

APPENDIX C

Agricultural Points Assessment

Introduction

Santa Barbara County has adopted a weighted point system to provide a preliminary screening of a project’s agricultural impacts during the environmental review process. The weighted point system, described in the County’s *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual*, assigns relative values to particular characteristics of a site’s agricultural productivity and suitability (e.g. soil type, water supply, etc.). The assignment of 60 or more points typically indicates an agriculturally viable parcel. The point system evaluates a site’s agricultural suitability and productivity to determine whether the project may have a significant impact on agricultural resources. The existing lots and proposed parcels, as well as the entire ranch as a whole, were all evaluated using the County’s Weighted Point System. Existing lots are indicated by Existing Lot A (ELA), Existing Lot B (ELB), etc. Proposed parcels are identified as Proposed Parcel 1 (PP1), Proposed Parcel 2 (PP2), etc. Existing and proposed parcels are labeled in Figure 2 of the Rangeland Assessment (September 2008).

Parcel Size

The following ranges were used to assess all of the existing and proposed parcels:

| Parcel size (acres) | Points Assigned | Parcel size (acres) | Points Assigned |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Less than 5 | 0-3 | 100-less than 500 | 11-12 |
| 5-less than 10 | 4-6 | 500-less than 1000 | 13-14 |
| 10-less than 40 | 7-8 | 1000 | 15 |
| 40-less than 100 | 9-10 | | |

The existing ranch is 1,784 acres and was assigned the maximum, 15 points. ELA is 11 acres and 7 points were assigned. The low end of the range was applied because the configuration and location of the parcel reduce farming potential. ELB is 94 acres and was assigned 10 points. ELC is 8 acres and was assigned 4 points. ELD (240 acres), ELE (165 acres), ELG (281 acres), and ELH (242 acres) were each assigned 11 points. ELF (740 acres) was assigned 13 points. ELI (1 acre) was assigned 1 point. PP1 (55 acres) and PP2 (59 acres) were each assigned 9 points. PP3 (100 acres), PP4 (148 acres), PP5 (157 acres), and PP7 (150 acres) received 11 points each. PP6 (1,115 acres) is the largest parcel and was assigned the maximum, 15 points.

Soil Classification

| Soil Class | Point Range |
|--|-------------|
| Class I These soils have few limitations that restrict their use. | 14-15 |
| Class II These soils have moderate limitation that reduce the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices. | 11-13 |
| Class III These soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require special conservation practices, or both. | 8-10 |
| Class IV These soils have very severe limitations that reduce the choice of | 6-7 |

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| plants or that require very careful management, or both. | |
| Class VI These soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuitable for cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to pasture, rangeland, forestland, or wildlife habitat. | 1-5 |
| Class VII These soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuitable for cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to grazing, forestland, or wildlife habitat. | 1-5 |
| Class VIII These soils have limitations that preclude commercial plant production and that restrict their use to recreational purposes, wildlife habitat, watershed, or aesthetic purposes. | 0 |

Points assigned in the soil classification category were based on information obtained from the Sage Report's Las Varas Ranch Soil Agricultural Characteristics (Table 1). The NRCS irrigated land capability classification system and GIS soils data were utilized to assign points for the soil classification category. All parcels and lots contain a mixture of soil classes. Soil class ranges were chosen based on the quantity for each parcel. Point assignment within each range was based on the presence of other soils and/or irrigated agriculture. Appendix B in the Las Varas Ranch Rangeland Assessment (September 2008) contains a description of the soils type, texture, average slope, soil class and acreage for the existing ranch, existing lots, and proposed parcels.

Existing Ranch – The soil composition on the existing ranch is complex. There are 26 different soil types and all of the soil classifications are represented with the exception of Class V soils which are not found in Santa Barbara County. Soil classifications for the existing ranch are: 910 acres of Class VI/VII soils (51%), 416 acres of Class IV soils (23%), 163 acres of Class III soils (9%), 157 acres of Class II (Prime) soils (9%), and 136 acres of Class VIII (8%). The existing ranch was assigned points in the Class VI/VII category. The higher end of the range, 5 points, was assigned to reflect the presence of prime and more productive soils.

