



SALC 2.0

Forum for Cultivating Solutions

May 27, 2025



Forum Agenda

- Open House
- Staff Presentation
- Panel of Experts
- Breakout Sessions



SALC Planning Grants

SALC 1.0

Purpose:

- Mapping agricultural lands
- Producer needs assessment
- Inventory of policies at local, regional and state level

Results:

- Three main issues identified: land access, water availability and efficiency, and workforce development
- Ten policy recommendations

SALC 2.0

Purpose:

- Support existing and emerging farmers through timely market research
- Develop strategies to support economic sustainability of small farms

Expected Outcome:

- Inform local agencies' decision-making to further aid and preserve the economic, environmental, and public health benefits that small-scale farms offer the region



Introductions



**Meghan
Traynor**

**San Diego
LAFCO**



**Michaela
Peters**

**San Diego
LAFCO**



**Stephanie
Neal**

**County of
San Diego**



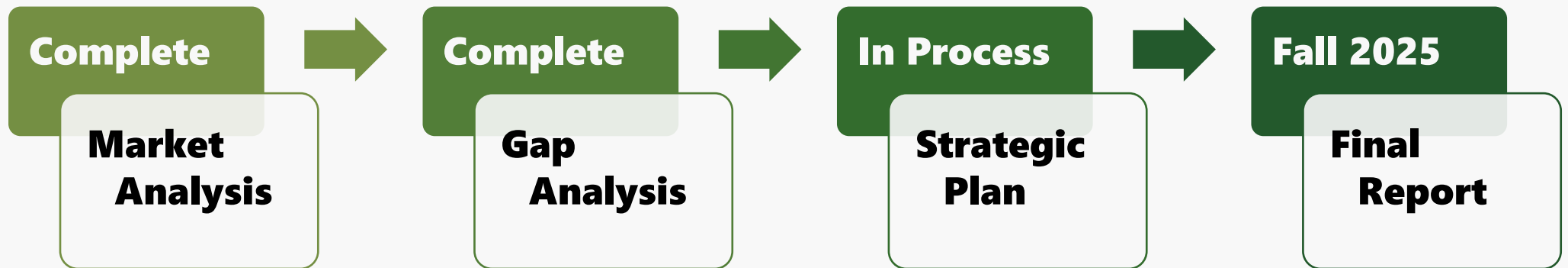
**Michael
Blackmun**

**County of
San Diego**

**Consulting with:
Agricultural Impact Associates**

**Consulting with:
RICK**

Project Overview

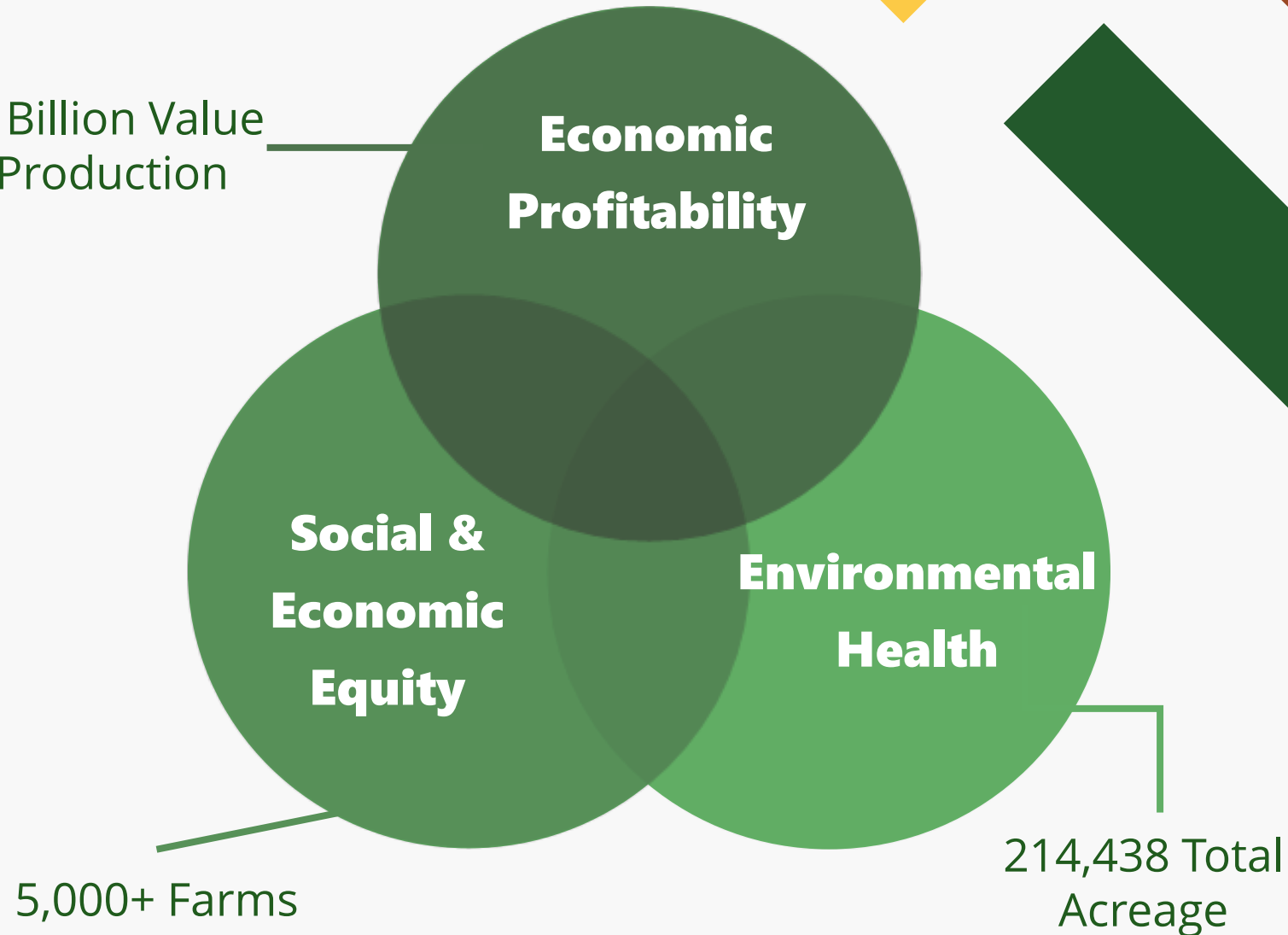


OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Purpose

Sustainable agriculture is the integration of three main objectives: a healthy environment, economic profitability, and social and economic equity¹

\$1.7 Billion Value
of Production



¹UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. 2021. "What is Sustainable Agriculture?" UC Agriculture and Natural Resources. <<https://sarep.ucdavis.edu/sustainable-ag>>



State of Agriculture in San Diego



Market Analysis

Part One | Trends: How many San Diego farms & agricultural acres will be lost if current trends continue unabated?

Part Two | Expenses: What are the costs of farming in San Diego County?

Part Three | Profits: How profitable are San Diego county farms?

