

**DRAFT 4**  
*City of Goleta, California*  
May 5, 2004

**BACKGROUND REPORT NO. 17**

**Agriculture**  
**City of Goleta, California**



Fairview Garden Farms  
Photo courtesy County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development

## **INTRODUCTION**

For over two hundred years the Goleta Valley has been a land of great agricultural diversity and prosperity. Spanish land grants first divided up the area into very large ranchos covering thousands of acres. Over time, these ranchos were subdivided into large and profitable ranches and farms. After World War II, Goleta began to follow the same pattern as the rest of the state when agricultural properties began to convert to urban uses at an increasing rate. Once the construction of the Bradbury Dam that created Lake Cachuma was completed in 1957 the growing community was assured an ample and stable water supply, permitting accelerated rates of change. Today the Goleta urban area contains about 920 acres still zoned for agriculture, less than half of the amount that remained in 1967.<sup>1</sup>

This report will first provide some brief background information on agriculture in the state and Santa Barbara County in order to give some context for the ensuing discussion on Goleta farming. All remaining parcels within the city limits which are zoned for, or used for, agriculture will be described and discussed

---

<sup>1</sup> Goleta Urban Agriculture Newsletter, Santa Barbara County Planning and Development. 2002.  
*City of Goleta, California* *XVII-1*

individually. Information will also be provided on some of the County zoned agricultural properties in the Goleta area which surround the City on three sides.

## **BACKGROUND**

### *State*

California is the number one agricultural producer of all the states in the nation, with total revenues in 2001 of \$25.9 billion. The state produces over 350 crops, growing more than half of all the nation's fruits, nuts and vegetables. Many of these are specialty crops grown almost exclusively in California. The state also leads the nation in agricultural exports, sending more than \$6.5 billion in agricultural products to other nations, with Canada, Europe and Japan being the top three importers.

Within the state there are five types of farmland as defined by the Department of Conservation: Prime, Statewide Importance, Unique, Local Importance and Grazing Land. Prime Farmland has the best combination of soil quality, growing season and moisture for sustaining long-term agriculture and must have been in irrigated production sometime during a four year period. Farmland of Statewide Importance is similar to Prime Farmland, but with some minor problems like less moisture or steeper slopes. It also must have been used for irrigated agriculture sometime during a four year period. Unique Farmland has lesser quality soils but is used for specific crops with high economic value that are particularly suited to that type of land. The crops may or may not be irrigated. Farmland of Local Importance is determined by each county's board of supervisors as important for the local agricultural economy. Grazing Land is land with existing vegetation that makes it suitable for the raising of livestock.

There are several state programs to encourage the long-term protection of farmland. In 1965 the Williamson Act was established which provides tax incentives to landowners who put their land under 10 year contracts that restrict development during that time period. The contracts are automatically renewed annually, unless the landowner requests non-renewal. The benefits of the Williamson Act are that the land's property taxes are based on the agricultural income derived from it and not the fair market or Proposition 13 value. The contract provides a certainty that the land will remain in agriculture or open space for the minimum ten year period and so receives greater protection from encroaching urban development.

Farmland Security Zones are areas within agricultural preserves which receive greater tax benefits (35% below the Williamson Act valuation) in return for entering into a 20 year contract. A farmer interested in participating in this program would present a petition to their County Board of Supervisors for approval. In Santa Barbara County, both the agricultural preserve and Farmland

Security Zone programs are governed by a set of “Uniform Rules,” which can be amended by the Board of Supervisors upon recommendation from the Agricultural Commissioner’s office and the Planning and Development Department.

The California Farmland Conservancy Program began in 1996 and provides grant funding for agricultural conservation easements. The easement pays a cash amount to the farmer for the land’s future development rights. The farmer retains ownership and the property remains in agricultural production permanently. The Department of Conservation’s Division of Land Resource Protection manages both the Williamson Act and the California Farmland Conservancy Program.

Individual counties have also taken action to protect their remaining farm land. Sonoma County residents voted for the establishment of an Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District financed by a quarter cent sales tax increase. Since 1990 the District has collected about \$80 million and spent \$45 million to protect about 27,000 acres. Both Ventura and San Luis Obispo Counties have passed “SOAR” (Save Our Agricultural Resources) initiatives which require the citizens’ vote of approval before agricultural property can be rezoned for other uses.

Despite all of these actions and programs to protect agricultural properties, California farmland continues to be converted to urban uses at an increasing rate. The American Farmland Trust’s report entitled “Farming on the Edge” lists three prime farming regions in California among the top twenty in the nation as most threatened by urban encroachment – the Central Valley (#1), Central California Coastal Valleys – which includes Goleta - (#15) and the Imperial Valley (#17).<sup>2</sup>

The Agricultural Issues Center of the University of California reported in May 2001 that the state lost approximately 500,000 acres of farmland to urban development between 1988 and 1998. And between 1998 and 2000 another 90,000 acres were lost.<sup>3</sup> As most of California’s urban areas are adjacent to land with prime soils, current development patterns are expected to exacerbate these irreversible changes.

---

<sup>2</sup> American Farmland Trust, California Region Report

<sup>3</sup> California Department of Conservation, “News Room”, June 2, 2003.

## FARMING ON THE EDGE

### Sprawling Development Threatens America's Best Farmland

#### California

High-quality farmland areas have relatively large amounts of prime or unique farmland. High-development areas have relatively rapid loss of high-quality farmland to development. Other areas do not meet the two threshold tests. The relative measures compare sub-county areas against their respective statewide averages.



#### Legend:

- High-Quality Farmland & High Development
- High-Quality Farmland & Low Development
- Federal & Indian Lands
- Urban Areas
- Other Lands

*American Farmland Trust*  
www.farmland.org

0 20 Miles

08/2002

## County

For planning purposes, Santa Barbara County is divided into eight agricultural regions: the Santa Maria Valley, the Lompoc Valley, the upper Santa Ynez Valley, the Los Alamos Valley, the Cuyama Valley, the Gaviota Coast, the North Gaviota Coast and the South Coast. 72% of the County's farms are owned by individuals or families, of which, 14% are headed by women. Corporate farms make up just 2% of the total.