ELA contains approximately 8 acres (73%) of Class IV soils and 3 acres (27%) of Class VIII soils. The low end of the Class IV range was applied to reflect the presence of highly erodible Class VIII soils. ELA was assigned 6 points.

ELB contains approximately 34 acres (36%) of Class IV soils and 32 acres (34%) of Class III soils. The high end of the Class IV range was assigned, 7 points, to reflect the presence of more productive Class IV and Class II, Prime soils (10 acres).

ELC contains 5 acres of Class IV soils according to the NRCS soil type. However, the lot contains approximately 3 acres of soil highly likely to erode (beach) and the small lot size and configuration make potential commercial agriculture nearly impossible. One point was assigned to show the presence of Class IV soils.

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ELD contains 72 acres (30%) of Class III soils; therefore that range was applied. The high end of the range, 10 points, was applied because the soils currently support high cash crops (lemons and avocados) and to reflect the presence of prime, Class II soils (68 acres or 28%).

ELE contains 80 acres (48%) of Class IV soils and the Class IV range was applied. The high end of the range, 7 points, was assigned because the soils currently support avocados and to reflect the presence of more productive, Class III (57 acres or 35%) and Class II (24 acres or 15%) soils.

ELF was assigned points in the Class VI/VII range because the majority of soils are in that class. ELF contains 458 acres (62%) of Class VII soils, 57 acres (8%) of Class IV soils, and 95 acres of Class VI (95 acres or 13%). The middle of the range, 3 points, was assigned to reflect the absence of irrigated agriculture on the parcel.

ELG contains 153 acres (54%) of Class VI/VII soils and points were assigned in the Class VI/VII category. The upper range, 5 points, was applied to reflect the presence of Prime, Class II soils (52 acres or 19%).

ELH contains 134 acres (51%) of Class VI/VII soils, therefore points within that range were applied to the parcel. The high end on the range, 5 points, was applied to reflect the presence of more productive Class III and Class IV soils.

ELI contains 1 acre of Class IV soils. The low end of the range, 6 points, was applied to reflect the small size of the parcel.

PP1 is comprised mostly of Class IV soils (41 acres or 75%), therefore points were assigned in that range. The high end of the range, 7 points, was applied to reflect the presence of Class II prime soils (10 acres or 18%).

PP2 is composed mostly of Class III soils (29 acres or 49%) and points were assigned within the Class III range. The low end of the range, 8 points, was used because the lot is small and the remaining balance of soils are less productive and not under cultivation.

PP3 contains 57 acres (57%) of Class IV soils, therefore that range was used to assign points to PP3. The high end of the range, 7 points, was assigned because the parcel currently supports a high cash crop (avocados) and to reflect the presence of more productive Class II, prime soils (12 acres or 12%).

PP4 contains 41 acres (28%) of Class III soils, therefore the Class III range was used to assign points to the parcel. The middle of the range, 9 points, was assigned to reflect the presence of less productive Class VI soils (40 acres or 27%) and cultivated, prime Class II soils (30 acres or 20%).

PP5 contains 72 acres (46%) of Class III soils, therefore that range was used to assign points to the parcel. The high end of the range, 10 points, was assigned to reflect the presence of prime Class II soils (31 acres or 20%) and cultivated crops (lemons and avocados).

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PP6 contains a majority of Class VI/VII soils (757 acres or 68%), therefore points were assigned using that range. The high end of the range, 5 points, was assigned to reflect the presence of prime Class II soils (57 acres or 5%) and cultivated crops.

PP7 contains 95 acres (57%) of Class VI/VII soils, therefore that range was used to assign points to the parcel. The high end of the range, 4 points, was assigned to reflect the presence of more productive (Class III and IV) soils.

Water Availability

| Water availability | Points assigned |
|---|-----------------|
| Land has adequate water supply suitable for crops or grazing | 12-15 |
| Land has water but may be marginal in quantity or quality suitable for crops or grazing | 8-11 |
| Land does not have developed water supply but an adequate supply is potentially available | 3-7 |
| Land does not have developed water and potential sources are of poor quality or quantity | 0-2 |