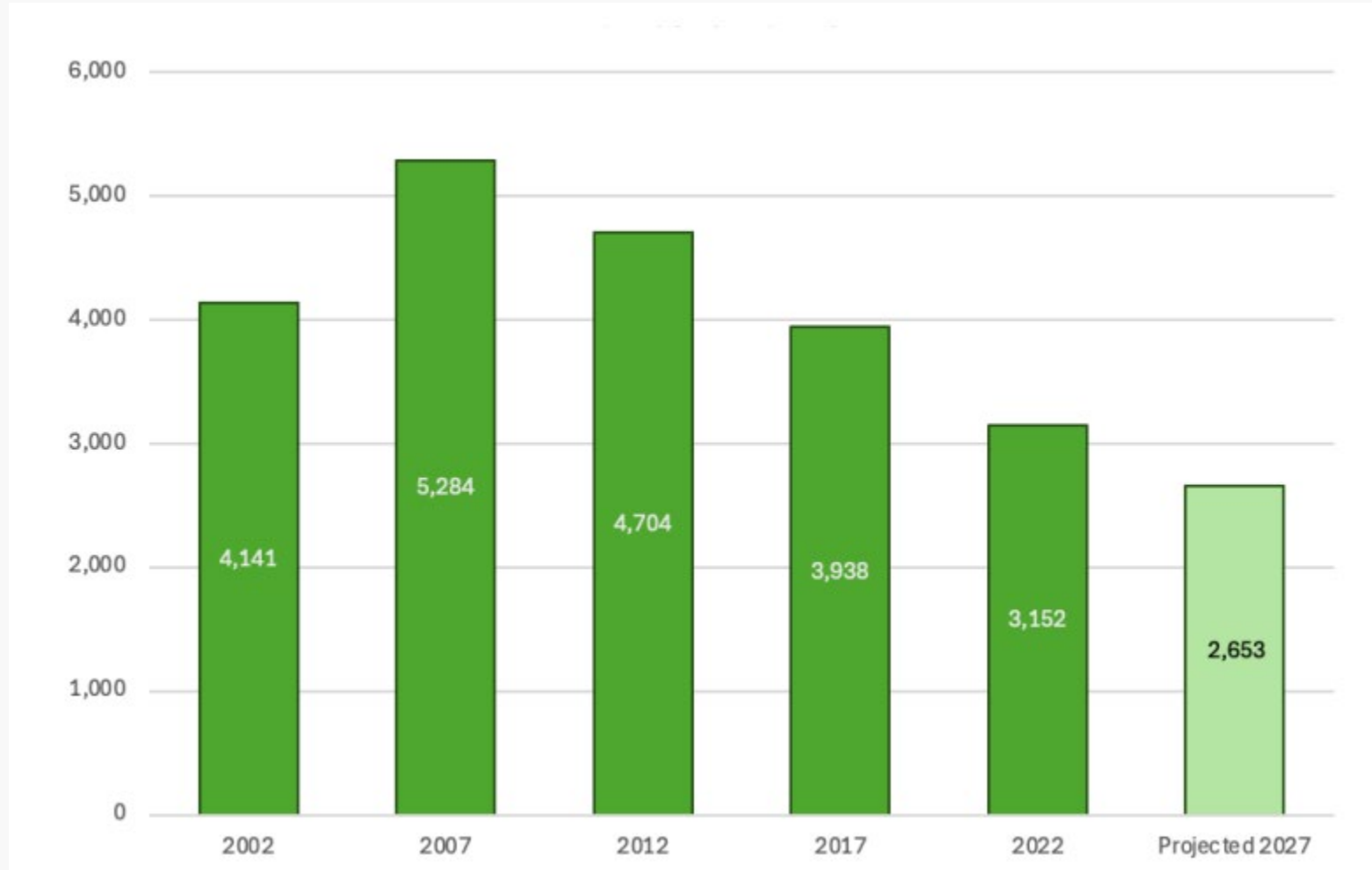
Data sources include: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture, County of San Diego Crop Statistics & Annual Report, Consumer Price Index (CPI)



