

# Capay Valley Vision

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## **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN YOLO'S CAPAY VALLEY**

By Paul Muller

In 2000, residents of western Yolo County came together to begin a planning process for the future of the communities of the Capay Valley-Esparto Region. Since that time, a number of conversations and workshops have focused on the question "What makes the Capay Valley special?" Consistently and passionately, residents identified agriculture as a cornerstone to the economy, environment, and identity of our region.

Every place has its own combination of elements that make it unique. As people are different, so are the landscapes and climates in which they live their lives. But as one lives in a place, one invests and grows accustomed to all the small things that make a place become something more – a home.

Capay Valley Vision was formed to convene a dialogue about the future of Capay Valley. One of our focuses has been agriculture and the knowledge, spirit, and experience that living in an agricultural area creates. As we look to the future, we have asked "How can we preserve the character of this place, and, as the Valley changes, can we retain the unique things that make this place our home?" The resulting plan is an attempt to think about a strategy for the future of profitable agriculture in the region. Good strategies require a plan, and agriculture will not succeed without sound and viable economic strategies. This plan is a place to build on the strengths of our community through collaboration.

What makes the Capay Valley special? It is the landscape, the rolling hills, familiar orchards, homes, and farms. It is the vegetation, redbud, valley oak, almond trees, and walnuts. It is the seasons, green velvety hills in winter and golden slopes in summer. It is a community – kids growing up together sharing birth, loss, and celebration; community meals; bake sales; fire calls; Christmas plays; and baseball games. It is the schools where our kids learn and share and grow up together. It is the diversity of people, all the characters that make up a community. It is birds and wildlife. But ultimately, community is the willingness to work together to persevere and keep our community strong and intact.

*Paul Muller lives in Guinda where he is a partner of Full Belly Farm and a board member of Capay Valley Vision, the publisher of the Agriculture Plan for the Capay Valley-Esparto Region. To order a copy send a check for \$5 to CVV, PO Box 799, Esparto CA 95637 or call (530) 796-4160.*