



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 11/4/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures

Staff Name and Phone Number: Andrew Smith, 707-565-2371

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Agriculture in Sonoma County Ad Hoc Committee Charter

Recommended Action:

Review and approve the Agriculture in Sonoma County Ad Hoc Committee Charter.

Executive Summary:

The Board of Supervisors established the Agriculture in Sonoma County Ad Hoc Committee on May 6, 2025, to assess the status of agriculture in the county, and recommend policies to strengthen the agricultural industry and ensure its future viability in Sonoma County.

Discussion:

Agriculture is one of the main industries in Sonoma County and is a significant base of the County's economy. Recently, agriculture industries in the county have faced myriad challenges including market instability, political activism, and are recovering from highly pathogenic avian influenza. As agriculture in Sonoma County responds to these challenges and looks forward, stakeholders have advocated for review of policies and consideration of policy adjustments that support agricultural activities, potentially expand protections, and streamline policies that permit supportive land use activities to ensure a strong and viable future for agriculture in the county of Sonoma.

Agriculture in Sonoma County Ad Hoc Charter, Methodology, & Areas of Focus

On May 6, 2025, the Board of Supervisors established the Agriculture in Sonoma County Ad Hoc Committee, which will be guided by the proposed Agriculture in Sonoma County Ad Hoc Charter (Attachment 1). The Agriculture in Sonoma County Ad Hoc will work to assess the status of agriculture in the county and recommend policies to strengthen the agricultural industry and ensure its future viability through the following methods:

- Gather input and experiences from industry, staff, and community members.
- Collect and assemble input for consideration by the Board, and to inform policy development, goals, and objectives within the Board's purview.
- Identify opportunities to clarify protections under the Right to Farm Ordinance and improve notification of the protections to better support agricultural uses on agricultural lands and decrease conflicts with surrounding residents.
- Analyze current Williamson Act program and ways of utilizing it as a tool to better keep land in active cultivation.

Deliverable

This ad hoc committee will generate a report identifying opportunities to strengthen agricultural industries for the Board to consider.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

N/A

FISCAL SUMMARY

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The approval of this charter has no fiscal impact.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Existing staff within the AWM executive management team will lead this project with support from the County Administrator's Office, County Counsel, and related departments as needed.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Draft Sonoma County Agriculture in Sonoma County Ad Hoc Committee Charter

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None