



Yolo County Ag Futures Alliance
Constitution
Adopted 4-4-06

Preamble

Food and food production is a cornerstone of civilization. Civilizations that fail to create a sustainable food system ultimately and always fail. Yolo County is blessed with ideal conditions to provide healthy food in perpetuity if we are able to balance the needs of farms and ranches to be economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just. The Yolo AFA is an association of individuals from agriculture, environmental groups, and the community who have come together to find a way to create this balance in Yolo County. We try to reduce political conflict by working through issues with our group's broad perspective in order to come up with solutions that can bring the community to a strong consensus. This document is our expression of our core beliefs about how to make positive change and create a sustainable community.

Our Purpose

The purpose of the Yolo County Ag Futures Alliance is to maintain and enhance agriculture and the environment in Yolo County in perpetuity.

Principles of Organization

Recognizing that efforts to create meaningful coalitions often fail for lack of clarity around how to be successful as a group, we have established these principles of organization to guide how we work together.

1. We will strive to include in our membership a broad spectrum of community interests.
2. We work in concert with each other and other organizations to be sure our ideas are not created in a vacuum.
3. We value and respect the experience, perspective and talent of each member, especially any unique hands-on experience, and recognize that this will provide great benefit to the group. We understand respect to be both a feeling of equality and an attitude that does not discount or devalue what members bring to the group.

4. We recognize the importance of seeking and basing our work on factual and scientific data.
5. We strive to learn from the experience of each member as well as from other available sources of information. We review our decisions and plans in light of new understanding of the issues.
6. We strive to be clear and accurate in order to be effective.
7. Different points of view are natural and desirable parts of our dialogues. How we address differences is critical; we talk and listen with respect, to gain understanding.
8. We make decisions by consensus. Consensus means that the decision made is one to which everyone gives consent.
9. We accurately record all viewpoints expressed. It is the responsibility of each member to assure that her/his viewpoint is accurately captured.
10. A sense of humor and humility is essential to our success.

Principles of Practice

Recognizing that our success is based on understanding and incorporating our deepest beliefs about the issues facing agriculture and environment, our communities, and our world we have identified these principles of practice to guide our actions.

1. We make our best effort to illuminate the root causes of the problems we are working to address.
2. We recognize that agriculture, including farming, ranching, processing, and support services, is an economic engine in our community.
3. The land and natural resources Yolo County depends on are unique and not portable.
4. Sustainable agriculture requires sufficient scale to support all the ancillary businesses that make it possible. There is a tipping point, when the loss of processing facilities, repair shops, equipment vendors and similar businesses make agriculture no longer viable.
5. Agriculture is not “just another business;” civilization depends on agriculture. Where agriculture is either not possible or is lost, civilization either does not take hold or is at risk.
6. Agriculture is part of the ecosystem, both serving and being served by our local ecology. We recognize the importance of conserving natural resources, such as soil, air, water and natural habitat, to sustain the long-term viability of both agriculture and environment.
7. We recognize the right to fair compensation for farmers, farm workers, and everyone involved in the agricultural industry.

8. Agriculture is a unique industry that creates new wealth each year.
9. Education of the public is a critical part of any plan to support sustainability.

What We Do

Provide New Ideas For Tough Problems

- Develop position papers
- Write Op/Ed pieces
- Support new research
- Be proactive (not reactive)
- Meet issues head on

Develop Coalitions

- Collaborate with other organizations
- Reach out to stakeholders
- Develop positions that have broad enough support to be realistic

Be Advocates in Public Arena

- Testify at public hearings
- Meet with County officials
- Promote policies
- Connect with the press
- Recommend positions and officials in elections

Be Educators

- Engage the public
- Create forums on issues
- Work in schools

Find Common Ground

- Use consensus to make recommendations
- Support proposals that promote agriculture

Yolo AFA Guidelines for Membership

Introduction

AFA Guidelines for Membership are intended to provide a consistent and understandable set of policies to guide members of AFA in maintaining the integrity of the AFA process. They are developed in accord with the following assumptions:

1. The Guidelines will be in line with the foundational work of the first year and designed to achieve the purpose of AFA in accordance with the principles set forth in the Constitution;
2. The Guidelines will maintain and enhance the unique dynamic, balance, and pattern of relationships within the AFA resulting from the diversity of affected views and interests at the table; and

3. The Guidelines will be generic in design and equitable to avoid individual and /or organizational politics of representation.

Structure

1. **SIZE.** The AFA Round Table will have a maximum size of 20 and a minimum of 9. (If 9 cannot be maintained, AFA needs to seriously question its relevance and continued existence.)
2. **CATEGORIES.** There are three main categories of membership: agricultural, environmental and civic. Civic includes community organizations and local government. Within each category, there are specific interest groupings that need to be considered as valuable perspectives to be represented in AFA. Representation from these interests will ensure the appropriate balance necessary to achieve the AFA purpose.
3. **COMPOSITION.** There shall be a minimum of three (3) members from the Agriculture category of which at least two (2) must be from production agriculture. There shall be a minimum of three (3) members from Environmental and three (3) from Civic. Individuals running for or holding political elected office are not eligible for core group membership.

Membership Intent

Emphasis should be given to the following membership characteristics:

1. **INDIVIDUAL BASIS.** Membership and participation in AFA is on an individual basis. There are no group memberships. Members may come from and represent the perspective of a particular interest group, but when involved in the activities of AFA, members balance constituency allegiances with the special obligation to be responsible to the larger AFA process. In AFA, members are expected to pursue group consensus in accordance with the AFA Constitution. Likewise, the individual member's group is not bound by any decision or action of the AFA; and
2. **ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONS.** While membership is essentially individual, it is desirable that a high proportion of AFA members come from well-established community organizations. This arrangement is important for purposes of AFA credibility. It is also desirable that represented community organizations support the purpose and principles of the AFA.

Selection of Members

1. When a vacancy occurs, filling the seat is initiated by nomination from a sitting member. A departing member may suggest a nomination. There must be group consensus in order to decide on the nominee. The above membership guidelines shall be followed.
2. A minimum of two AFA sitting members shall then meet with the nominee to discuss and ascertain both willingness/commitment to serve and the willingness and capacity to subscribe to the purpose and principles of AFA.
3. The AFA sitting members shall then report back to the group at its next regular meeting. The nominee must be approved by group consensus. The new member begins service at the following regular meeting.

Process of Renewal

After the initial two years, the AFA will seek to rotate a maximum of 1/3 of the members off the Round Table each year. This rotation, on a calendar year basis, is desirable to allow the fresh infusion of perspectives necessary to keep the organization relevant and responsive to the actual

needs of the wider community. In order to maintain balance, the 1/3 that rotates off needs to be in approximately the same relative composition as the Round Table itself. Members are expected to commit to a cycle of 10 meetings per year for a preferred maximum of 3 years. **By group consensus the service limitation of 3 years may be waived for certain key members.**

Termination

The effective functioning of the Round Table is absolutely dependent on the commitment and regular participation of its members. Therefore AFA shall have a termination of membership policy as follows:

1. A member who misses 2 consecutive regularly scheduled meetings without advising the other membership shall be considered to have resigned;
2. A member who misses 3 meetings in a calendar year shall be considered to have resigned; and
3. A member who is deemed by the core group to have failed to live up to the purpose and principles of the AFA Constitution may be terminated by group consensus, less the affected member.

In the event of 1 or 2, *on an exceptions basis* a resigned member may be re-instated by group consensus at the following meeting. Meeting attendance shall be reviewed regularly by the facilitator and reported to the group.

The facilitator shall notify an affected member of his or her effective resignation or termination.