The source of agricultural water is provided by a combination of creek diversion, storage, wells, and Goleta Water District. Nearby creeks and run off fill the large 644 acre-foot reservoir, located on ELF and PP6. The reservoir is the main agricultural water source and the Goleta Water District supplements a small portion of the water allocated to the ranch. The agricultural wells on the property are not used for irrigation because they are high in salts and minerals (pers. comm., Ranch Manager). Currently, water for agriculture and cattle is available to all portions of the ranch and each of the existing lots. A shared water system has been proposed as part of the project and would ensure water would be available to the ranch and proposed parcels after the project. Based on the long history of agriculture on the ranch and proposed shared water system, the existing ranch, existing lots and proposed parcels were considered to have an adequate water supply of sufficient quality available for cattle and irrigation. The existing ranch, ELF and PP6 were all assigned the maximum, 15 points, because they have an onsite source of water. The remaining existing lots and proposed parcels all rely on the same offsite source of water and were subsequently assigned 14 points.

Agricultural Suitability

| Crops | Points Assigned |
|--|-----------------|
| Highly suitable for irrigated grain, truck and field, orchard, or vineyard crops | 8-10 |
| Highly suitable for irrigated ornamentals, pasture, alfalfa, or dry farming | 6-8 |
| Moderately suitable for irrigated crops, orchard, ornamental or dry farming | 4-5 |
| Low suitability for irrigated crops, orchard, ornamentals or dry farming | 1-3 |

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|--|---|
| Unsuitable for crop production because of soil capabilities, environmental constraints, etc. | 0 |
|--|---|

| Grazing | Points Assigned |
|--|-----------------|
| Highly suitable for pasture or range | 6-10 |
| Moderately suitable for pasture or range | 3-5 |
| Low suitability for pasture or range | 1-2 |
| Unsuitable for pasture or range | 0 |

Points for this category were assigned based on site specific considerations, the Conservation Element, the Rangeland Assessment (September 2008) and current data. The Conservation Element (adopted 1979, amended 2003) states the major environmental determinants of agricultural suitability are water supply, soils, climate, terrain and environmental constraints. Environmental constraints may include biological resources, frost areas, flood areas, high groundwater tables, drainage problems, etc. In addition to the Conservation Element, other information sources included existing and historical agricultural practices, Department of Conservation's Important Farmland 2006 maps, Agricultural Commissioner's 2008 crop GIS data, and the Rangeland Assessment provided by Orrin Sage. Rangeland considered suitable for cattle included areas determined to be High, Moderate, or Low suitability in the Rangeland Assessment. Unsuitable rangeland was excluded from the rangeland acreage calculations.

Existing Ranch – Las Varas Ranch is a 1,802-acre ranch (1,784 acres of which are covered by the project site) that currently supports 198 acres of irrigated orchard crops and a cow/calf cattle grazing operation. Existing development totals approximately 25,805 square feet and includes one main residence, two rental units, one vacant unit, four farm employee dwellings, four sheds, two barns and one shop. The mature, fruit bearing orchard is composed of 171 acres of avocados and 27 acres of lemons with an average annual yield of 1.4 million pounds totaling \$1.1 million (Paul Van Leer, Ranch Manager). Terrain south of the freeway is generally flat with 2-9% slopes. Terrain north of the freeway contains 15% to 50% slopes. The majority of irrigated agriculture and Important Farmland are located north of the freeway. According to the Agricultural Suitability maps, it appears that land within close proximity to the 101 freeway is considered “highly suitable for orchards and vineyards” or “moderately suitable for crop production” and steep foothills north of the freeway are considered “unsuitable for crop production”. The Department of Conservation's Important Farmland Maps designate the majority of the land within the ranch as Grazing (83%) with some Prime Farmland (5%), Farmland of Statewide Importance (less than 1%), Unique Farmland (6%), and Other (6%). All of the Important Farmland is currently under cultivation and a small amount (20 acres) of cultivated land is classified as Grazing land. This may be because the orchard was installed after the last Important Farmland mapping cycle.

According to the Rangeland Assessment, approximately 649 acres (inclusive of the 18-acre parcel that is proposed to be “not a part” of the project) of rangeland supports a cattle grazing operation with a historical carrying capacity of 86 AU/yr. This includes 60 cow-calf pairs, 10 replacement heifers, four bulls, and seven horses. The calculated carrying capacity of the existing ranch is estimated to be 42 AU/yr. The existing carrying capacity is higher than the

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calculated carrying capacity because of supplemental feeding and the presence of Harding Grass (*Phalaris aquatica*), a non-native perennial grass used for forage (Sage 2008). In addition to rangeland forage, cattle are fed liquid supplements and hay supplements as needed. By both estimates, the carrying capacity is well above the 25-30 AU/yr threshold stated by the Santa Barbara County Cattlemen's Association to be the appropriate threshold for viable grazing operations.

