

Scenarios for Regional Food Diversity

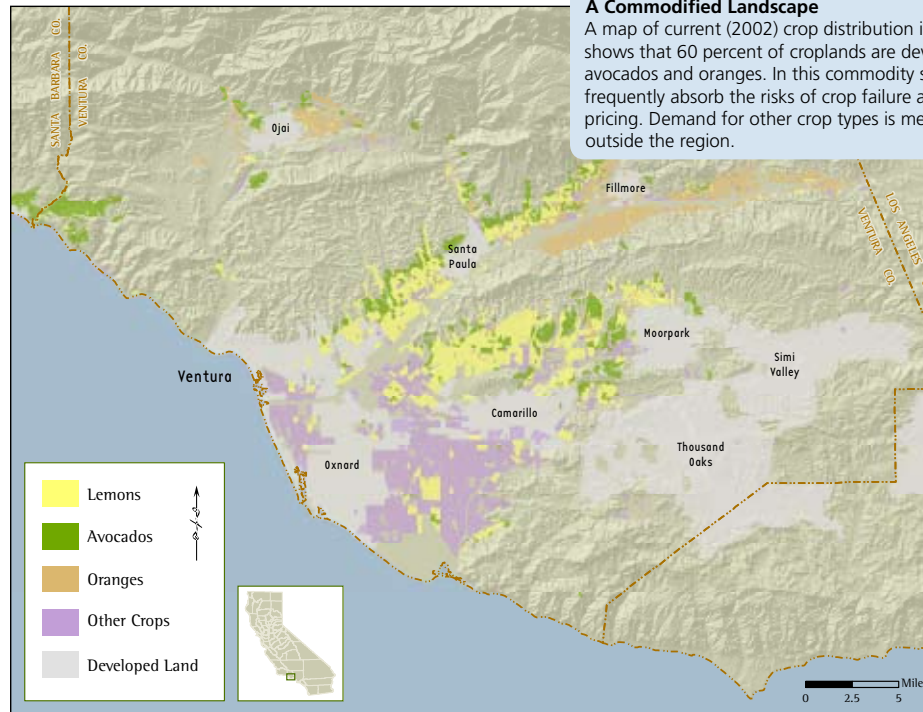
How many people can Ventura County feed?

The Ag Futures Alliance is a California-based nonprofit working closely with farmers to ensure the health of the region's food system. In 2007, they hired Ecotrust to perform a landscape production analysis for Ventura County. If the county's landowners diversified their cropping, what could they grow and how many could they feed?

Drawing upon data for ecological factors such as soil quality, land elevation and access to water, Ecotrust classified the landscape into roughly 100 agro-ecological zones. Then we developed scenarios for diversification and measured output according to the county's landscape productivity. We found that Ventura County could easily feed itself and could satisfy demand for some, but not all, crop types in nearby Los Angeles County. Our findings indicate an opportunity for landowners to diversify production to meet the burgeoning market for regional foods.