## Major Agricultural Products of Santa Barbara County

Row Crops	asparagus, bell peppers, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, grapes, lettuce, peas, spinach, strawberries, summer squash, anise, artichokes, beets, carrots, cilantro, sweet corn, cucumbers, endive, escarole, frisee, green beans, herbs, kale, leeks, onions, parsley, potatoes, pumpkins, winter squash, tomatoes and turnips.
Orchard Crops	avocados, lemons, walnuts, apples, cherimoyas, guavas, olives, peaches, persimmons, pistachios and sapotes
Field Crops	Lima beans, garbanzo, fava, pinto, white and yellow beans, alfalfa, hay, grain, oat seed, sudan seed and straw
Livestock and Poultry	Cattle and calves, breeding stock, chickens, llamas, pigs, goats and sheep
Livestock, Poultry and Apiary Products	Milk and milk products, honey, eggs and fertilizer
Flowers and Nursery Items	Carnations, chrysanthemums, gerbera daisies, gypsophila, orchids, roses and statice, potted flowers and plants, ground covers, turf, bulbs and fruit and vegetable transplants

Agriculture is Santa Barbara County's number one industry. The County places very high among all the counties in the nation for agricultural production, placing 30<sup>th</sup> out of more than 3,000 nationwide in 1997, the most recent year this ranking was calculated. In California, Santa Barbara County was in 14th place in 2002 for total agricultural production out of all 58 counties with gross income of \$775,051,153. The multiplier effect gives this an impact of over \$1.5 billion throughout the County.

In 2002, the leading commodities in the County were strawberries (\$115.8 million), broccoli (\$99.6 million), wine grapes (\$72.4 million), head lettuce (\$48.3 million) and cauliflower (\$45.3 million). However, the County's agricultural income is not dependent on just a few products, but is derived from a wide variety of crops. Fifty-seven different crops grown in 2002 reported gross income over \$1 million. The uniqueness and wide variety of microclimates throughout the County makes possible this great diversity in agricultural production.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL REPORT  
1999 – 2002

	Year	Acreage	Value
Vegetables	2002	69,835	\$325,720,147
	2001	67,307	\$282,524,294
	2000	71,145	\$328,670,574
	1999	74,011	\$265,130,061
Field Crops	2002	604,685	\$ 9,944,272
	2001	607,530	\$12,048,232
	2000	609,178	\$12,161,431
	1999	617,221	\$10,738,891
Fruit and Nut Crops	2002	32,276	\$251,758,571
	2001	31,523	\$242,102,144
	2000	29,396	\$204,555,071
	1999	29,080	\$201,175,702
Nursery Products	2002	2,192	\$144,487,321
	2001	2,478	\$120,992,105
	2000	2,875	\$140,718,788
	1999	2,889	\$129,336,861
Seed Crops	2002	1,305	\$7,264,616
	2001	1,731	\$8,424,614
	2000	1,817	\$7,740,832
	1999	2,526	\$8,899,427
Livestock and Poultry (includes cattle and calves, breeding stock, llamas, sheep and aquaculture)	2002		\$23,626,541
	2001		\$27,491,723
	2000		\$27,361,296
	1999		\$28,863,803
Livestock, Poultry, Dairy and Apiary Products (includes milk and milk products, eggs, honey, Fertilizer and wool)	2002		\$12,249,685
	2001		\$15,534,232
	2000		\$13,795,909
	1999		\$12,824,514
Total	2002	710,293	\$775,051,153
	2001	710,569	\$709,117,112
	2000	714,411	\$735,003,901
	1999	725,727	\$656,969,259

Source: Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner's Crop Reports 2000, 2001, 2002

The South Coast agricultural area, which stretches from Gaviota to Carpinteria and covers about 106,000 acres, accounts for about one third of the County's gross income from agriculture.<sup>4</sup> Farming occurs primarily in the areas surrounding Goleta and Carpinteria, both within and north of the urban limit line. Avocados, lemons, and orchids are just a few of the crops grown in the County because of the climate and soils found in these two areas. This unique combination of prime soils and mild climate assists the County in successfully competing in specialized agricultural markets within the state, the nation and the world.

### *Organic Farming*

The number of organic farms in the County is increasing, ranging in size from one and two acres to over a hundred acres. In 2002 there were 62 registered organic farms in the County growing over 50 different vegetables and 30 different fruit and nut crops. There is strong local support for the organic farms, which are often located inside or immediately adjacent to urban areas. Organic produce is sold at local farmers markets and purchased by area residents and restaurant owners.



To be “legally” organic, the farms must register and perform required soil testing, record keeping and periodic monitoring by a third-party organization. Organic farmers may not use pesticides and herbicides on soil, crops or livestock and will use alternative pest controls such as beneficial insects. It should be noted that some farmers use organic methods, but do not do the required paperwork for official certification. Other farmers will use a combination of organic and non-organic farming practices.

---

<sup>4</sup> Bill Gillette, Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner.  
*City of Goleta, California* *XVII-7*

There are significant environmental benefits from maintaining farm and range land, particularly those managed organically. The Institute for Ecological Health states:

“Privately owned cropland and rangeland is critical to the ecological health of many regions in the United States. This is particularly true in California, where foothill, coastal and valley landscapes are primarily private land. Many habitat types and species, including a number of rare or endangered species, only occur in these private land regions. Most of our rivers and streams flow through private rural lands for a significant part of their lengths. The ways in which landowners manage their land have major impacts on biological diversity, ecosystem processes, water quality and soil maintenance.”<sup>5</sup>

### *Agricultural Zoning*

There are two separate Agricultural zone districts in the County zoning code, AG I and AG II. Each of these zone districts has various options for minimum parcel sizes. AG I zoning can have minimum parcel sizes of 5, 10, 20 and 40 acres, e.g. “AG I – 5”, (five acre minimum parcel size). AG II can have 40, 100 or 320 acre minimum parcel sizes, e.g. “AG II – 100”, (one hundred acre minimum parcel size.)

To aid in the process of determining which agricultural properties should have either an AG I or AG II designation, the County established an “Urban Limit Line” or “Urban-Rural” line in several locations including the Goleta area. The County defines “Urban” land is that within the boundary while “Inner Rural” and “Rural Neighborhoods” are those in the area just outside the line and adjacent to the urban area. “Rural” areas are those outside the boundary and outside the “inner rural” areas.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of the AG – I zone district is to designate lands appropriate for agricultural use within Urban, Inner Rural and Rural Neighborhood areas. It provides standards which will support agriculture as a viable land use and encourage maximum agricultural productivity. Uses permitted are all types of agriculture, except for commercial livestock feed or sales yards. These uses can include the raising of horses, mules, cattle, sheep, llamas, ostriches and other livestock on parcels more than 20 acres. On parcels less than 20 acres, only one animal per 20,000 square feet is allowed, (about 2 per acre.) Private kennels and the raising of poultry are limited to reasonable personal, not commercial, use.

---

<sup>5</sup> “Linkages”, Newsletter of the Institute for Ecological Health. No. 12, Fall 2001.

