

## **A.G. Kawamura elected to co-chair UN Environment Program Farmers Group**

California farmer A.G. Kawamura has always wanted to be involved in bringing an end to hunger. He started in his own backyard, with [Orange County Produce](#), which delivers fresh fruits and vegetables directly to his local food bank, as well as more traditional venues including grocery stores and farmers markets. Now the former California Secretary of Agriculture and founding co-chair of Solutions from the Land (SfL) will take on an international role, as co-chair of the [United Nations Environment Program \(UNEP\)'s Farmers Major Group](#).

The UNEP, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, is the leading global authority on the environment. Its mission is to inspire, inform, and enable nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. Solutions from the Land joined the UNEP as an official observer in June 2022, opening doors for it to participate in international events and conversations on climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution.

As co-chair of the UNEP's Farmers Group, a constituency of global farm nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) engaged by the UNEP, Kawamura will advocate for farmer-centered policy and discussion and share examples from the field of farmers, ranchers, foresters and fishermen improving their environment and economics while delivering food, fiber and fuel.

"The voices of producers seem to be lost within the policy world," Kawamura says. "That's why Solutions from the Land stays involved. That's why I like to be engaged. We believe the voice of the farmer, the rancher, the fisherman, the forester must be heard, especially when we start talking about these big policy areas. We need to show policymakers what's possible."

Kawamura, who served as the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture from 2003 to 2010, has experience growing fruits and vegetables—from cabbage and celery to strawberries and green beans—using both organic and conventional methods on small and large scales, from 3-to-4-acre to 300-to-600-acre fields.

In addition to his role with Solutions from the Land, he serves on boards and advisory committees for multiple organizations, including the Farm Foundation, Western Growers, Chicago Council Ag Advisory Committee, Bipartisan Policy Center Ag and Forestry Task Force, and Southern California Water Coalition Board. He is a former member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Board of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BANR) and the Council on Agriculture, Science and Technology (CAST). He also founded [Solutions for Urban Ag](#), which grows nutritious food to donate to local food banks and teaches the methods and importance of local urban agriculture.

"The UNEP farmers constituency will be well served by A.G.," says Ernie Shea, Solutions from the Land president. "He brings a breadth of knowledge, experience and leadership capacity to the table, and a true passion for agriculture, farmers and ranchers, and the people they serve through the delivery of abundant, nutrient-dense food, a healthy environment, and a full range of other goods and services."

Kawamura wants to “share the enthusiasm that comes from Solutions from the Land, that agriculture holds the keys to much of what is possible in terms of achieving the [SDGs](#),” as the UNEP Farmers Group co-chair, he says.

He will share the position with [Paul Temple](#), a farmer from the United Kingdom who is involved in the [Global Farmer Network](#). They will attend the [Major Groups and Stakeholders Consultations in Morocco on July 4-5](#).

“Abundance can only be maintained when we invest in and create the capacity to move forward with agriculture, whether it’s through research, infrastructure for clean water, or moving waste into energy and other new products through circular economies,” Kawamura says. “Out of the examples of 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking comes solutions for allowing us to thrive in the future.”

### **SfL Guiding Principles**

Find the guiding principles Kawamura will use to lead in [Guiding Principles to Enable Food Systems to Support Sustainable Development Goal Attainment by 2030](#).

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