New Ruralism
Revitalizing Regional Agriculture and Local Food Systems

Presentation by
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Climate Change and Human Health Roundtable

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Agriculture at the Metropolitan Edge Program

• Seed was *A Call for New Ruralism*
• Initiated in fall 2006 under auspices of UC Berkeley’s Global Metropolitan Studies Center
• In recognition of agriculture being an integral system for sustaining metropolitan regions
• Driven by student interest in linking the built environment and ecology; design and agriculture

Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)

• Nonprofit, founded in 2001
• Focus: Urban Edge Agricultural Parks (AgParks)
Local and Regional Food Systems:
Integration of regional and local agricultural production with food distribution to enhance the economic, environmental, and social wellbeing of a particular place
Global Agriculture & Climate Change

All Sources of Greenhouse Gases

Agriculture
Other sources

Source: UN FAO

Agricultural Sources of Greenhouse Gases

Nitrous Oxide
Carbon Dioxide
Methane

Source: UN FAO
Agriculture & Climate Change

- On average, it takes 8–10 calories of fossil fuel energy to produce 1 calorie of food.
- The average food item travels at least 1500 miles.
- Paving over prime farmland; 60% of fruits and vegetables produced in urban–influenced farmland.
- In 2006, for the first time, the value of food imported into the US exceeded the value of food we exported.
Agriculture & Human Health in the US

We are overfed and undernourished

- Obesity epidemic
- 10% of the population is food insecure

Agriculture & Human Health in the US

We depend upon a low-paid immigrant labor force for food production

The population of farmers is aging, with few young farmers starting out
The US Farm Bill

Significant proposed programs for 2007:

- Farm, Nutrition and Community Investment Act
- Farm Safety Net Improvement Act
- Conservation Security Programs
APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning, 2007

*General Policy #3*: Support food systems that improve the health of the region’s residents

*General Policy #4*: Support food systems that are ecologically sustainable

*General Policy #7*: Facilitate community and regional food planning
New Ruralism
• Systems- and place-based framework
• Bridges sustainable agriculture/local food systems and Smart Growth/New Urbanism

Vision: New Ruralism is the preservation and enhancement of urban edge rural areas as places that are indispensable to the economic, environmental, and cultural vitality of cities and metropolitan regions.
New Ruralism: characteristics

- Geography – rural lands within urban influence
- Interface location – in the transect sense – fosters multifunctionality
  *place-making, ecological improvement, opportunities for new
  farmers, opportunities for public engagement*
- Well suited for organic, sustainable ag, and wildfarm practices
- As an ecotone, opportunity for multiple environmental services
- Form: foodbelts, buffers, permanent agricultural preserves
- Draws from past models
Agriculture at the Metropolitan Edge Program
Conservation Development Case Studies

Pros: farmland preservation, built-in markets and financial support for farmers, non-urban green space, filled rural lifestyle demand
Cons: “greenwashing”, fake farming, limited public access

2007 Symposium: New Ruralism and Other Urban–Rural Linkages
- attended by 200+ researchers & practitioners
- topics: environmental services, vitality of rural communities, policy
Pending Research: Ag at the Metro Edge

Development of an ag land-use assessment and planning framework

• Purpose is to qualify and quantify values as yet non-monetary
• In collaboration with SACOG (30 yr greenprint for 30 yr blueprint)
• Linked with existing frameworks used for urban planning and natural resources assessment
• Seeded with existing metrics: certification systems to Millennium Eco-System Assessment
• How do cities, counties and regions plan for agriculture and food systems? What are the links with health, energy, and the economy?

San Francisco Foodshed Assessment

• What is SF’s potential to feed itself with food produced sustainably on farms within 100 miles of the GG bridge? What are the benefits?

2008 AME Symposium

• Case studies of places demonstrate urban–rural synergy
SAGE – Urban Edge AgParks

Part parkland, part working agriculture
Suitable for public lands or private lands
Create Resilient City–Regions

- Can adapt to and interact with global forces
- Contribute toward climate change mitigation
- Advance public health