<sup>6</sup> The City of Goleta adopted the County’s zoning ordinance upon incorporation and contains agricultural parcels zoned AG I and AG II. The City’s northern boundary line is contiguous with the urban limit line except where it encompasses the Couvillion property zoned AGII north of Cathedral Oaks and west of the Glen Annie Golf Course.



Buildings and uses allowed in the AG I zone district per parcel, can be:

- 1) a farmstand not more than 600 feet in sales area
- 2) greenhouses (if total development of greenhouse and other structures on property exceeds 20,000 s.f., than project needs a development plan.)
- 3) one single family dwelling per legal lot which may be a mobile-home.
- 4) one guest house or artist studio per legal lot
- 5) home occupations
- 6) wineries, with a development plan
- 7) one attached residential unit
- 8) one detached residential unit
- 9) special care homes
- 10) other buildings considered accessory to the use, i.e. a barn.

Uses that require a major conditional use permit are: trout farms, hog ranches, dairies, commercial riding stables, onshore oil development and farm labor camps, including trailers for housing five more employees working on or off the property. Minor conditional use permits are needed for commercial kennels, animal hospitals, commercial poultry farm, or similar small animal operation. The purpose of AG II zoning is to establish agricultural land use for prime and non-prime agricultural lands located outside of Urban, Inner Rural and Rural Neighborhood areas, with the intent of preserving them for long-term agricultural use. Permitted uses include all those listed for the AG I district, except those listed as needing a major or minor conditional use permit in the AG I zoning do not need one in the AG II zoning.

Besides those permitted uses, AG II zoning also allows excavation and quarrying of building or construction materials up to 1,000 cubic yards in an area not exceeding one acre. Anything larger than that would be required to obtain a special mining permit. Additional uses available with a major conditional use permit are campgrounds and guest ranches, rifle ranges, packing houses, aquaculture, and commercial livestock feed or sales yards. All of the uses listed in the zoning code for both agricultural zone districts are subject to both general regulations and specific development standards.

### *Agricultural Policies and Ordinances*

To emphasize the high importance of agricultural activities in the County, the Board of Supervisors adopted an Agricultural Element for the Comprehensive Plan in 1991. The Element contains twenty five strong goals and policies to protect and enhance the role of agriculture including:

- Goal I – to assure and enhance the continuation of agriculture as a major viable production industry

- Policy I.D. – strong encouragement and support for the use of the Williamson Act and other agricultural land protection programs.
- Policy I.F. – protection of the quality and availability of water, air and soil resources through the establishment and maintenance of stable urban/rural boundary lines and other buffer areas around agricultural properties.
- Policy I.G. – encouragement for sustainable agricultural practices to preserve the long-term health and viability of the soil.
- Goal II – protection of agricultural lands from adverse urban influence.
- Policy II.D. – conversion of highly productive agricultural lands whether urban or rural shall be discouraged.
- Goal III – a necessary conversion of agricultural land shall not interfere with remaining agricultural operations.
- Policy III.A. – expansion of urban development into active agricultural areas outside of urban limits is discouraged.
- Policy III.B. – it is a County priority to retain blocks of productive agriculture within Urban Areas where reasonable.

The County also has a “Right to Farm” Ordinance adopted in the 1980s which protects farmers and ranchers from issues and conflicts that could arise as rural and urban uses come into closer contact with each other. For example, this type of conflict can arise when new residences are built near to existing farms.

Approximately 73% of the agriculturally zoned land in the County is under Williamson contract. Also, the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County has been successful in negotiating several conservation easements on large agricultural properties including protecting 105 acres on Rancho Rinconada in Buellton, Rancho Dos Vistas (1,406 acres), La Paloma Ranch (750 acres) and El Capitan Ranch (650 acres) all on the Gaviota Coast and Fairview Gardens (12 acres) in the City of Goleta.

Despite these successes, Santa Barbara County is still losing productive agricultural land. Between 1992 and 2000, 4,352 acres of County farmland were converted to non-agricultural uses. 2,443 acres– 56% of the total-- was property considered Prime Farmland.



Fairview Garden Farms surrounded by Goleta residential development.  
Photo courtesy County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development

## Goleta



Photo courtesy of Fairview Gardens



Photo courtesy of Fairview Gardens

The Goleta Valley has a rich agricultural heritage which reaches back two hundred years. The area has a benign climate and extremely fertile soil which

has allowed the profitable year round cultivation of a wide variety of crops and the raising of livestock. Several of the finest remaining historic structures in Goleta - Stow House and Sexton House - were the family homes of some of the area's first farmers and ranchers.

The area was also in the forefront in experimenting with growing new and different crops. The La Patera Rancho was one of the first ranches to plant a commercial lemon orchard in California. Goleta pioneer Ellwood Cooper was the first to try growing eucalyptus commercially. Several of the groves and windrows he planted are still a part of Goleta's scenery today and provide adaptive habitat for aggregations of monarch butterflies. At the turn of the century pampas grass was also planted and harvested commercially. Later, walnuts became one of Goleta's leading crops, along with beans and other vegetables.



Patterson and Calle Real Intersection in 1948 and 2000.  
Photo courtesy County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development

Over the past fifty years most of the orchards and row crop areas in the fertile valley floor have been uprooted for residential and business development. Only pockets of cultivated agriculture remain, along with some greenhouse development. Major agricultural production still occurs on the south facing slopes and hillsides, most of them covered with orchards of lemon and avocado trees.

### *Goleta Community Plan*

In 1993 the Board of Supervisors approved the Goleta Community Plan. As part of that process, County planning staff reviewed all vacant parcels in the Plan area, including over twenty agricultural parcels or blocks of parcels. The final Plan permitted the cumulative conversion of up to 238 acres of urban agricultural land to urban uses with the potential loss of 208 acres of prime soils and 30 acres of productive non-prime soils. The Plan outlined three Class I environmental impacts on agricultural resources resulting from this conversion.

Three large “blocks” of land were determined to still be agriculturally viable for the long term and kept their agricultural zoning – the Bishop Ranch (287 acres), the South Patterson Agricultural Block (610 acres) and the Hollister-San Marcos Agricultural Area (51 acres). Four smaller parcels were believed to be agriculturally viable for the short to mid term – about ten years. These properties were Fairview Gardens (12 acres of orchards and row crops), the Noel Christmas Tree Farm (26 acres), the MTD site on Calle Real (17 acres of row crops) and a parcel on Cathedral Oaks just west of Dos Pueblos High School owned by Dr. Couvillion (13 acres of avocados).