ELA is an 11-acre undeveloped lot with no irrigated agriculture and zero acres of potential rangeland. The lot size, configuration, and location make it unsuitable for cattle or crops. ELA received zero points for crop and grazing suitability.

ELB is a 94.25-acre undeveloped lot with 78 acres of rangeland. Terrain is generally flat and with a small amount of Class II soils (42 acres) but no irrigated agriculture. Grazing potential is identified as "good-fair" and the estimated cattle carrying capacity is 3.6 AU/yr. The lot is long and narrow with a significant amount of acreage along the bluff that is susceptible to erosion. ELB has a low suitability for irrigated crops, orchards, pasture, and rangeland because of the lot configuration and lack of production agriculture. One point was assigned for crops and one point for grazing for a total score of 2 points.

ELC is an 8.35-acre undeveloped lot with five acres of suitable rangeland or irrigated crops. ELC contains Class IV soils suitable for hay, rangeland and orchards with a moderate erosion hazard. The lot size is small with poorer soils and one point was assigned to ELC for cattle and crop suitability.

ELD is a 239.53-acre lot with 51 acres of irrigated orchards and 115 acres of rangeland that is highly suitable land for cattle. Existing development totals 13,070 square feet. Approximately 55 acres are designated as Prime, 12 acres are designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance and 10 acres are designated as Farmland of Unique Importance. A portion of the cultivated areas is designated as prime soils (Class II). The Rangeland Assessment (Sage 2008) concluded that the lot has good grazing distribution with an estimated carrying capacity of 6.5 AU/yr. The lot was assigned 8 points for crop suitability and 2 points for grazing suitability, for a total score of 10 points.

ELE is a 165.21-acre lot with 20 acres of irrigated agriculture underlain with Class II (prime) soils and 123 acres of rangeland suitable for cattle. Approximately 9,215 square feet of development exists on the lot. Despite the presence of irrigated agriculture, it is designated as Grazing land by the Department of Conservation. The orchard was planted after the last mapping cycle and may explain why it is not designated as Important Farmland. Adequate water is available for crops and cattle. Grazing distribution is good, and the majority of the lot, 122 acres (74%), is considered highly suitable for cattle. The estimated carrying capacity for cattle is 8.5 AU/yr. A perennial creek with sensitive habitat could theoretically impact the farming potential. However, the lot has been farmed and grazed for many years. The lot was assigned 8 points for crop suitability and 3 points for grazing suitability, for a total score of 11 points.

ELF is a 740-acre undeveloped grazing lot with no irrigated crops. The lot contains poor soils and steep slopes. The Rangeland Assessment estimated the carrying capacity is 5.5 AU/yr with

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136 acres of rangeland suitable for cattle and 604 acres of rangeland unsuitable. The lot was assigned 3 points for crop suitability and 2 points for grazing suitability, for a total score of 5 points.

ELG is a 281-acre lot with 127 acres of avocados and 28 acres of suitable rangeland. Existing development totals 3,520 square feet. The farmland is designated as Important Farmland (Prime and Unique) and underlain with Class II (prime) soils. The Rangeland Assessment estimated the carrying capacity to be 1.2 AU/yr and concluded 90% of the lot to be unsuitable for cattle. Fenced orchards exclude cattle and reduce the amount of available forage. The lot was considered highly suitable for orchards and received 9 points for crop suitability. ELG was assigned 1 additional point for grazing suitability for a total score of 10 points.

ELH is a 242-acre undeveloped grazing lot with approximately 144 acres of suitable rangeland. Grazing distribution is “good” with 29% of the parcel considered to be highly suitable for cattle. Steep terrain and dense canopy cover in some areas limit carrying capacity to 16 AU/yr. ELH was assigned 0 points for crop suitability and 5 points for grazing suitability for a total score of 5 points.

ELI is a one-acre undeveloped grazing lot with one acre of suitable rangeland. ELI was assigned 0 points for crop suitability and 3 points for grazing suitability.

