



# NEWS

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## REPORT DETAILS IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE TO CALIFORNIA, URGES SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINING FOOD SYSTEMS

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – Agriculture continues to drive a major part of California’s economy but the cornerstones are in jeopardy, according to a report released today by the California Council of Land Trusts.

“California has a rich and varied economy, but while segments of the state like Silicon Valley and Hollywood receive a lot of attention, the reality is that agriculture remains one of the most important parts of our economy. Moreover, everybody eats!” said Darla Guenzler, Executive Director of CCLT.

“The drought and its impact on our reserves have sharpened attention on the threats to agriculture, and organizations which are working to protect our land, water, and food systems need the support of all Californians,” she said.

The “Growing Our Future” report <http://www.calandtrusts.org/resources/conserving-californias-harvest/> was prepared by CCLT to “celebrate the agricultural powerhouse that is California and to recognize the complexity of growing and maintaining a system that delivers healthy and sustainably-grown food to all our tables,” said Guenzler.

Bill Martin, Executive Director of the Central Valley Farmland Trust, called the report, “very well done. It exemplifies the multi-level importance of California agriculture, and shows the definitive linkage between how and where food is produced and the Californians who eat it. As this document makes clear, food does not come from supermarket.”

Kevin Sanchez, of the Yolo Food Bank, had a similar reaction. “This report is the most succinct yet powerful portrayal of our food system in California. The numbers are impressive and yet unnerving.

In response to release of the report, Mary Kimball, Executive Director for the Center for Land-Based Learning, stated “The California Council of Land Trusts’ Food and Ag report brings to light the key issues facing agriculture today and does it in a very proactive context. There are amazing organizations all across the State dedicated to ensuring the next generation will prosper from California’s agricultural bounty.”

“There is no where on earth like California for growing food, but the cornerstones of the system are in jeopardy, like the loss of another million acres of farm land, uncertain and over tapped water supplies, and the decline of bees that pollinate one in every three bites of food. Many people have lost connection and knowledge about the origins of food. Nearly 4 million Californians are food insecure, and we dump millions of tons of food each year. Yet, a sustainable food system can feed us, help combat climate change, and improve water quality and supply,” explained Wendy Millet, Executive Director of TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation.

“From protecting farmlands to food banks to buying local, the organizations profiled in the report are all delivering solutions for growing a sustainable food system in California. We call on California’s leaders, organizations, producers, and citizens to recognize that having a sustainable food system for our state depends upon Californians understanding, valuing, and actively supporting the land, water, and human power needed to deliver healthy food to all our tables.”

The report will be distributed to local, state and federal elected leaders, and nonprofit organizations who are working to build a sustainable food system for California. It is also the basis of a sold-out gathering Friday evening, October 9<sup>th</sup>, entitled *All Aboard California: A Farm-to-Fork Event to Savor California’s Bounty* hosted by CCLT. Awards will be presented to organizations profiled in the report; keynote speakers are Karen Ross, Secretary of CA Food and Agriculture, and John Laird, Secretary of Natural Resources.

The California Council of Land Trust’s mission is to build a statewide land trust community equal to the challenge and privilege of conserving our extraordinary land and water resources for all Californians. We serve as a unified voice for more than 150 land trusts working in local communities throughout California, and we partner with public agencies and nonprofit organizations to advance critical issues for natural resources, agriculture and the public’s enjoyment and connection to the outdoors.