Many other parcels were rezoned for other uses, primarily housing, which cumulatively had a significant impact on agricultural resources in the area. Some of the development which has occurred on those sites since 1993 are the Maravilla Senior Community, Orchard Park, Hollipat, Winchester Commons, Mountain View Ranch, Forte Ranch and Oakview housing developments, as well as the Patterson Self Storage and Girls Incorporated projects.



Lane Farms

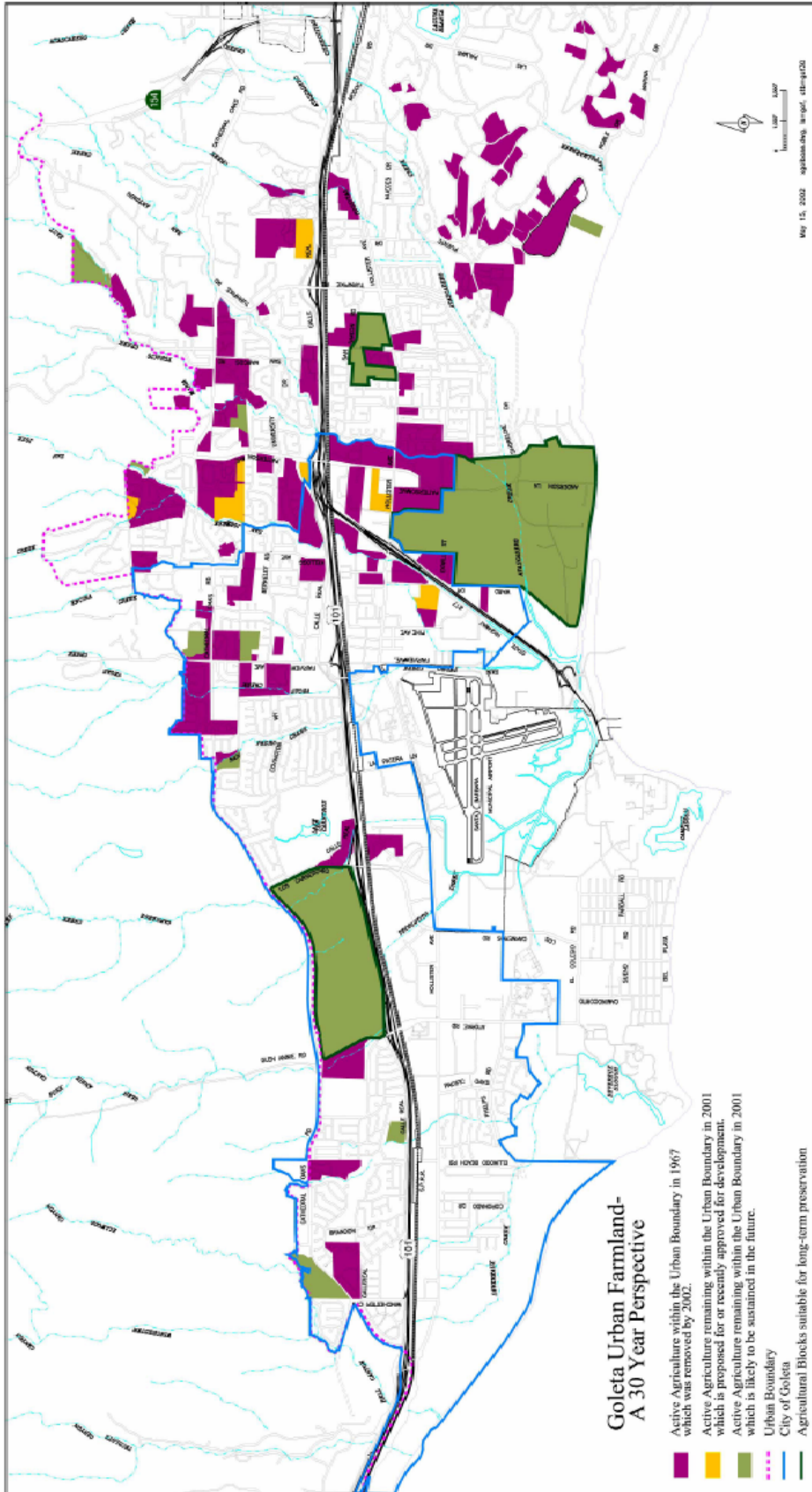
To aid in the continued viability of the remaining agricultural resources, the Goleta Community Plan contained a number of policies to protect agriculture including:

- Land designated for agriculture within the urban boundary shall be preserved for agricultural use, unless the County makes findings that the land is no longer appropriate for agriculture or there is an overriding public need for conversion to other uses for which there is no other land available in the Goleta urban area.
- In consideration of conversion any agricultural land within the urban boundary to urban uses, the County shall first consider smaller, more isolated parcels with greater urban/agricultural conflicts prior to larger blocks of agricultural land.

The Bishop Ranch, Fairview Gardens and the Couvillion property are all now within the City of Goleta and the Tree Farm and the South Patterson Agricultural Block are both on the City's eastern border with the County.

Currently, all three of the large agricultural blocks continue to be farmed either partially or completely. Of the four smaller properties, the Couvillion site was developed as the "Crown Collection" housing tract when the missing section of Cathedral Oaks Road was completed. Both the MTD site and the Christmas Tree Farm are now designated housing sites for the County's Housing Element Update and have housing development proposals in process.

Fairview Gardens is still in active agricultural production and also operates a produce stand on site. It is now operated as a non profit with a conservation easement which permanently keeps it from being converted to urban uses. It is the only agricultural property in the entire Goleta area to be so protected. In addition, there are no agricultural parcels in the Goleta urban area which are currently covered by Williamson contracts. Today in the Goleta urban area 920 acres of agricultural land are left, with 680 acres actively farmed. 358 acres of the total are within the City of Goleta boundaries. The map which follows gives a clear picture of how much land has been lost to urban development since 1967. The map is used through the courtesy of the County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development department.



## *Agricultural Employment and Water*

Agricultural employment currently totals about 900 – 1,000 jobs, accounting for 2 - 3% of the total employment in the Goleta area. Of that number, approximately one third of the jobs are performed by females and two thirds by males. Wages for men and women are equivalent or higher to those in the retail sector.

Water for irrigation is obtained either through private wells on the farm or ranch properties, or through a Goleta Water District meter. Through the years the District has kept water rates for agriculture substantially lower than for residential and business customers, currently \$.95 per hundred cubic feet (HCF) as compared to \$3.29 per HCF for residential and commercial accounts. This has occurred due to a combination of strong lobbying efforts by the local growers and Goleta residents who support the retention of local agriculture as a viable economic endeavor. This support was reconfirmed just recently in the spring of 2003 when a Citizen Advisory Committee for the Goleta Water District recommended a rate increase for all customers, except the agricultural accounts.