PP1 is a 55-acre grazing parcel with 49 acres of suitable rangeland and an estimated carrying capacity to be 2.4 AU/yr. There are 10 acres of prime soil not irrigated or under cultivation. The configuration of the bluff top parcel is long and narrow and susceptible to erosion. Based on small parcel size and configuration of the lot, PP1 was assigned zero points for crop suitability and one point for grazing suitability for a total score of 1 point.

PP2 is a 59-acre grazing parcel with 30 acres of suitable rangeland. The Rangeland Assessment (Sage 2008) estimated the carrying capacity to be 1.4 AU/yr with poor-good grazing distribution. One point for grazing suitability was assigned to PP2.

PP3 is a 100-acre lot with 20 acres of irrigated crops and 65 acres of suitable rangeland. The parcel contains 12 acres of Class II prime soils that are under cultivation. Grazing distribution is good and 64% of the parcel contains forage highly suitable for grazing. The estimated carrying capacity is 4.3 AU/yr. Eight points were assigned for crop suitability and 1 point was assigned for grazing suitability. A total score of 9 points were assigned for PP3.

PP4 is a 148-acre lot with an 11-acre lemon orchard and 104 acres of suitable rangeland. The orchard is designated as Prime Farmland and a portion is underlain with Class II, prime soils. Most of the rangeland is highly suitable for grazing and the estimated carrying capacity is 8.5 AU/yr. Eight points were assigned for crop suitability and 3 points were assigned for grazing suitability, for a total score of 11 points.

PP5 is a 157-acre lot with 40 acres of orchard crops that are fenced to exclude cattle and 74 acres of suitable rangeland for cattle. The orchard is designated as Important Farmland (Prime and Statewide) and a portion is planted on prime soils. PP5 contains 83 acres (53%) of land

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unsuitable for cattle and the estimated carrying capacity is 3 AU/yr. Eight points were assigned for crop suitability and 1 point was assigned for grazing suitability, for a total of 9 points.

PP6 is a 1,115-acre lot with 125 acres of orchards that are fenced to exclude cattle and 243 acres of rangeland. A portion of the parcel is designated as Important Farmland (Prime and Unique) and underlain with Class II (prime) soils. The Rangeland Assessment estimated the carrying capacity to be 10.7 AU/yr and determined 78% of the lot to be unsuitable for cattle. Nine points were assigned for crop suitability and 4 points for grazing suitability, for a total score of 13 points.

PP7 is a 150-acre grazing lot with approximately 82 acres of suitable rangeland for cattle. The estimated carrying capacity is 11.7 AU/yr and 44% of the rangeland is highly suitable for grazing and 41% is as unsuitable. Steep terrain and canopy cover in some areas limit grazing potential. PP7 was assigned 0 points for crop suitability and 4 points for grazing suitability for a total score of 4 points.

Existing and Historic Land Use

| Description of Land Use | Points Assigned |
|--|-----------------|
| In active agricultural production | 5 |
| In maintained range/pasture | 5 |
| Unmaintained, but productive within the last ten years | 3-5 |
| Vacant land – fallow or never planted | 1-3 |
| Substantial urban or industrial ag development onsite | 0 |

With the exception of ELA, the existing ranch, existing lots and proposed parcels are currently planted with lemons/avocados or grazed and each was assigned the maximum, 5 points. ELA received one point because its configuration and location along the blufftop sandwiched between the railroad tracks and cliff face make it unsuitable for cattle or crops.

Comprehensive Plan Designation

| Comprehensive Plan Designation | Points Assigned |
|--|-----------------|
| A-II | 5 |
| A-I | 4 |
| Existing or proposed open space or recreation; open land; Rural Residential 40-100 acres | 3-4 |
| Residential Ranchette 5-20 acres | 2 |
| Residential 5 acres or less; Commercial, Industrial, Community Facility | 0 |

The existing ranch, existing lots and proposed lots have a comprehensive land use designation of Agriculture-II (A-II) and each were assigned 5 points.

