



VOL.2, NO.2

STRIVING TO PROTECT FOOD, FAMILIES AND FARMLAND

Summer 2002

## Our Mission

**To Preserve the Agricultural Foundation of Our Region and Promote Smart Growth in Our Urban Communities Through Education, Outreach and Action.**

**T**ake a moment to think about your community. It is special because of “the land.” Whether you live in Patterson, Hughson, Modesto, Turlock, Merced or Hilmar—it is the orchards, fields of corn and alfalfa, grazing land dotted with cattle, endless rows of tomatoes and small patches of strawberries that create our landscape. It is a working landscape that is the foundation of our region’s agricultural infrastructure and economy.

Without this rich tapestry of crops and miles of canals glistening with flowing water, we would not be “valley people,” people who are connected to the land. We are connected to the land because we work the land, or know someone who works the land, or come from people who once worked the land.

The land, *the farmland*, is part of our past as well as our present. The pink blossoms of the peach trees, the white almond blossoms and the amazing spring green of the budding grape vines mark the end of the gray days of winter. The corn that seems to reach to the sky before our very eyes marks the hot days of summer in the valley when trucks fill the roads with load after load of fruits, nuts and vegetables.

The land gives us more than the miracle of harvest; it gives us an amazing cornucopia of fresh food that is grown “here.” And “here” on our rural edges, we purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at local produce

stands. From May until November, local farmer’s markets draw community people together as farmers showcase old and new varieties of fruits, vegetables, plants and flowers. We celebrate our agricultural heritage as we enjoy the greatest variety of local produce in the nation—the world !

You’ll find us at the Modesto Farmer’s Market on Saturday morning. Farmland Working Group is there to remind you that this land, this farmland, this valley—the Great Central Valley of California is unique in the world. There is no valley in the world that has the soil, the Mediterranean climate, the abundant and inexpensive water, the infrastructure, and the “know how” that this valley can claim. There is no farmland in the world that can grow what is grown “here.”

**If you share our goals please become a member. We depend upon local support for our work.**

**WHAT WILL OUR COMMUNITY BE LIKE IN TWENTY YEARS ?**

## RESOURCES

**American Farmland Trust/AFT** is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1980 to protect our nation's farmland. AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. Its action-oriented programs include public education, technical assistance in policy development and direct farmland protection projects. For more information call 209/523-3276 or visit our website at [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

**California Women for Agriculture/CWA** is a non-profit, agricultural advocacy group with 27 chapters throughout the state educating school children and teachers, the general public, and our local, state and federal officials. Statewide, chapters form alliances with local, rural and urban legislators through our Adopt-a-Legislator program, in an attempt to become an information resource for legislators. Visit our website at [www.cawomen4ag.com](http://www.cawomen4ag.com)

**Merced County Farmland and Open Space Trust** is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1992, to conserve and protect farmlands and other natural resources of Merced County for the benefit of present and future generations. Visit our website: <http://www.mcfost.org> or write to P. O. Box 3696, Merced, CA 95344

**Stanislaus Farmland Trust/SFT's** mission is to acquire or accept property interests, including conservation easements, from willing sellers who want to preserve their farmland and related natural resources. SFT will seek and obtain funding, will hold and oversee conservation easements and other interests, and will promote educational programs, policies, projects and community involvement to protect farmland. For information call 209/523-3276.

**Community Alliance With Family Farmers/CAFF** is building a movement of rural and urban people to foster family-scale agriculture that cares for the land, sustains local economies, and promotes social justice. CAFF is a nonprofit membership organization with regional chapters. Reach us at: PO Box 363, Davis, CA 95617, 530/756-8518  
*e-mail: [caff@caff.org](mailto:caff@caff.org)*

**Stanislaus County Farm Bureau** is a non-profit, voluntary membership whose mission is to serve as the voice of Stanislaus County agriculture at all levels of government, while providing programs to assist its farm and family members and educate the general public of the needs and importance of agriculture. Stop by 1201 L Street, Modesto, or call 209/522-7278, email: [bambib@stanfarmbureau.org](mailto:bambib@stanfarmbureau.org)

**Merced County Farm Bureau/MCFB's** voluntary, elected leaders and professional staff work hard for all Californians to ensure the rural economies growth...to protect the family farm...and to maintain the treasured natural resources that are so important to the state's vitality and lifestyle. Stop by

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### Farmland Working Group Needs Your Support

FWG depends on contributions from individuals to keep our non-profit organization active and vital. Your support keeps us going!

Please take a moment to join us and be part of the solution in protecting our agricultural heritage and promoting Smart Growth in our region.

Our active members meet monthly and regularly make presentations to service organizations, clubs and classrooms. For information contact Jeani Ferrari (209) 634-4495.