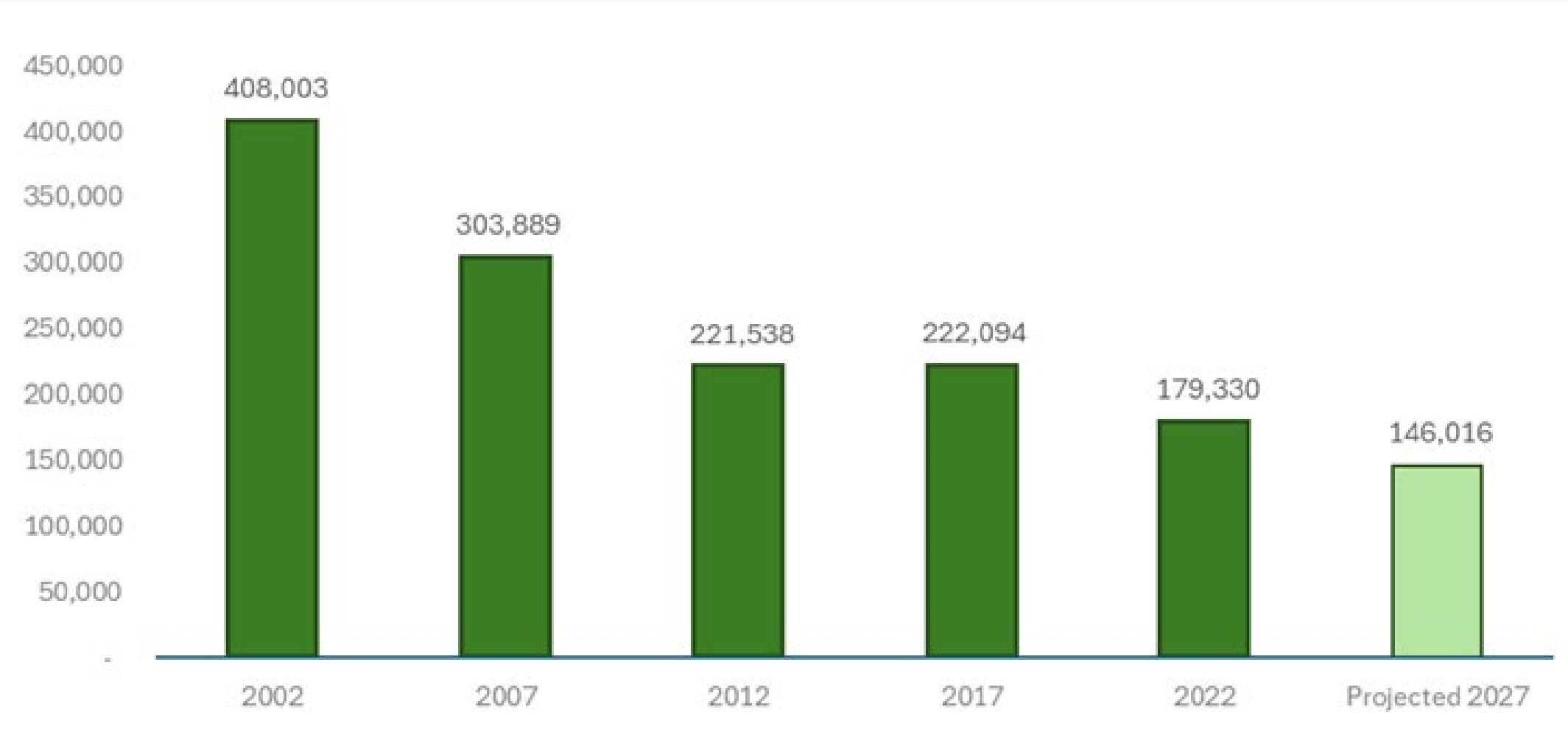
Market Analysis Findings

- 1. Trends:** -18 acres of farmland a day & -1 farm every 3 & ½ days
- 2. Expenses:** property taxes & labor
 - Most farm expenses have risen faster than inflation over 20 years
- 3. Profits:** fluctuating operating profits
 - 2022 average of 13% -- half of the 25% threshold recommended by experts