Adjacent Existing Land Use

| Adjacent Land Uses | Points Assigned |
|--|-----------------|
| Surrounded by ag /open space in a region with adequate support uses | 9-10 |
| Surrounded by ag operations or open spaces in a region without adequate agricultural support uses; Partially surrounded by ag or open space with some urban uses adjacent, in a region with adequate ag support uses | 7-8 |
| Partially surrounded by ag or open space with some urban uses adjacent in a region without adequate agricultural support uses | 3-6 |
| Immediately surrounded by urban uses with no buffers | 0-2 |

Las Varas Ranch is on the Gaviota Coast where there is adequate support for orchard crops and cattle. The project site is bordered by the ocean to the south, Los Padres National Forest land to the north, and agricultural land and open space to the east and west. The maximum, 10 points, were assigned for the existing ranch, existing lots and proposed parcels.

Agricultural Preserve Potential

| Agricultural Preserve Potential | Points Applied |
|---|----------------|
| Can qualify for prime ag preserve by itself or is in a preserve | 5-7 |
| Can qualify for non-prime ag preserve by itself | 2-4 |
| Can qualify for prime ag preserve with adjacent parcels | 3-4 |
| Can qualify for non-prime ag preserve with adjacent parcels | 1-3 |
| Cannot qualify | 0 |

The project site is not currently enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve Program. According to the Uniform Rules (adopted by the Board of Supervisors on September 2007), non agricultural development (including principal dwellings, accessory structures, landscaping, non-agricultural roads, etc) shall not occupy more than 2 acres or 3% of the parcel, whichever is smaller. Some of the proposed development envelopes are over 2 acres. However, the project proposes to limit non-agricultural development to 2-acres consistent with the Uniform Rules requirement.

The existing ranch contains irrigated agriculture and could qualify for an independent prime Agricultural Preserve contract. One less point than the maximum, 6 points, was assigned because the ranch is not currently enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve program. ELA, ELB, ELC, and ELI were all assigned zero points because they contain no cultivated agriculture and

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are too small to qualify for non-prime contracts. ELD received 6 points because it contains at least 50 acres of irrigated agriculture and therefore could qualify for a prime contract (Uniform Rule 1-2.3a.1). ELE and ELF are predominately grazing land, at least 100 acres and therefore could qualify for individual non-prime contracts. ELE and ELF were each assigned 4 points. ELG received 6 points because it contains approximately 140 acres of irrigated agriculture and could qualify for an individual prime contract. ELH, a 242 acre lot, could qualify for an individual non-prime contract and was assigned 4 points.

PP1 and PP2 were assigned zero points because they are not in irrigated agriculture and are too small to qualify for a non-prime Agricultural Preserve contract. PP3, PP4, PP5 and PP7 received 4 points each because they could qualify for individual non-prime contracts. PP6 could qualify for a prime contract and was assigned 6 points.

Combined Farming Operation

| Combined Farming | Points Applied |
|---|----------------|
| Provide a significant component of a combined farming operation | 5 |
| Provide a important component of a combined farming operation | 3 |
| Provide a small component of a combined farming operation | 1 |
| No combined farming operation | 0 |

Las Varas Ranch consists of the ten subject parcels (one of which is not a part of the project) and is cooperatively farmed. The applicant plans to continue farming the ranch cooperatively after the proposed project as well. Since an 18-acre parcel within the ranch is proposed to remain outside of the project, the remaining 1,784 acres of the ranch provide a significant component of the combined farming operation. Therefore, 5 points were assigned. ELB, ELC, and ELI contribute little to the cattle grazing operation. Each was assigned 1 point. ELD contains the infrastructure necessary for the cattle grazing operation, housing for the farm manager, and approximately 60 acres of orchard crops. It was considered a significant component of the combined farming operation and assigned 5 points. ELF contains the water reservoir and ELG contains the majority of the planted cropland (approximately 140 acres). Each was assigned 5 points. ELH is an important component of the cattle grazing operation and was assigned 3 points. If the proposed project is approved, PP1 and PP2 would be a small component of the cooperative farming operation and each was assigned 1 point. PP3 and PP4 would provide an important component of the combined farming operation due to their grazing land and, in the case of PP3, the existing orchard areas. They were each assigned 3 points. The existing farm employee dwelling and cattle support structures are located on PP5. PP6, the largest proposed parcel, would contain the largest agricultural block and the water reservoir. PP5 and PP6 were each assigned 5 points. PP7 contains grazing land and was assigned 3 points.