However, although the commodity charges for agricultural water are less than for urban uses, this primarily benefits existing farms and ranches. Any new agricultural enterprise seeking to begin operations would be forced to pay costly start up charges for planning, permitting, metering and additional capacity costs in order to obtain water service.

For example, a new 2 inch service connection for agricultural irrigation is currently charged \$304,493. In comparison, a new connection of the same size for a commercial account is \$89,569.<sup>7</sup> The total of new service fees and charges for any new agricultural operation could run into the millions of dollars, depending upon the size of the acreage. As most farms and ranches do not make large profits, these initial costs would be a serious deterrent to anyone wishing to begin a new farming operation within the service area of the Goleta Water District.

## *Agricultural Products*

Although it would appear that avocados and lemons dominate the agricultural production in Goleta, there are actually many other products grown here as well which mirror the agricultural diversity throughout the county. Because of the wide variety of soil types and microclimates found in the area, Goleta produces a range of products from the subtropical like cherimoyas, bananas and all types of citrus to broccoli, corn, strawberries, squashes, lettuces, apricots and tomatoes, to name a few. Greenhouse operations produce a variety of ornamental plants and flowers which are shipped across the nation, as well as sold locally. There is also a thriving orchid business. Local beekeeping operations produce and sell

---

<sup>7</sup> Goleta Water District, Water Service Applications Packet, January 2002.  
City of Goleta, California



honey and honeycomb. Because of local consumer demand, most of the area's row crops are grown organically.



Beekeeping on the Bishop Ranch.  
Photo Courtesy of County of Santa Barbara, Agricultural Commissioner's Office

## CITY OF GOLETA AGRICULTURAL PARCELS

### *Bishop Ranch*



Bishop Ranch: The view from the Calle Real/Glen Annie intersection

At a total of 287 acres, the three parcels of the Bishop Ranch located within the City of Goleta make up 84% of the remaining land still zoned for agriculture in the City. It is also the single largest undeveloped area in the City. All three parcels are zoned AG I – 40 acre minimum parcel size. The property is bounded by Los Carneros Road on the east, Glen Annie Road on the west, Cathedral Oaks to the

north and Highway 101 on the south. The site is highly visible from all of those major roadways and offers scenic vistas from numerous locations from the property as well as across the site to the mountains or ocean.



Looking north across the parcel owned by the Stow Company.

The property is divided by four drainage areas, including Los Carneros Creek, which are lined with wetland and riparian vegetation. A large number of eucalyptus trees on site are home to several monarch butterfly aggregation sites and various populations of raptors. The two smaller parcels contain some actively farmed orchards, but the larger center parcel now lays fallow.



View from Cathedral Oaks of north/central area.

The property known as the Bishop Ranch has a long and rich history and has great significance for the Goleta area. The acreage was once part of a much

larger Mexican land holding called the Dos Pueblos Rancho granted to Goleta pioneer Nicholas Den on April 18, 1842. At Den's death in 1850 the Rancho was divided in half and the eastern portion, which included much of present day Goleta, was inherited by his ten children.

A series of natural disasters combined with poor management forced the family to sell the Tecolotito Canyon portion to Colonel Hollister in 1868 who had wanted to acquire the property for a long time. Hollister paid \$10 an acre for 5,000 acres which was considered double the estimated value. He renamed Tecolotito Canyon "Glen Annie" after his wife, Annie James Hollister. The entrance to the ranch was located at what is now the intersection of Hollister and Coromar Avenues. It was demarcated with a large arch and the road leading to the house was lined on either side with large palm trees, some of which are still alive today.

In 1869 Hollister spent a large amount of money building a mansion on the property which contained, among other things, redwood lumber shipped from Santa Cruz which alone cost \$80,000 – an extravagant amount for that time. Despite the richness of their home, Annie was extremely unhappy living there with her sister-in-law and succeeded in convincing the Colonel to build her a separate – and equally expensive – mansion of her own farther up the canyon. The original home became known as the "Lower Ranch" while the second home was known as the "Upper Ranch".



Bishop Ranch entrance drive

In 1876, Nicholas Den's eldest daughter brought suit against the Hollisters and the other families who had purchased portions of the family estate, claiming the properties had been sold illegally because not all of the Den children were over 18 at the time of the sale, which had been one of the stipulations of the inheritance. The attorney representing the Den family was a man named

Thomas B. Bishop who agreed to take the case if he would receive as payment half of whatever land was recovered.

A series of court cases ensued over the next fourteen years and was finally settled by the State Supreme Court in 1890 which ruled that the Glen Annie Rancho, including the \$250,000 worth of improvements, had to be returned to the Den family immediately. As agreed upon, Thomas Bishop received half of the remaining property as payment for his work and the acreage then became known as the "Bishop Ranch".

Annie Hollister was left to face the final verdict alone, as Colonel Hollister had died four years earlier. Although the case was decided in August 1890, Annie refused to vacate the property until the County sheriff came to evict her. Finally, on November 20, 1890 she and her brother moved out. About fifteen minutes after they left a fire erupted in the mansion and it burned to the ground.

Over the course of its long history, the Bishop Ranch has supported the raising of livestock as well as a wide variety of fruit, vegetable and nut crops. Remnant walnut trees still line the drive to the home recalling a past era when walnuts were grown commercially on the property. Historical photos also show extensive plantings of orchards and row crops.



Bishop Ranch in full production, July 1948, shown with current parcel boundaries for orientation.

In 1980, the Board of Supervisors drew the Urban Limit Line for Goleta to the south of the Bishop Ranch, leaving both the upper and lower portions of the ranch (now bisected by Cathedral Oaks Road) in the rural area. In 1993 when the most recent Goleta Community Plan was adopted, a different Board moved the urban limit line so that it was aligned with Cathedral Oaks Road, putting the southern three parcels within the urban area and keeping the balance outside of it. Despite its new designation, the Board also chose to keep the agricultural zoning and indicated that if the properties were to be rezoned, the first priority would be as a “receiver” site for a transfer of development credit (TDC) program which was anticipated to transfer development rights from coastal properties. However, a County TDC program was not enacted.



Current appearance of Bishop Ranch.  
 Photo courtesy of County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development

Currently, the properties south of Cathedral Oaks within the boundaries of the urban limit line and the City of Goleta are comprised of three parcels each with different ownership. The Cardio/Pulmo Medical Group owns a 22 acre parcel on the northwest side of the site. It contains some well maintained avocado orchards on a portion of the property.