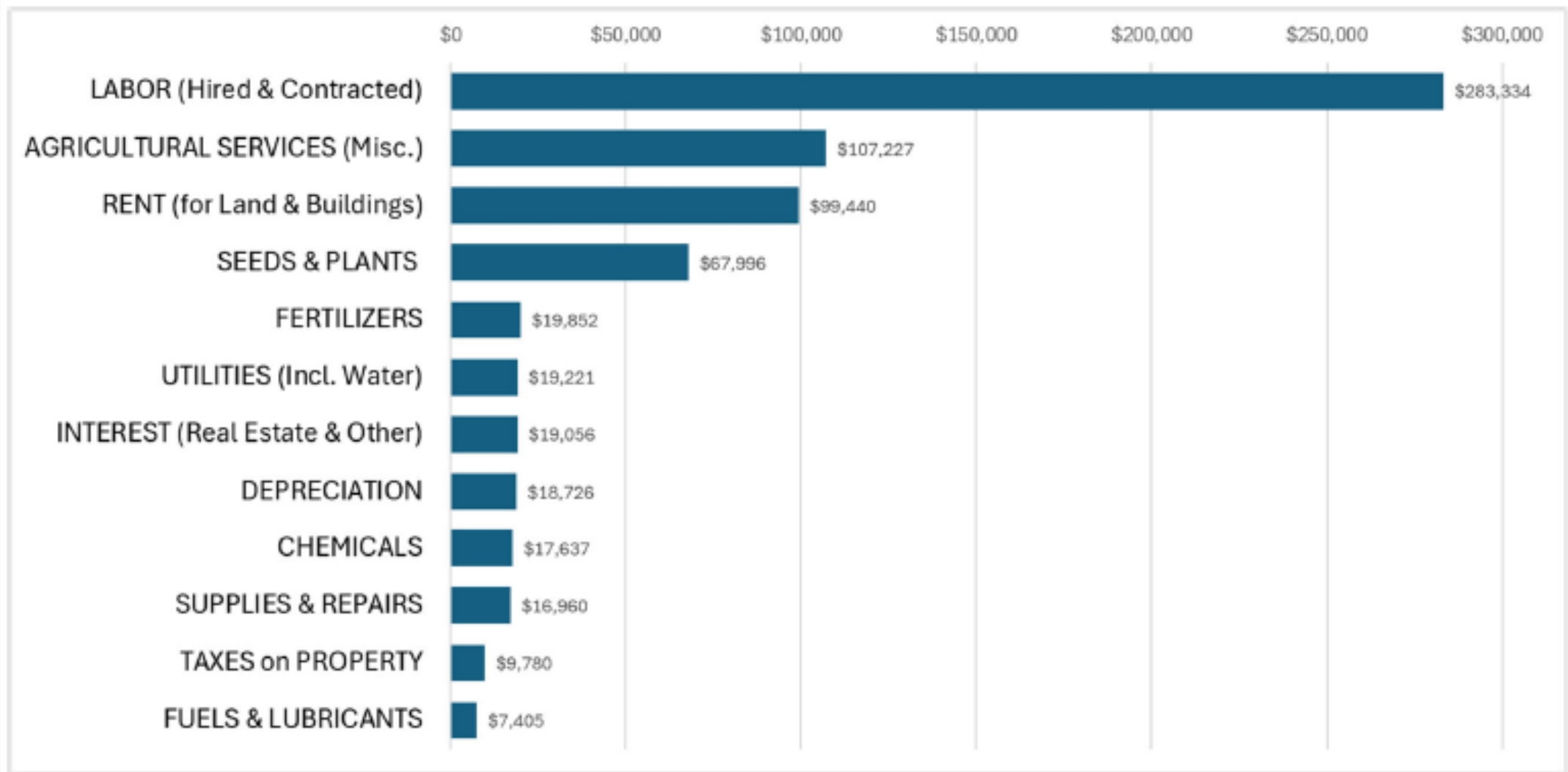
Forecasted Number of San Diego County (Crop) Farms in 2027



Forecasted Number of Agricultural Acres in San Diego County 2027



Average Per-Farm Expenses for 2022



Gap Analysis



Explores: the profitability of San Diego County crop production

- How profitable is production at the individual farm level?
- On the Countywide level?