Yes, I want to support FWG. **Here is my tax deductible contribution.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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\$35     \$50     \$75     \$100     other

Mail to FWG, PO Box 461, Ceres, CA 95307

The Farmland Working is a broad range of individuals committed to preserving the agricultural foundation of our region and promoting Smart Growth in our urban communities through education, outreach and action

Farmland Working Group  
Executive Board

President— Jeani Ferrari  
Vice President— Rudy Platzek  
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#### NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

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Many thanks to our sponsors for underwriting the cost of FWG's newsletter

# WHAT IS SLOW FOOD ?

Slow Food was founded in 1986 by an Italian named Carlo Petrini. It was founded in response to a world food system dedicated to mass quantities of “cheap food.” It was founded in response to the establishment of a McDonald’s “store” near the Spanish Steps in Rome. And since 1986 it has grown to 60,000 members and 500 chapters in 43 countries.

In the United States, Slow Food USA’s mission statements reads: Recognizing that the enjoyment of wholesome food is essential to the pursuit of happiness, Slow Food is an educational organization dedicated to the stewardship of the land and ecologically sound food production; to the revival of the kitchen and the table as centers of pleasure, culture and community; to the invigoration and proliferation of regional, seasonal culinary traditions; and to living a slower and more harmonious rhythm of life.

To achieve its mission the organization operates through local “Convivium” or chapters. These are groups of members who meet on an informal basis to promote micro-purveyors of traditional and local fare, learn about various diverse culinary traditions, arrange tastings of anything from peaches to beer to wine, to converse and to come up with new ideas on how eating well and supporting local farmers can improve our mental and physical health—not to mention the well-being of our community.

In addition to the Convivia, Slow Food has an “Ark Project” which seeks out and preserves endangered foods. David Mas Masumoto has recently had his Sun Crest Peaches listed in the Ark of Taste. From considering removal of his trees, he now sells about 4,000 boxes per year and is enthusiastic about Slow Food. For more information call 209/236-



## 0163. **ROMAN LORANC** **IMAGES OF THE GREAT CENTRAL VALLEY**

Roman Loranc’s black and white landscape photography has been called “expansive” and “powerful” in the tradition of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century landscape artists such as Albert Bierstadt and Ansel Adams. Roman creates artwork that captures the disappearing landscapes of the Central Valley: the harvest fields, the delicate wetlands, the stirring contours of the Diablo Range, and the sinuous and radiant surfaces of the once mighty Central Valley rivers. Roman’s work marks a return to landscape photography as intimate encounter with land and psyche and documents the physical and spiritual relationship between humans and nature.

Roman’s work has been published in a variety of newspapers and magazines and has been featured in: *Highway 99: A Literary Journey Through California’s Great Central Valley*, Heyday Books, 1996, and *Picturing California’s Other Landscape: The Great Central Valley*, Heyday Books, 1999.

Roman has lived and worked in the Central Valley since emigrating from Poland in 1981. For information visit [www.romanloranc.com](http://www.romanloranc.com).

### IN MEMORY OF

**BETTY COX**

*given by*  
MARGARET HIDAHL  
JOYCE WARNER

**JOEL HIDAHL**

*given by*  
JOYCE WARNER  
JOANN DIGIOVANNI

**KATIE SANTOS**

*given by*  
JEANI FERRARI

# Denny Jackman—On Board

Long-term prudent planning takes long-term knowledge and the capacity to connect past and future and the present. I am pleased to be back in the thick of things with Farmland Working Group. Many years back I was invited to Congressman Condit's office as a local "environmentalist" to participate in group-discussions about our most pressing environmental issues. It was obvious to all who attended that urban sprawl, and the consequences it may bring to our community, should be a priority of roundtable discussion. Given the quality of our land and our community relationship with food production the environmental issue became "farmland preservation." From meeting to meeting the participants changed from urban environmentalists to farmers and community activists dedicating thought to the task of working on a common goal. Working as a group to save farmland gave us our name.

Today, as a Modesto Council Member I am keenly aware of the land and its value to the urban constituents I represent. It remains nearly impossible to live in Modesto and not be impacted by food production activities. Presently I am requesting that my fellow Council members place a broad based urban limit initiative on the November 2003 ballot. Though it is called the Farmland Stabilization Initiative it is truly an Urban Stabilization Initiative. One based on the premise of self-determination. Why shouldn't the citizens of a community have a say in the size and shape of their community? Isn't that what is called for in the county's vision statement?

I hope that you can help us promote our past and all its positive values into the future we are designing today.

Denny Jackman, Modesto City Council

**FARMLAND WORKING GROUP**  
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**there are no more valleys over the hill...**