Results of Weighted Point System

The County conducted an independent analysis using the Weighted Point system for the existing ranch (as a single unit), existing lots, and proposed lots. According to the points, the existing ranch, when assessed as one unit, received 83 points and is therefore considered to be an agriculturally viable operation. However, when the nine individual lots are assessed separately, four of the lots (ELA, ELB, ELC, and ELI) received scores below the 60 point threshold and five of the lots (ELD, ELE, ELF, ELG and ELH) received scores above the threshold. Scores for each of the existing lots are as follows: ELA received 43 points, ELB received 54 points, ELC received 41 points, ELD received 76 points, ELE received 70 points, ELF received 65 points, ELG received 71 points, ELH received 62 points, and ELI received 45 points. The point system was also applied to each of the proposed parcels. With the exception of PP1 and PP2, all of the proposed parcels were at or above the 60-point threshold. Scores for each of the proposed parcels and lots are as follows: PP1 received 52 points, PP2 received 53 points, PP3 received 68 points, PP4 received 72 points, PP5 received 73 points, PP6 received 79 points, and PP7 received 60 points.

Therefore, based on the point system, when the ranch is assessed as a single unit it is agriculturally viable. When assessed as separate lots, four of the existing lots are not capable of supporting independent agriculturally viable operations. After the proposed project, five of the proposed lots are likely able to support an agricultural operation, albeit one is marginally capable. It is likely that two of the proposed lots are not capable of supporting an agriculturally viable operation. Overall, the project would not reduce the agricultural viability of the ranch or reduce the number of individually viable parcels.

Results of the Rangeland Assessment

The Rangeland Assessment (Sage 2008) estimated the rangeland carrying capacity for the existing ranch (as a single unit), existing lots, and proposed lots. The report estimated the carrying capacity of the rangeland for the existing ranch to be at least 42 AU/yr. The estimated number of animal units that Las Varas Ranch can support is well above the 25-30 AU/yr threshold suggested by the Santa Barbara County Cattlemen's Association. Therefore, when the ranch is evaluated solely as grazing land, it is agriculturally viable and capable of sustaining a cattle grazing operation independent of any other parcel. The Sage report estimated the carrying capacity for each of the existing lots and found all of them to be below the threshold. Results for the existing lots are as follows: 0 AU/yr for ELA; 3.6 AU/yr for ELB; 0.2 AU/yr for ELC; 6.5 AU/yr for ELD; 8.5 AU/yr for ELE; 5.5 AU/yr for ELF; 1.2 AU/yr for ELG; 16 AU/yr for ELH. The number of estimated animal units each proposed parcel could support are as follows: 2.4 AU/yr for PP1; 1.4 AU/yr for PP2; 4.3 AU/yr for PP3; 8.5 AU/yr for PP4; 3AU/yr for PP5; 10.7 AU/yr for PP6, and 11.7 AU/yr for PP7. Thus, the proposed project would not increase or decrease the cattle grazing viability on an individual parcel basis.

Conclusion

When Las Varas is considered as an existing cooperatively farmed ranch, it is capable of supporting an independent agricultural operation and/or cattle grazing operation. This is

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indicated by the weighted point system score of 83 points and the estimated carrying capacity of 42 AU/yr. However, when the ranch is assessed as separate lots, the results are very different. South of the railroad corridor, the existing lots (ELA, ELB, and ELC) and proposed parcels (PP1 and PP2) are not agriculturally viable according to the point system. The small parcel sizes and lot configurations are not conducive for agriculture. In contrast, the existing lots (ELD, ELE, ELF, ELG, ELH) and proposed parcels (PP3, PP4, PP5, PP6, and PP7) located north of the railroad corridor are agriculturally viable when assessed under the point system. One proposed lot, PP7 scored 60 points and is at the threshold for significance. Relatively large parcel sizes and presence of irrigated agriculture contributed to the higher scores. When assessed as rangeland, all of the existing lots and proposed parcels scored below the estimated carrying capacity threshold of 25-30 AU/yr. ELH and PP7 had the highest estimated number of animal units at 16 AU/yr and 11.7 AU/yr respectively. The parcels are either too small to support an independent grazing operation or are planted with orchards.

