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### **Farm Water Quality Planning**

*A Water Quality and  
Technical Assistance Program  
for California Agriculture*

This REFERENCE SHEET is part of the **Farm Water Quality Planning (FWQP)** series, developed for a short course that provides training for growers of irrigated crops who are interested in implementing water quality protection practices. The short course teaches the basic concepts of watersheds, nonpoint source pollution (NPS), self-assessment techniques, and evaluation techniques. Management goals and practices are presented for a variety of cropping systems.



## Reference:

# Identifying Your Farm Water Quality Goals

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**W**hat are you trying to achieve through your use of time, effort, money, and management skills? Where are you going, how are you going to get there, and when will you arrive at your intended destination? The answers to these questions and the nature of your intentions for the future can be found in your choice of goals. Since management is a goal-oriented activity, your goals provide direction to all your management efforts.

Goals reflect a very personal aspect of your life. While the goals you identify may be similar to those identified by others, they will also be unique to you and your family. They will reflect your values and beliefs, the resources that you have to work with, and the opportunities and limitations that you face. Through goals, each person, family, or business unit identifies its aspirations for the future.

If goals are this personal, you may wonder, why start a discussion of farm management by focusing on goals and priorities. We follow this approach because we believe that individuals and families are much more likely to achieve the things they want in life if they know

- what they are trying to accomplish
- how they want to carry out their actions or decisions
- when they can expect their efforts to be complete

## GOAL IDENTIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

All of us have goals that we work toward over many years — goals such as the debt-free ownership of a farm or “burning the mortgage” on the family home. Some goals require a lifetime to achieve. Others can be attained in a year, a few years, or a decade. Goals that take many years to achieve are called long-term goals. Those that can be attained in relatively short periods of time are usually called short-term goals or objectives. In farming, short-term goals focus on production targets. For instance, a vineyard manager’s short-term goal could be to meet all winery contract parameters at a desirable (i.e., profitable) volume of tons per acre.

To the extent possible, we generally want to have short-term goals that directly support the attainment of our long-term goals. This kind of harmony sets the stage for more effective financial and business management. It’s rare, though, for all of a person’s short-term and long-term goals to be in this kind of agreement. Production goals for farming may be to some degree in opposition to important short-term quality-of-life goals. If you find inconsistencies in the goals you set, don’t be surprised. By deliberately setting priorities, you can examine conflict or competition between your goals and identify the ones that you believe are most important or most urgent.

## GOAL WRITING GUIDELINES

Here are some ideas about writing goal statements that can serve as guidelines as you complete the goal setting exercise:

- *Goals are written action statements.* “To complete...” or “To earn...” or other action statements introduce typical goals.
- *Goals should be attainable* in that they should describe situations that you believe are possible to achieve in the designated time. Avoid “pie-in-the-sky” long-term goals that you neither believe in nor will find possible to achieve.
- *Short-term goals indicate a target date for completion.* “To replace our present tractor with a 125 horsepower model by the end of 2003.”
- *Long-term goals usually specify the time by which the goal is to be attained.* “To pay off the real estate mortgage by...”
- *When long-term goals do not specify a time, they usually refer to qualitative aspects of life.* “To make it possible for each of our children to secure a college or university degree by providing...”

As you write goal statements, you are expressing your hopes, dreams, and ambitions for the future by identifying what you want to achieve as well as how and when you intend to achieve it. In this course, you will start to develop three kinds of long- and short-term goals: production, quality of life, and natural resource goals. You will want to review and update these goals throughout the planning process and at least once a year thereafter.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Some of the information in this publication appeared previously in Melvin George's 1993 work, Rangeland Watershed Program, Water Quality Planning Guide No. 1: Identifying Your Goals, published by the University of California at Davis.

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