

Opportunity Knocks

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There are many different quotes and sayings about crises and opportunities. You probably have read the old Chinese proverb that, “A crisis is an opportunity riding the dangerous wind,” heard the quote attributed to the Roman philosopher Seneca, “Luck is when opportunity meets preparation,” or know that Thomas Edison said, “Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” Often, these old sayings contain kernels of wisdom that can inspire us in times of crisis, such as the current global economic crisis.

The University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) is comprised of Agriculture Experiment Stations, Cooperative Extension, Statewide Special Programs, and Campus Centers. Collectively, we are UC researchers and educators dedicated to the creation, development, and application of knowledge in agriculture, natural, and human resources. We recognize that the current economic crisis is an opportunity to reevaluate how we can best serve Californians, and have spent the last few months developing a new strategic vision. The process started last fall, when Vice President Dan Dooley asked roughly 60 UC leaders to contact clientele and identify what the diverse needs of Californians will look like in the year 2025. Additionally, an independent firm was hired to collect ideas from community leaders around the state. Those interviews resulted in reports describing the challenges that may face California in the areas of State Demographics and Infrastructure, Agriculture and Food Systems, Natural Resource Systems, Health and Nutrition, and Human Communities.

After considering the predictions contained in each report, UC leaders considered how to best address future challenges, and synthesized the information into a Strategic Vision document. The Strategic Vision identifies the needs of Californians related to Healthy Food Systems, Healthy Environments, Healthy Communities, and Healthy People, and describes how UC ANR can continue to play an important role in California’s future by providing leadership and innovation through research, education, and community service. The Strategic Vision document goes on to identify nine new initiatives that we are considering to ensure that we help Californians have a high quality of life, a healthy environment, and economic success in the future.

Our next step is to engage people in the development of a plan to help us achieve the initiatives we have identified. We are interested in your ideas and you will be hearing more about our plans in the future. Please visit these web sites to read our Strategic Vision:

<http://ucanr.org/vision/anrstrategicvision2025.pdf>

<http://ucanr.org/vision/ANRStrategicVision2025ExecutiveSummary.pdf>