

CUESA'S SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCER FRAMEWORK

CUESA Mission

The Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture is dedicated to cultivating a sustainable food system through the operation of farmers market and educational programs.

Vision

We envision a healthy world nourished by sustainable food systems, and shall contribute to this vision by: actively connecting, engaging and supporting all participants within our regional food system; presenting substantive education programs and serving as a resource for information on sustainable food systems; operating world-class farmers markets that develop and support regional sustainable farm operations.

Statement of Sustainability Components

A food system is the inter-relationship of agricultural systems, their economic, social, cultural, and technological support systems, and systems of food distribution and consumption. A sustainable food system uses practices that are environmentally sound, humane, economically viable and socially just. Sustainable agriculture uses these same practices.

CUESA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

Environmentally Sound

Producers actively work to create and sustain cultivated landscapes that are complex, diverse and balanced biological systems. Producers use practices that conserve and restore resources.

Humane Animal Management

While being raised, animals are allowed to engage in the natural behaviors that are important to their well-being, and are harvested in ways that minimize stress to the animals and the environment.

Economically Viable

Producers operate within a framework of sound business planning and pursue integrated and proactive approaches to marketing and sales.

Socially Just

Producers and their employees receive fair and reasonable compensation and work in a safe and respectful environment.

CUESA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES & BEST PRACTICES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

PRINCIPLE: ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND

Producers actively work to create and sustain cultivated landscapes that are complex, diverse and balanced biological systems. Producers use practices that conserve and restore resources.

EXAMPLE BEST PRACTICES

Producers use production practices that are supported by current sustainable agriculture research and knowledge. Such practices may include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Producers build and conserve soil structure and fertility
(Examples: no till/reduced till farming, cover crops, rotational cropping, mulching, composting and incorporating crop residues, using manures, enhancing beneficial biota)
- Producers conserve water and protect water quality
(Examples: dry farming, efficient irrigation systems, mulching, minimizing use of toxic pesticides, buffer zones, bio-filtration systems)
- Producers protect air quality
(Examples: harvesting practices that reduce dust, lowering or eliminating emissions, reducing or eliminating use of toxic spray applications)
- Producers minimize use of toxics
(Examples: reducing or eliminating use of toxic pesticides, reducing or eliminating use of synthetic fertilizers, eliminate burning)
- Producers conserve energy and use renewable resources
(Examples: using energy efficient technologies, minimize farming and transportation fossil fuel inputs, solar; wind, biomass, geothermal, minimize use of fertilizers and pesticides derived from fossil fuels)
- Producers maximize biodiversity and conserve genetic resources
(Examples: seed saving, using heirloom varieties, buffer zones, contour and strip tillage, rotational grazing, retaining native habitats, intercropping, rotating crops, integrating multiple species of crops and animals, providing habitat for native species and pollinators)
- Producers avoid the intentional use of genetically modified seeds and organisms

RESOURCES

The following organizations, institutions and programs are easily accessible sources of information on current best practices as described above:

California Certified Organic Farmers; University of California Cooperative Extension; University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program; University of California-Santa Cruz Agroecology Program; Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas; Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch List

CUESA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES & BEST PRACTICES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

PRINCIPLE: HUMANE ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

While being raised, animals are allowed to engage in the natural behaviors that are important to their well-being, and are harvested in ways that minimize stress to the animals and the environment.

EXAMPLE BEST PRACTICES

Producers, including those farming aquatic species, use animal production and harvesting practices that are supported by current sustainable agriculture research and knowledge. Such practices may include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Animals not raised in their natural habitat are raised with sufficient space, shelter and appropriate handling to limit stress
(Examples: clean and dry bedding, ventilated structures, non-slip flooring, access to outdoors; no undue competition for space to lie down, stretch or eliminate; allowances for herding, daily migrations, wallowing)
- Animals have ample fresh water and a healthy diet free of performance stimulants and without routinely added antibiotics
(Examples: unrestricted access to fresh water, no undue competition for water sources, no use of growth hormones, nutritional guidelines, no undue competition for food sources, grazing)
- Animals are harvested, transported, and handled in the least stressful manner possible
(Examples: passageways do not impede movement, noise reduction mechanisms, no using electric prods, pre-slaughter handling kept to minimum; fishing by trolling, jigging, trapping, hook and line, or encircling seine nets)
- Producers implement an animal health plan that is in accordance with sound veterinary and husbandry practices
(Examples: general herd health plan, individual animal health plan and records, segregation areas, ongoing training for managers and caretakers, herd management guidelines or handbook)
- Producers actively work to protect and conserve genetic resources and diversity
(Examples: no using cloned species, no intentionally using genetically modified organisms in feed or care, harvesting only from sustainable fishery populations)

RESOURCES

The following organizations, institutions and programs are easily accessible sources of information on current best practices as described above:

University of California Cooperative Extension; Humane Farm Animal Care Program

CUESA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES & BEST PRACTICES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

PRINCIPLE: ECONOMICALLY VIABLE

Producers operate within a framework of sound business planning and pursue integrated and proactive approaches to marketing and sales.

EXAMPLE BEST PRACTICES

Producers use business planning and management practices that are supported by current sustainable business management research and recommendations. Such practices may include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Businesses operate within a framework of sound financial planning
(Examples: business plan, incorporating risk management strategies, record keeping, estate planning; crop, health, accident, and property insurance)
- Businesses conserve capital
(Examples: managing bank debt, managing expenditures)
- Businesses consider diversifying products, service offerings and sales outlets
(Examples: diversifying crops and herds, value-added products, agritourism, farmer's markets, CSA programs, restaurants, online sales, direct to retailers)
- Businesses pursue integrated and proactive approaches to marketing
(Examples: farm cooperatives, internet, direct marketing pieces)
- Businesses provide quality customer service and cultivate positive customer relations
(Examples: actively educate and inform customers, customer service standards, sales staff training, attractive and compelling displays, business website or newsletter, full disclosure of ingredients and processes, adopt code of business ethics)

RESOURCES

The following organizations, institutions and programs are easily accessible sources of information on current best practices as described above:

University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program; University of California Small Farm Center; University of California Cooperative Extension; National Association of Farmers Markets; United States Department of Agriculture; The Center for Resilience

CUESA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES & BEST PRACTICES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

PRINCIPLE: SOCIALLY JUST

Producers and their employees receive fair and reasonable compensation and work in a safe and respectful environment.

EXAMPLE BEST PRACTICES

Producers use labor compensation and management practices that are supported by current sustainable agricultural labor management recommendations. Such practices may include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Employers and employees receive fair and reasonable compensation
- Employers and employees receive appropriate benefits
(Examples: workers compensation, health care, housing, food from the farm)
- Employers provide a respectful work environment that empowers employees
(Examples: non-discrimination policies, employee participation in decision making)
- Employers and employees have safe working conditions
(Examples: safety training, safety incentives)
- Employers optimize employees' work experiences and opportunities
(Examples: appropriate training and supervision, mechanisms for communication and information sharing; opportunities for skill development, diversity of tasks and advancement)

RESOURCES

The following organizations, institutions and programs are easily accessible sources of information on current best practices as described above:

University of California Cooperative Extension; California Institute for Rural Studies (Best Labor Practices Report); Domestic Fair Trade Association; Rural Advancement Foundation USA; Agricultural Justice Project