

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County believes that the county agricultural industry is of historical, environmental and economic importance to our region. The county possesses unique and separate properties and challenges that differ from the rest of California and the United States. The arid nature of its climate, lack of water sources and high land costs present a special challenge to agriculture in our region.

## **Land Use**

1. Support the preservation and expansion of land used for agricultural purposes through:  
a) adopted General and Specific Plans; b) zoning; and c) permanent dedication programs in order to encourage the long-term presence and viability of the agricultural industry in an environmentally sound manner.

## **Challenges to Agriculture in San Diego**

### ***Water***

2. Encourage farmers to improve water conservation, selection of crops appropriate for our climate and end all runoff of pesticides, insecticides and fertilizers from their fields and groves, as currently recommended by the UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Division (UC ANR). In addition, local governments and water districts, as well as the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) should be encouraged to facilitate ever evolving best agricultural water practices recommended by UC ANR, or similar organizations, through incentives and innovative programs.
3. Support the availability and use of recycled water for a dependable, sustainable source of agricultural water.
4. Monitor the implementation of the 2013 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act goals because groundwater, which may represent 9% of our regional water source, needs to be preserved and protected from contaminants.
5. Continue support of the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) programs and pricing that facilitate the provision of regional agricultural water, when appropriate.

### ***Climate Change***

6. Support efforts of the county agricultural industry to adapt to climate change through promotion of research, development of new resources and implementation of environmentally sensitive technologies and conservation strategies.

## ***Pests and Diseases***

7. Support government and privately funded efforts to protect the agricultural industry and the environment from pests and diseases. Such programs include the University of California Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program and the California Detector Dog Teams.

## ***Pollinator Protection***

8. Support efforts to protect, maintain and foster a sustainable, healthy population of bees and other pollinators to support county agriculture.

## ***Labor***

9. Support immigration policies at the local, state and federal levels which allow for a legal labor force to work in local agriculture.

## ***Opportunities***

10. Support new alternative water use farming practices and technologies which result in long term, sustainable, efficient water use.
11. Support research on, and implementation of, sustainable agricultural practices at all levels including production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management.
12. Support an understanding and awareness of the concept and value of sustainable agriculture both within the agricultural community and among the public.



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We want to especially note the valuable and informative annual publication of the San Diego County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, the “2013 Crop Statistics & Annual Report”. It was a crucial foundation to our understanding of the current state of agriculture in San Diego County.

## ***INTERVIEWS***

James Bethke, County Director, Nursery & Floriculture Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension

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