The University Exchange Corporation owns the large 240 acre center parcel. This parcel is not actively engaged in agriculture at this time, although it was intensively farmed in the past with both row crops and orchards. Located on this parcel is a historic residence and plantings that are approximately one hundred years old. These are the last remaining vestiges of the original Hollister/Bishop complex of ranch buildings which used to exist in that location. In 1992, the University Exchange Corporation submitted an application to the County to demolish 20 buildings, 17 of them considered important to the history of the ranch by local historians. The County approved the demolition with an over-the-counter permit and the historic structures were bulldozed that April.



The historic home which remains on Bishop Ranch

The Stow Land Company owns the 25 acre parcel on the eastern side along Los Carneros Road which historically was, and still is, a part of the original Stow Family/La Patera Rancho, not the Bishop Ranch. However, because of its geographic location it has been linked to the two historic Bishop Ranch parcels. The Stow Company parcel is covered in a large lemon and avocado orchard which is actively farmed. Both the University Exchange Corporation and the Stow Land Company also still own extensive acreage planted in avocado and lemon orchards directly across the street on the north side of Cathedral Oaks outside of, but immediately adjacent to, the Goleta city limits.



Bishop Ranch: Avocado orchard on northwest corner parcel



Lemon orchard on the Stow Company parcel

Presently, the Larwin Development Company has an option on the parcels owned by the Cardio/Pulmo Medical Group and the University Exchange Corporation which together total 262 out of the 287 acres. The Larwin Company has met with groups of interested parties and is proposing that the two parcels be rezoned for a variety of uses, primarily housing. A draft proposal shows a plan which includes locations for up to 1,500 housing units, a small commercial area, an 8 acre elementary school site, public park amenities and the construction of the missing section of Calle Real between Los Carneros and Glen Annie Roads.



View from Cathedral Oaks Road looking southwest

### *Fairview Garden Farms*



Fairview Gardens, looking north. The Goleta Public Library is in the lower left (southwest) corner of the farm. The produce stand is visible at the top left, at the corner of North Fairview and Stow Canyon Road.

Photo courtesy of County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development

Surrounded by suburban development on all sides, Fairview Garden Farms is a 12 acre organic farm on North Fairview Avenue, one block south of Cathedral Oaks. Zoning is Ag I with a five acre minimum parcel size. There is also a produce stand and very small gravel parking lot along the Fairview Avenue

frontage. The farm is an outstanding example of how prolific an organic farm can be on a site with soils that are not considered prime, and yet grows over 100 different fruits and vegetables annually.

The property was originally a part of the La Goleta Rancho and later subdivided. A 450 acre portion was purchased by Colonel Hollister's brother in 1870. Twenty five years later the Colonel's niece by marriage, exclaiming over the beauty of the extensive orchards as viewed from her new home, declared it a "fair view". The property – which contained areas of topsoil as much as 30 feet deep – has been farmed continuously since 1895 and may be the oldest organic farm in southern California.

When, in 1993, the Goleta Community Plan designated the parcel to remain in agricultural for only a few more years, a group of concerned citizens came together to try and figure out a way to save the farm. The result was the formation of the Center for Urban Agriculture in 1997 which raised funds and forged an agreement with the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County to buy the acreage and hold a conservation easement on the property. The easement is a legal agreement between the Center and the Land Trust that guarantees that Fairview Gardens will remain a working farm and educational facility in perpetuity. It is the only agricultural acreage in all of Goleta that is permanently protected with a conservation easement.

The farm is financially self-sufficient and employs twenty people. The produce it grows feeds about five hundred families through the only "Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)" program in the area. The Fairview Gardens CSA program began in 1988 and was the second farm on the West Coast to offer one. Residents can pay a lump sum at the beginning of the year and receive a share of the farm's produce each week throughout the growing season from mid-March to mid-November. The program has been sold out the past few years and there is a waiting list.

Additional produce is sold at the farm stand located on the property immediately adjacent to Fairview Avenue. The produce stand is open every day from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and also serves as a public information center for the farm. The farm also wholesales about 25,000 pounds of avocados every year.

Fairview Gardens participates in five different farmer's markets throughout the week – two in Santa Barbara, one in Montecito, one in Santa Monica and one in San Francisco. The markets provide an important outlet for reaching both urban and suburban communities and offer a venue for chefs to pick up orders of fresh specialty vegetables like white asparagus and heirloom tomatoes.

The farm also has a strong educational component in their mission statement to "research and interpret the connections between food, land, and community well being...." Their community programs throughout the year include workshops,



tours, lectures, cooking and gardening classes, apprenticeships and outreach and consultation to schools and communities locally and across the country. The education program is supported through fees and donations.

Besides farming organically, Fairview Gardens is committed to and practices other ideas for sustainable living. The farm has a “green” bath house with a composting toilet and graywater system, a “compost tea brewing system” and a tractor which runs on 100% recycled restaurant fryer oil. All of these features and more can be seen on both guided and self-guided tours throughout the year.

### *Ellwood Canyon*



Originally a part of the large land holding owned by pioneering horticulturalist, Ellwood Cooper, the Ellwood Canyon agricultural area contains prime soils and is located in the northwest corner of the City of Goleta just north of Cathedral Oaks and east of Winchester Canyon. Ellwood Canyon Road divides several of the parcels which are all zoned AG I with a ten acre minimum parcel size. The area is 33 acres and is owned by three different families. The majority of this area is the 27 acre Bradley farm, with the other holdings at 4.5 and 1.5 acres. The smaller farms have orchards and natural vegetation while the Bradley farm supports both row crops and greenhouse development.





### *Roman Catholic Archbishops*



Photo courtesy of County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development

This nine acre parcel of prime soils is located in northwestern Goleta and fronts on Calle Real to the south. Owned by the Catholic Church and managed by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the property is surrounded on the east and north by single family homes and on the west by a condominium development. The City of Goleta obtained a narrow easement along the northern portion of the property to accommodate the future building of a paved path which would link with the proposed pedestrian/bike bridge to be built one block to the east.

The property is divided almost equally into two parcels. The parcel along Calle Real is zoned for commercial "C-1" uses. The parcel to the rear is zoned for design residential (DR) at a density of 4.6 units to the acre. Currently the property is leased to Goleta farmer, John Lane, who grows various row crops for the local Lane Farms business.

*Philip*



Photo courtesy of County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development

This parcel contains 6.5 acres of a well maintained avocado orchard on Stow Canyon Road. The Stow Grove tennis courts community park is located across the street to the south and San Pedro Creek is immediately adjacent on the east side. The northern portion of the property abuts Cathedral Oaks Road. The orchard is an island in the midst of single family homes and is zoned 10-R-1 like the properties which surround it.