Includes: supplemental information for 4 specific crop types

Provides: a foundation for future projects and policy change

Crop Selection



Economic

Measured by annual
revenue for each
crop type



Social

Measured by the
number of farms
growing each crop type

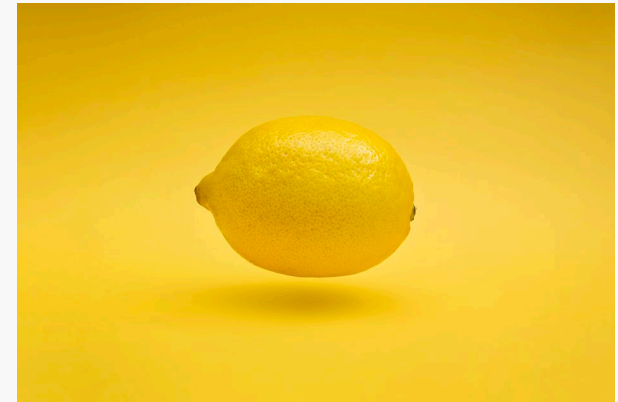


Environmental

Measured by the
number of acres in
production for each
crop type

Crop Selection

- Avocados
- Lemons
- Tomatoes
- Strawberries



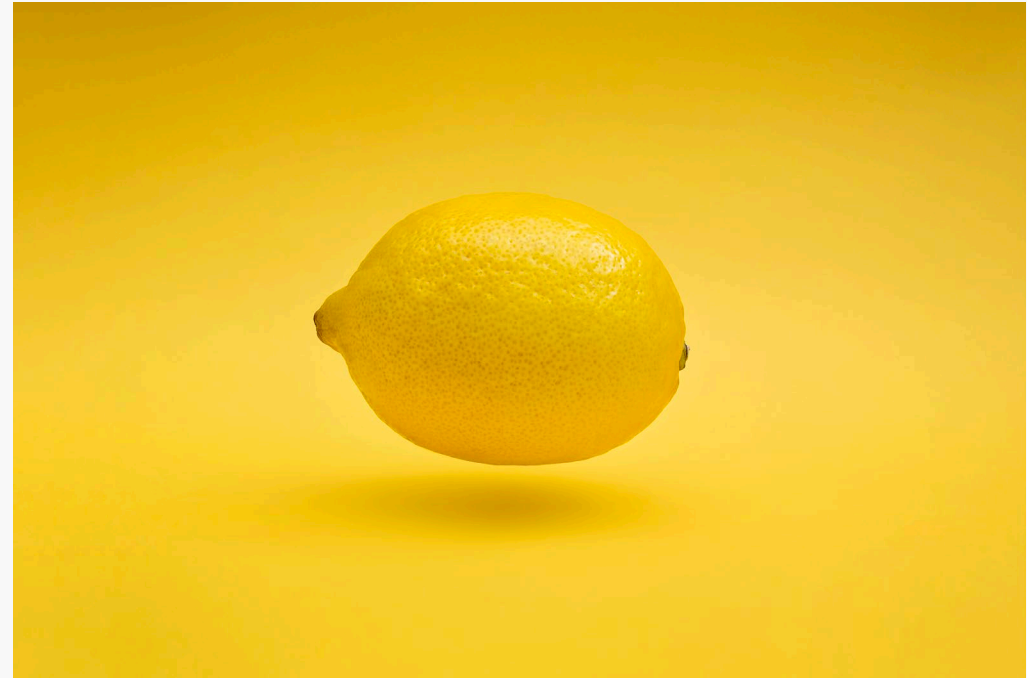
Gap Analysis – Avocados

- 2022 net return per acre of \$3,316 above total costs.
- To break even based on total costs, the required price was \$1.09 per pound.
- Water costs highly influence financial performance.



