional efforts that promote the environmental benefits of local food sources and agricultural land uses is a viable way for the District communicate with the public, is aligned with the District's mission, and serves a public good.

- Allowing District tenants to promote their products on District lands.

Potential Policy Area AG-9: Partnerships, Representation, and Agreements

Issue: The District will need support from others to achieve its agricultural policy goals and objectives; there are numerous existing entities and organizations supporting coastside agricultural needs that can lend institutional knowledge, networks, and resources to help ensure success.

Opportunity:

- Expanding existing partnerships and entering into new partnerships with organizations that support local agriculture to achieve mutual goals and leverage resources.

Potential Policy Area AG-10: Recreation

Issue: Agricultural operations vary in their compatibility with recreational access.

Opportunities:

- Evaluating the compatibility of recreational access for different agricultural uses on District lands and facilitating access where compatibility is high.
- Prioritizing agricultural uses, such as conservation grazing, that have high compatibility with recreational uses.

Potential Policy Area AG-11: Research, Sustainability, and Environmentally Sensitive Agriculture

Issue: Technical and financial barriers are limiting the adoption of environmentally sensitive agricultural practices.

Opportunities:

- Investing in research of new techniques for improving efficient use of resources, reducing impacts of agricultural practices, and enhancing habitat value on working lands.
- Providing technical support and incentives for implementation of environmentally sensitive practices on District lands. Requiring such practices to protect natural resources by both conventional and organic farming operations.
- Supporting regional partners with existing programs that encourage the adoption of environmentally sensitive agricultural practice