

# TOOLS THAT SUPPORT FARMING

## YOLO COUNTY

Western Sacramento experienced a dramatic loss of farmland (approximately 22,000 acres since 1990), a loss in the number of farms, and an aging farmer population. Yolo County decided to do something to help preserve critical farmland.

Yolo County responded by developing policies and tools to encourage the conservation and preservation of farmland outside existing planned communities. The county recognized agriculture as "the most important industry in Yolo County."



Source: Flickr - Dr. B (bioflyer)

Yolo County agricultural preservation techniques include:

- General preservation: Williamson Act contracts, Farmland Security Zones, and revenue sharing agreements
- Limits on use: use restrictions, minimum parcel sizes, and cluster zoning
- Conservation easements and mitigation programs: agricultural conservation easements and transfer of development rights
- Marketing and economic support: agricultural districts and tourism
- Farmer support: educational and technical assistance
- Rural culture: right to farm ordinance and lower service standards

Text adapted from Design, Community, and Environment Presentation

## Innovative Techniques to Preserve Critical Farmland

Potential application: Helping to preserve agricultural land outside of the SEGA



- 67% of total land area is in Williamson Act contracts
- 85% of the population in the incorporated cities occupies 5% of the land in the County
- Yolo County Land Trust has placed 6,300 acres in conservation easements

Source: Design, Community, and Environment

Source: San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, www.spur.org

## ALBA: Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association

Agriculture workers are underpaid and often lack some of the skills necessary to succeed. In Monterey County, more than 100,000 people, or nearly 30% of the population, are engaged in largely low-skill, low-wage agricultural activities.

ALBA, based in Salinas and Watsonville, focuses on training small farmers and entrepreneurs in broad skills that lead to job advancement or farm ownership. ALBA leverages farm workers' field experience with agronomic and marketing skills in order to incubate small-scale organic farming businesses and link economic opportunity with conservation goals.

ALBA provides the following services at the Rural Development Center and Triple M Ranch:

- Farmer Education Program
- Incubator environment for farmers
- Equipment maintenance workshops
- Cooler and distribution facilities
- Below-market rate land leases to beginning farmers
- Organic sales and distribution program

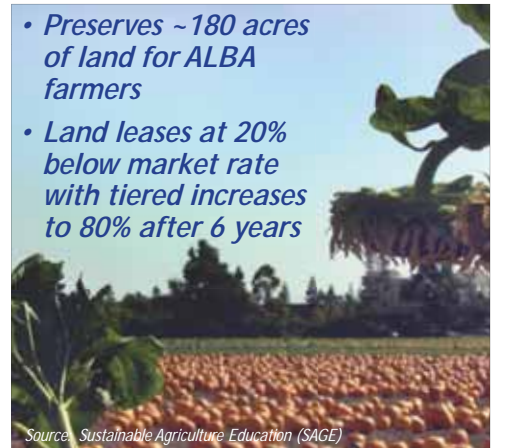
Source: ALBA website

## Farmworker Skills Programs

Potential application: Supporting small-scale farming in and around the SEGA



Source: ALBA



Source: Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)

- Preserves ~180 acres of land for ALBA farmers
- Land leases at 20% below market rate with tiered increases to 80% after 6 years

Currently, the majority of farmers are over the age of 55. Who will manage the future crop production, and what resources are available for them to get started in an agriculture career?

## ALBA FARMER Amparo Martinez



Source: ALBA

Mr. Martinez is a native of Mexico. He graduated from ALBA's PEPA (Small Farmer Education Program) in 1999 and has been farming full-time ever since.

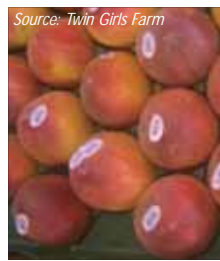
Currently, Amparo farms 16 acres at the Rural Development Center, cultivating strawberries, celery, romaine lettuce, zucchini, cilantro, and other cool-season crops.

*Mr. Martinez employs 8 of his 12 children in the family farming business. He sells largely to a local broker, but has begun to diversify his marketing outlets at the suggestion and encouragement of ALBA.*

Source: SAGE AgPark Toolkit

## Recruiting Entrepreneurs to the Agricultural Profession

## FRESNO FARMERS Ignacio and Casamira Sanchez



Source: Twin Girls Farm



Source: Twin Girls Farm

Currently, Ignacio and Casamira own the Twin Girls Farm in Reedley, CA, which is named after their eldest daughters, Christyna and Serena. The farm totals 436 acres with nearly 40% of the area certified organic. The farm cultivates a variety of fruits including apricots, cherries, citrus, plums and pomegranates.

*The Sanchezes employ 19 full-time and 9 seasonal workers. Twin Girls Farm enjoys wide distribution—including to the prestigious San Francisco Ferry Plaza Farmers Market.*

Source: Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA)



Source: CUESA