Gap Analysis – Lemons

- 2022 net return per acre of \$4,741 above total costs.
- To break even based on total costs, the required price was \$20.74 per carton.
- Eureka lemons served as proxy for citrus in this study.



Gap Analysis - Strawberries

- To break even based on total costs, the required price was \$18.42 per tray.
- 2022 net return per acre of \$40,813 *below* total costs.
- Strawberry production in San Diego is generally a high-risk, low-return endeavor.



Gap Analysis - Tomatoes

- To break even based on total costs, the required price was \$1,207 per ton.
- 2022 net return per acre of \$11,901 above total costs.
- Labor is a dominant cost, indicating a highly manual production system.



Agricultural Profitability Assessment Tool

AG-PAT



What We've Heard

- **Water availability & efficiency**
- **Marketing & branding**
- **Technical & policy support**





Breakout Sessions

What can local jurisdictions and industry partners do to increase profitability?



Policy

Rules and regulations that impact land use, water, permits, and economic support for farming



Land

**Land access and affordability,
regenerative agriculture, and long-
term preservation of farmland for
agricultural use**



Profitability

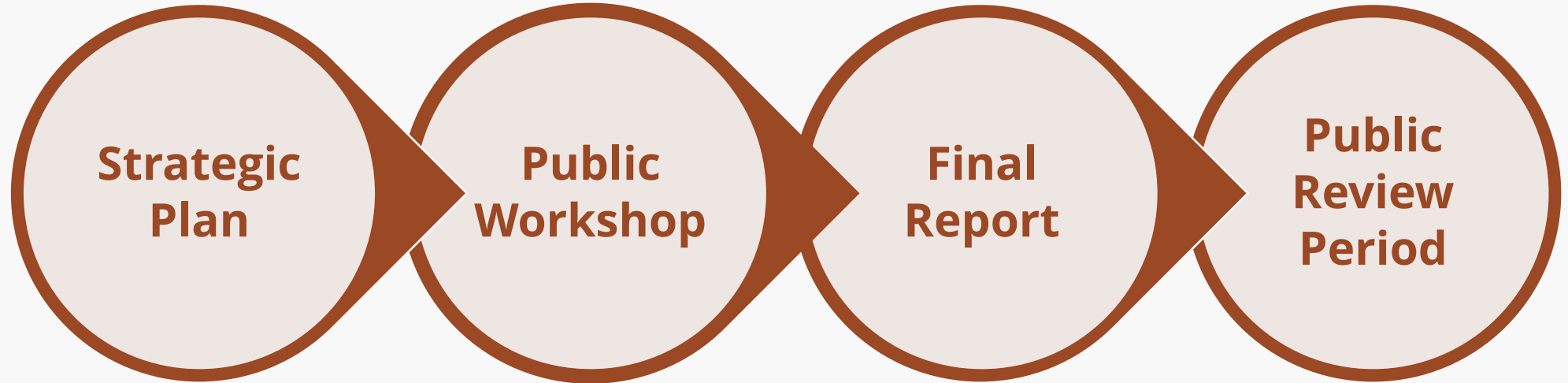
Strategies to increase yields and farm income, reduce costs, and improve financial sustainability



Food Systems

Strengthen networks that connect farm production to food access through distribution, markets, and institutions

Next Steps





Panel of Experts

Panel of Experts

Policy

Jordan Key

**County of San
Diego,**
Deputy Ag
Commissioner

Profitability

Ramiro Lobo

**UC Cooperative
Extension,**
County Co-
Director and Farm
Advisor

Land

Joel Kramer

**RCD of Greater
San Diego
County,**
Agriculture
Program Director

Food Systems

Chuck Samuelson

Heal the Earth,
Founder/CEO

Breakout Sessions

Policy
Hearing Chambers

Land
5510 Room 271 – 2nd Floor

Profitability
5510 Room 372 – 3rd Floor

Food Systems
5510 Room 472 – 4th Floor