*Herold*



Photo courtesy of County of Santa Barbara, Planning and Development

There are several parcels totaling about 10 acres just northeast of the intersection of Fairview and Cathedral Oaks roads. The properties contain several single family homes and are covered with scattered avocado orchards in various stages of health. The properties are zoned 1-E-1 as are the parcels which surround them and have a gradual slope from south to north.



## *Couvillion*



This parcel is the 13 acre northern portion of what was once a large avocado orchard prior to the completion of the missing section of Cathedral Oaks Road which bisected the property. Now the road is on the southern boundary of this site and the southern section has been developed as the “Crown Collection” housing development. Glen Annie Golf Course is immediately adjacent on the east and north and a drainage/riparian area is on the west.

This agricultural property is zoned AG II with a 40 acre minimum parcel size. It is the only one in the City with an AG II zoning because it is in the unique position of being within the city boundaries but outside the urban limit line which follows Cathedral Oaks Road at this location. Although outside the urban limit line, the property owners requested that LAFCO include the site when the boundary lines for the new city were being drawn. Currently the property is not being farmed, but does contain a house and several outbuildings. The property owner has made it clear that he would like to build housing on the site in the future.

## COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND ADJACENT TO OR NEAR GOLETA CITY BOUNDARIES

There are hundreds of acres of agriculturally zoned property within the County's jurisdiction which are just outside the Goleta city limits. A number of these properties can only be accessed by using Goleta city streets. Because of their close location to the city boundaries, activities which occur on these sites directly affect the City. Any future change of use or zoning by the County for these sites would have an impact on the City in a variety of ways including increased traffic, heavier demand for library, parks and recreation services and potential loss of panoramic public views. The following is a list of some of the large agricultural areas which surround the City:

### *West of Goleta - Winchester Canyon*



Winchester Canyon, below Winchester Commons

Adjacent to the City of Goleta's western boundary is a 110 acre agricultural property which abuts the Winchester Commons housing development on the west and the San Miguel housing development on the south. 30 acres are prime soils and are actively farmed in row crops. The balance is sloping land not currently farmed. A part of the property along the southern edge is located within the coastal zone, although the entire property is outside the urban limit line.

The property has been for sale for some time with a price of \$5,750,000. At one time it was advertised as being in "the path of progress". However, now the property description only includes uses allowed by the agricultural zoning. In addition, there are more than 500 acres of actively farmed agricultural land that

are north and west of the San Miguel tract, outside the urban limit line, and accessed via Winchester Canyon Road.

*North of Goleta – Glen Annie Golf Course*

Located just northwest of the intersection of Glen Annie and Cathedral Oaks and north of Dos Pueblos High School, the Glen Annie Golf Course covers 76 acres and was allowed as a conditional use on land zoned AG II by the County of Santa Barbara. The course is open daily and has a snack bar and restaurant. It also holds special events occasionally which have caused traffic, parking and noise impacts to Goleta residents living on the south side of Cathedral Oaks. The golf course is one of about twenty agricultural parcels of varying sizes which take their access from Glen Annie Road north of Cathedral Oaks. These properties are all outside the coastal zone and the urban limit line.

*North of Goleta – Bishop Ranch and Stow Land Company (La Patera Rancho)*





The northern portion of the Bishop Ranch is several thousand acres and reaches all the way to the Los Padres National forest. A portion of it is actively farmed with large avocado and lemon orchards. Most of the property is hilly, but there are some flatter areas along the north side of Cathedral Oaks.

The Stow Land Company and La Patera Rancho total more than 800 acres in a number of parcels of various sizes. They are located on the north side of Cathedral Oaks, east of the Bishop property. The properties are both hilly and flat. The area is actively farmed with avocado and lemon orchards, some greenhouses and row crops. Access to these properties is from Cathedral Oaks via a number of unpaved ranch roads. La Patera Rancho has a formal paved entrance road across the street from Stow Grove Park. These properties are outside of the coastal zone and the urban limit line.

*East of Goleta – Noel Christmas Tree Farm*



The tree farm is located south of Cathedral Oaks, one block west of Patterson Avenue and is made up of three parcels totalling 26 acres of prime soils. Zoning is AG I – 5. The property was once part of a larger agricultural area which has gradually diminished in size over the past 15 years with the building of the nearby Sunrise Village and Cathedral Pointe residential developments. The southwest



corner of the property abuts the City of Goleta's eastern boundary at San Jose Creek. The property is outside the coastal zone, but inside the urban limit line.

The site was considered for housing and a corresponding rezone at the time of the 1993 Goleta Community Plan. But the owner chose to keep the agricultural zoning in order to continue selling Christmas trees from the property. Over the past ten years, the tree farm has been less successful for a variety of reasons and the property owner has indicated that he does not wish to continue farming.

In 2001 the owner submitted a request for a rezone and a proposal to build 85 homes which had been extensively discussed by residents of the adjacent neighborhoods. While the application has been in process at the County Planning and Development Department, County staff and Second District representatives have indicated a preference for a more dense development project with a greater number of housing units.

Initially, the County's Housing Element Update proposed to rezone the site to Design Residential at 10 units per acre, with a possible buildout maximum of the site at 258 units. This proposal was met with great opposition by the neighbors. Now the County is proposing no new density and is looking at several other sites along the Hollister corridor to potentially accommodate units. Discussions are still ongoing between the County, the property owner and the neighbors as to the size and type of residential project that might be most suitable for the Noel site.

*East of Goleta – Hollister/San Marcos Agricultural Area*



The Hollister-San Marcos Agricultural Area totals about 51 acres of prime soils in 6 parcels owned or leased by three different families. The properties are located north of Hollister Avenue near the intersection with San Marcos Road. This was one of the three large agricultural areas designated for long-term agricultural

zoning in the 1993 Goleta Community Plan. Because of that decision, all of the properties are still actively farmed today with row crops, orchards, greenhouses and a wholesale nursery. In addition, Lane Farms operates a produce farm stand along the Hollister Avenue frontage. The properties are outside the coastal zone, but inside the urban limit line.



Initially, the County's Housing Element Update proposed that these properties be rezoned to Design Residential, 20 units per acre which would have allowed up to 1,121 units to be built. One landowner has already expressed a strong interest in the proposal and a local developer has an option to develop the property. However, now the County is considering these sites, and some adjacent residentially zoned property, for an as yet undetermined amount of residential development. Residents of the surrounding area have organized to oppose residential development and keep the properties zoned for agriculture. The County intends to facilitate a number of community workshops to discuss the issues.

