

# MEMO

**To:** Agricultural Subcommittee

**From:** La Plata County Planning Department and CommunitybyDesign consulting team

**Date:** July 22, 2010

**RE:** Agricultural Production Strategy Recommendations for Comprehensive Plan

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## I. Background

In mid-May the Agricultural Subcommittee submitted recommendations to the Working Group Committee regarding how the County can enhance and support agricultural production in La Plata County. The Working Group met the end of May and reviewed the recommendations. The Working Group found the detail good, but too long for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically this referred to the goals and strategies developed related to ways the County could promote and encourage the retention of agricultural lands under the Sustainable Development plan element. The Working Group instructed the County and consulting team to synthesize the recommendations into a more concise summary of goals and strategies.

Based on this, a matrix was created by the consulting team to demonstrate where Agricultural Subcommittee recommendations could be incorporated into a set of concise goals and strategies. The matrix was presented to the Working Group on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The Working Group spent the meeting discussing the synthesized goals and strategies and how the “actions” recommended by the Agricultural Subcommittee could help achieve the goal. The matrix is attached for your review so that you can see where the Agricultural Subcommittee’s recommendations have been included. The Working Group approved and accepted the recommended goals, strategies, and actions.

## II. Final Recommendation for Sustainable Development Ag Goals

The goals and strategies in the draft plan to be released July 22, 2010 reads:

### 7. Promote and encourage retention of agricultural lands.

- a) Create an Agricultural Advisory Group to work with the La Plata County Commissioners on local, state, and federal policy reforms that benefit local producers and maintain the 35 acre subdivision exemption.
- b) Develop land subdivision, zoning, and conservation incentives for agricultural land owners that maintain the integrity of productive agricultural lands while allowing for other forms of development.
- c) Amend the development code to incentivize agricultural production to remain viable by providing clear and simple regulatory processes.
- d) Utilize County tax policy to support and enhance agricultural production viability (e.g., agricultural inputs, acquisition fund, etc.)
- e) Adopt a Right to Farm/Ranch ordinance including content of Colorado’s revised statute 35-3.5-101: Nuisance Liability of Agriculture Operations.

### **III. Next Steps**

The DRAFT Comprehensive Plan will be released on July 22<sup>nd</sup> for public review. A meeting and public process schedule is attached to this memo.

The Comprehensive Plan sets the policy framework to guide the next planning phase, the Future Land Use Plan. Many of the specific actions developed by the Agricultural Subcommittee will be incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan phase and ultimately in the Land Use Code itself. We hope you will remain engaged and involved in this effort to ensure that La Plata County maintains a vibrant and successful agricultural base.

Thank you for all your hard work! Great job!

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