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| Category | | EP 1,784 acres (a) | E A 11 | EL B 94a | EL C 8a | EL D 240a | EL E 165a | EL F 740a | EL G 281a | EL H 242a | EL I 1a | PP 1 55a | P 2 59 | PP 3 100a | PP 4 148a | PP 5 157a | PP 6 1,115a | PP 7 150a | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| Parcel size (gross) | | 15 | 7 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 11 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 15 | 11 | |
| Less than 5 | 0-3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 less than 10 | 4-6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 less than 40 | 7-8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 40 less than 100 | 9-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 100 less than 500 | 11-12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 500 less than 1000 | 13-14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1000 or more | 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Soil classification | | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 5 | 4 | |
| Class I | 14-15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class II | 11-13 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class III | 8-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class IV | 6-7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class VI&VII | 1-5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class VIII | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Water availability | | 15 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 14 | |
| Land has adequate water supply suitable for crops or grazing | 12-15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Land has water but may be marginal in quantity or quality suitable for crops or grazing | 8-11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Land does not have developed water supply but an adequate supply is potentially available | 3-7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Land does not have developed water and potential sources are of poor quality or quantity | 0-2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Agricultural Suitability | | 17 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 11 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 13 | 4 | |
| Crops | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Highly suitable for irrigated grain, truck and field, orchard, or vineyard crops | 8-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Highly suitable for irrigated ornamentals, pasture, alfalfa, or dry farming | 6-8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Moderately suitable for irrigated crops, orchard, ornamental or dry farming | 4-5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low suitability for irrigated crops, orchard, ornamentals or dry farming | 1-3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unsuitable for crop production | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Las Varas Ranch Project Agricultural Points Assessment

| Category | | EP 1,784 acres (a) | E A 11 | EL B 94a | EL C 8a | EL D 240a | EL E 165a | EL F 740a | EL G 281a | EL H 242a | EL I 1a | PP 1 55a | P 2 59 | PP 3 100a | PP 4 148a | PP 5 157a | PP 6 1,115a | PP 7 150a |
|--|------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| because of soil capabilities, environmental constraints, etc. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grazing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Highly suitable for pasture or range | 6-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Moderately suitable for pasture or range | 3-5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low suitability for pasture or range | 1-2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unsuitable for pasture or range | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Existing and Historic Land Use | | 5 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| In active agricultural production or maintained range/pasture | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unmaintained, but productive within the last ten years | 3-5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Vacant land – fallow or never planted | 1-3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Substantial urban or industrial ag development onsite | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comprehensive Plan Designation | | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| A-II | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A-I | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MA; Open space; Recreation; Open land; Rural Residential 40-100 acres | 3-4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Residential Ranchette 5-20 acres | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Residential 5 acres or less; Commercial; Industrial; Community Facility | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Adjacent Land Uses | | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Surrounded by ag /open space in a region with adequate support uses | 9-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Surrounded by ag operations or open spaces in a region without adequate agricultural support uses; Partially surrounded by ag or open space with some urban uses adjacent, in a region with adequate ag support uses | 7-8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Partially surrounded by ag or open space with some urban uses adjacent in a region without adequate agricultural support uses | 3-6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Immediately surrounded by urban uses with no buffers | 0-2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Las Varas Ranch Project Agricultural Points Assessment

| Category | | EP 1,784 acres (a) | E A 11 | EL B 94a | EL C 8a | EL D 240a | EL E 165a | EL F 740a | EL G 281a | EL H 242a | EL I 1a | PP 1 55a | P 2 59 | PP 3 100a | PP 4 148a | PP 5 157a | PP 6 1,115a | PP 7 150a |
|---|-----|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Agricultural Preserve Potential | | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Can qualify for prime ag preserve by itself or is in a preserve | 5-7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Can qualify for non-prime ag preserve by itself | 2-4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Can qualify for prime ag preserve with adjacent parcels | 3-4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Can qualify for non-prime ag preserve with adjacent parcels | 1-3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cannot qualify | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Combined Farming Operations | | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Provide a significant component of a combined farming operation | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Provide a important component of a combined farming operation | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Provide a small component of a combined farming operation | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No combined farming operation | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total score | | 83 | 43 | 54 | 41 | 76 | 70 | 65 | 71 | 62 | 45 | 52 | 53 | 68 | 72 | 73 | 79 | 60 |