Although this acreage does not directly abut the City of Goleta boundaries, it is within about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of the City's eastern boundary. So a dense residential project would still impact the City of Goleta in the form of increased traffic on city streets and intersections, as well as an increased demand on various types of services, including active recreation and library resources.



*East of Goleta – South Patterson Agricultural Block*



The South Patterson Agricultural Block was one of the three large agricultural areas, along with the Bishop Ranch and the Hollister-San Marcos Area, designated for long term agricultural use at the time of 1993 Goleta Community Plan. The area is called a “block” because it is a 610 acre area made up of numerous contiguous parcels of different sizes all zoned for AG I with either a five or ten acre minimum parcel size. The parcels vary from 2 acres to 150 acres with soils designated both prime and non-prime. The most southern parcels are within the coastal zone, but all of the “block” is within the urban limit line.

This area supports row crops, orchards and a group of nursery and greenhouse businesses that are second in size only to those found in Carpinteria. Currently, one of the greenhouse operations – Por La Mar Nursery – has an application in process with the County to add 1.5 million additional square feet of greenhouse

development on property along South Patterson near the Maria Ygnacio Creek bikepath.

The properties are located south of Hollister and east of Highway 217 and are bounded by the City of Goleta on the east, west and north. Access to the properties is via Goleta city streets. A large piece of the block is in the flight path of the City of Santa Barbara Airport which could constrain other possible future uses in that area, as could the coastal zone designation for some parcels.

Initially, the County had not considered rezoning any properties in this area as a part of the Housing Element Update process. However, recently, due to the opposition of residents to the housing proposal on the Hollister-San Marcos agricultural area, several other alternative sites have been mentioned. Included in these alternatives are two properties in the South Patterson Agricultural Block totalling 95 acres. Discussions are ongoing between the County and the community regarding these potential housing sites on agricultural land, as well as the others already mentioned.





## Farm Stands and Farmer's Markets



Source: S. B. County

There are three farm stands currently operating in the Goleta area, with a fourth proposed to open sometime in the next few years. Fairview Garden Farms has a produce stand on North Fairview Avenue within the city limits. And Lane Farms operates two farm stands just to the east of the city boundaries. The first is located on the Lane Family property on Walnut Avenue, just south of Hollister Avenue. The second is on leased property farther east on Hollister near the intersection with San Marcos Road.

Fairview Gardens sells only organic products, while Lane Farms sells a combination of organically grown and non-organic items. All three stands sell products grown locally as well as some items from farms outside the area. All produce is sold fresh and in season.



Lane Farm stand on Hollister Avenue

Lane Farms is hoping to open an additional farm stand on property that directly abuts the city limits near the intersection of Calle Real and North Kellogg Avenue. As a part of the approval for a large mini-storage project on a parcel between Calle Real and Patterson, a small retail area across from the fire station was also approved. The intent of the developer is to lease space to the Lane Family for another produce stand.

The Goleta Farmer's Market is currently located in the Calle Real Shopping Center and operates from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoons throughout the year. It is one of six farmers markets that occur each week in the South County area that are managed by the Santa Barbara Certified Farmers Markets Association.

In order for a farmer to participate in one of the markets, they need to obtain a California Growers Certificate from the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioners Office. Then a review team of four grower members reviews the certificate. Availability is based on the type of products to sell and the space

available in the markets. Currently there is a waiting list of farmers wishing to participate in the local markets. If a farmer wishes his products to be certified as organic, he or she must go through additional steps.

The Goleta Farmers Market has a dozen or more farmers selling their products each Thursday. Some of the products sold are certified as organic and some are not. There are several local Goleta organic farmers who do sell their products at the Goleta market and other local markets throughout the week. Besides a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, the markets also sell other products like preserves, eggs, honey, juices, cut flowers and ornamental plants.



The Thursday Farmers Market in Goleta



Source: S. B. County

Goletans and other Southcoast residents eat much of the produce grown here. Buyers of Goleta's fruits and vegetables also include representatives from many local restaurants who prepare it and offer it for sale to locals and tourists alike.

This direct selling at farmers markets allows the farmer to realize a greater profit from their agricultural products than would be possible through selling to large-

scale shipping companies. In some cases, the ability to sell locally and directly to area residents increases profits just enough to make it possible for local farmers with small acreages to stay in business.

The Santa Barbara Certified Farmers Market Association is hoping to open another farmers market in Goleta in the near future. They have an application in process with the City for a market to be held on Sunday mornings at the Camino Real Shopping Center. They are hoping to open the market sometime in the Spring of 2004.

## **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CITY OF GOLETA**

Goleta agriculture provides a strong link to the area's rich history, much of which has been lost over time through natural disasters and changing circumstances. The historic ranch homes and buildings and large farm parcels which still remain remind Goletans of an era when the community was much smaller and the pace of life much slower.

The agricultural land which still remains in the Goleta area provides a multitude of benefits for area residents. Agricultural uses in the foothill areas provide a beautiful visual backdrop for the City and causes few water quality problems as runoff from winter storms flows down the hillsides to Goleta creeks and then to the ocean. The open range land and orchards provide a healthy habitat for a variety of species to flourish here. And, with the exception of large greenhouse development, agricultural activities do not generate significant traffic or visual impacts.

Farms in the canyons and along the coastal plain grow a variety of fruits and vegetables – many organically – which provide the local population with a large selection of fresh, healthy food at a reasonable cost. Goleta plants and produce are shipped throughout the nation and the world, aiding the county, state and the nation in their positions of agricultural dominance and providing products that are difficult to grow in most other locations.

The continued conversion of Goleta agricultural land, whether located inside or outside of the Goleta city limits, will have a profound impact on the City in a variety of ways. Although such conversion may occur to provide additional needed urban uses, such as more housing or commercial opportunities, the benefits of any change of use will be balanced by new impacts and costs to the City. Existing infrastructure will be stretched farther and require improvements. Services will need to be increased. Prime soils will be paved over and forever lost.

If agricultural land is proposed for conversion within the City of Goleta, then city staff and council members can make decisions about what is the best way to



handle new development on these properties. If County farm land is converted, the County Board of Supervisors will be the decisionmakers and will ultimately determine how these sites would be developed. The City of Goleta will not be able to control the location, amount, type and appearance of development and the corresponding impacts which will still occur on the City.

As the City of Goleta goes through its General Plan process, the costs and benefits of converting the city's remaining agricultural land should be weighed very carefully. The City should also stay current on any County plans to convert agricultural land on the city's borders and provide comments as needed to County planning staff and supervisors on how such plans will affect the City.