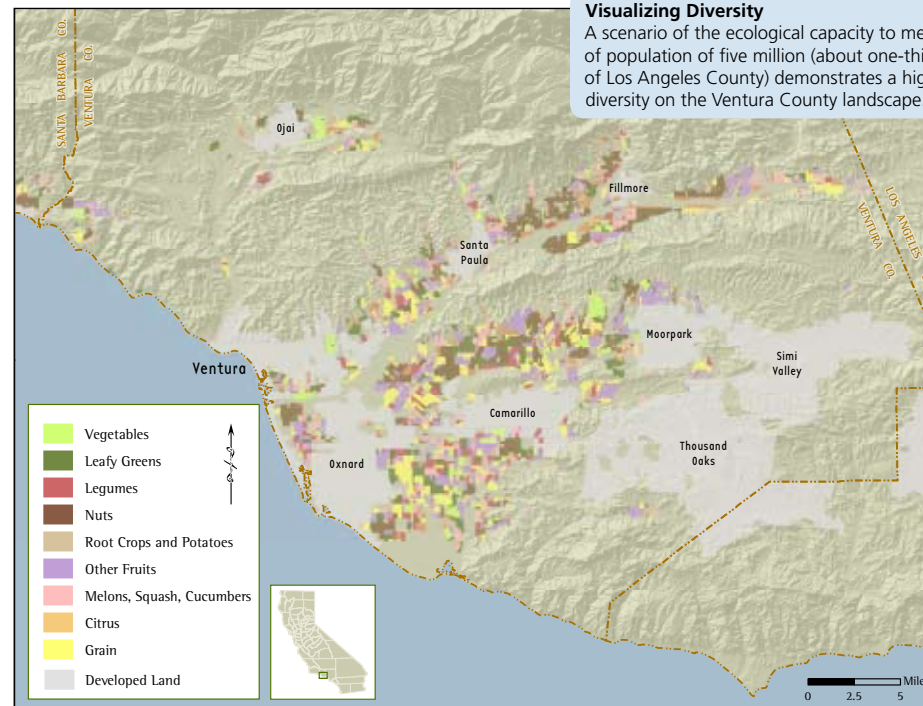
These analyses — agro-ecological and landscape productivity — are two components of Ecotrust's SEEDS (Socio-Economic & Ecological Decision Systems) toolkit. SEEDS allows us to quantify and assess the benefits of alternative planning, marketing and resource management systems.

Learn more:
www.ecotrust.org/seeds



A Commodified Landscape

A map of current (2002) crop distribution in Ventura County shows that 60 percent of croplands are devoted to lemons, avocados and oranges. In this commodity system, producers frequently absorb the risks of crop failure and variable market pricing. Demand for other crop types is met by sourcing food outside the region.



Visualizing Diversity

A scenario of the ecological capacity to meet the demands of population of five million (about one-third the population of Los Angeles County) demonstrates a high degree of crop diversity on the Ventura County landscape.

Meeting Local Demand

Following USDA designations for crop types and drawing upon data for Ventura County consumption levels, we demonstrate that by diversifying production, within the agro-ecological constraints of the landscape, Ventura County could easily meet the demands of its 724,560 residents for all crop types.

Crop Type	Production (in tons)	Demand (in tons)	Demand Satisfied
Alfalfa Mixtures	25,363	25,363	100%
Apples	15,723	15,718	100%
Avocados	797	800	100%
Barley	254	276	109%
Beans	3,333	3,339	100%
Broccoli	2,862	2,880	101%
Bush Berries	2,572	2,680	104%
Cabbage	3,840	3,872	101%
Carrots	5,507	5,598	102%
Celery	2,246	2,274	101%
Corn	42,894	42,928	100%
Grain	59,160	59,157	100%
Grapefruit	1,848	1,842	100%
Kiwis	217	272	125%
Lemons	2,246	2,472	110%
Lettuce	20,324	20,289	100%
Melons, Squash, Cucumbers	15,433	15,494	100%
Misc Grasses	4,673	4,662	100%
Misc Subtropical	54,125	54,050	100%
Misc Vegetables	13,730	19,329	141%
Oats	1,558	1,551	100%
Olives	326	322	99%
Onions, Garlic	7,680	7,890	103%
Oranges	30,939	31,019	100%
Peaches, Nectarines	3,333	3,452	104%
Pears	1,014	1,472	145%
Peas	1,340	1,395	104%
Peppers	2,862	3,033	106%
Pistachios	322	324	101%
Potatoes	50,248	50,265	100%
Rice	7,137	7,195	101%
Spinach	978	1,014	104%
Strawberries	2,137	2,973	139%
Sugar Beets	23,766	24,032	101%
Sweet Potatoes	1,558	1,648	106%
Table Grapes	2,645	2,644	100%
Tomatoes	31,591	31,580	100%
Walnuts	645	684	106%
Almonds	645	854	132%
Corn silage	6,999	7,155	102%
Silage	6,999	7,391	106%