

Welcome Address
William D. Gillette
Assistant Agricultural Commissioner
County of Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California, USA

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
Good Morning and welcome to Santa Barbara

It is with a great deal of pleasure that Agricultural Commissioner Ron Gilman and I welcome you to Santa Barbara. I wish to express my appreciation for your participation in this Third International Conference on Kyusei Nature Farming where you will be sharing experiences and knowledge on the transition to a more sustainable agriculture. Your planning committee could not have picked a better location for this conference.

Santa Barbara is a very environmental and health conscious community and we take great pride in encouraging progressive changes that enhance those values. Agriculture is an integral part of both our culture and our economy in this area and it is very appropriate that you have chosen this city as the site for your Third International Conference on Kyusei Nature Farming.

With concerns increasing over the environmental and health effects of chemicals in agriculture, conferences such as this become even more essential because they provide a forum for communicating ideas and experiences on viable alternatives which can change agricultural paradigms. The sustainability of our agriculture should be paramount in everyone's priorities. By bringing together this tremendously diverse group of experts, the dialogue that follows will greatly enhance our common goal of increased agricultural and environmental sustainability.

Santa Barbara County produces over one-half billion dollars of agricultural products each year. The vast majority of this production is by conventional methods, yet we have a very active and growing number of non-conventional growers and an increasing willingness by the conventional growers to incorporate more and more sustainable practices into their operations. On Thursday, you will get a chance to see first hand the application of the principles of Kyusei Nature Farming under local conditions.

Again I want to welcome you to Santa Barbara. I want to thank you in advance for your participation, I hope you have a wonderful time enjoying our area while you are here and, most importantly, I hope you have a productive and fulfilling conference.