

Issue 4 – May 2012 - [UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center website](#)



Message from the director: Dr. Jeff Dahlberg

The weather seems to be on everyone's mind lately. We set a record for heat here in the Fresno area on Sunday, April 22, when the temperature topped 97 in a few spots. We were below normal rainfall for much of the winter, and then an unusually wet April helped out our farmers a bit. Our snowpack is up to 60 percent, which is better than the 35 percent forecasters were predicting earlier this year. These unusual weather patterns make it difficult for everyone to plan, even here at the research center. We are a bit behind in some of our normal agricultural routines because of either a lack of rain or too much. This is the challenge of doing applied and basic research in the field — sometimes Mother Nature does not cooperate! With the hot and dry weather come challenges to our farmers to explore some different crops that are more heat- and drought-tolerant. I continue to work on one of the most drought-tolerant cereal crops, sorghum, and if you are interested, I will demonstrate sorghum growing on the center this fall.

You may have noticed a bit of a change on our website. We are updating our homepage address. This is part of a strategic move to put all the centers under one web domain — [ucanr.edu](#). Note our new web address — <http://kare.ucanr.edu>. Many of us have new [e-mail addresses](#) as well. As always feel free to contact me at jadahlberg@ucanr.edu and comment on our [website blog](#) anytime.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Dahlberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Kearney makes first appearance at the World Ag Expo

The Tulare World Ag Expo was a great success for Kearney. Kearney staff reached out to a broad and diverse group of people to let them know about the exciting research being conducted for the benefit of everyone in the Valley. Lots of kids stopped by, mostly for the free pencils, but also to look through microscopes at different bugs. It provided a great opportunity to let them know what these tiny insects could do to plants. "I look forward to expanding our presence in the AgExpo next year and there is talk of having a booth that highlights all nine UC research and extension centers," said Kearney director Jeff Dahlberg. [Read more about Kearney at the World Ag Expo.](#)



Kearney goes solar

An 80-panel solar array is being installed at the Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center to provide clean, green energy to the F. Gordon Mitchell Postharvest Laboratory, the sensory laboratory and a plant and sample handling lab. Initially, the array will generate 22.4 kilowatts of electricity per hour, a supply expected to cut the center's energy expenditures by \$5,400 per year.

[Read more about the new Kearney solar farm.](#)



Kearney IPM scientist receives two lifetime achievement awards

Walt Bentley, UC Cooperative Extension advisor and Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program coordinator for Entomology, has received lifetime achievement awards from two organizations. In February, the Association of Applied IPM Ecologists honored Bentley during its annual meeting in Oxnard, Calif. In March, Bentley received international acclaim when he was presented with a lifetime achievement award at the 7th International IPM Symposium in Memphis, Tenn.

Read more about the awards from the [Applied IPM Ecologists](#) and [7th International IPM Symposium](#).



Solar tents help stop the spread of weeds at remote sites

Solar tents can easily, inexpensively and successfully kill weed seeds and rhizomes, eliminating the need for hauling weeds out of remote areas where the unwanted plants have taken hold, a UC researcher has demonstrated. Research by Jim Stapleton, a UC Cooperative Extension advisor and Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program Coordinator for Natural Resources, based at the Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center, was published as *Feasibility of solar tents for inactivating weedy plant propagative material* in the March 2012 issue of the Journal of Pest Science.

[Read more about the solar tent research.](#)



Kearney teaches kids about food and farming

Kearney staff brought an educational exhibit to the Fresno County Farm Bureau's "Farm and Nutrition Day" in March. Nearly 2,000 third-graders took part in the event. Many went home with lettuce seedlings from the Kearney booth, in addition to a better understanding of the connection between agriculture and a healthful diet.

[Read more about Farm and Nutrition Day.](#)



In memoriam: F. Gordon Mitchell

Namesake of the UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center's postharvest center, F. Gordon Mitchell, died in February. He was 88. Mr. Mitchell was the viticulture advisor in San Joaquin County for eight years before taking a position as statewide pomology specialist at UC Davis in 1957. He retired in 1991. When Dinuba farmer/packer LeRoy Giannini contributed funds to build the new postharvest laboratory at Kearney, he suggested naming the building after Mr. Mitchell. On Feb. 8, 1993, the facility was christened the F. Gordon Mitchell Postharvest center.

[Read more about F. Gordon Mitchell.](#)



In memoriam: Fred Jensen

Fred Jensen had a gift for grooming future UC Cooperative Extension farm advisors. A litany of current and now-retired farm advisors began their careers working with Jensen when he was a viticulture specialist at the Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center. Jensen passed away April 18. He was 91. During his 15 years at Kearney, Jensen identified recent agricultural science graduates and hired them as staff research associates to work with him in the field and in his lab. He trained them on the most recent plant science research techniques, imparting skills for future careers as farm advisors.

[Read more about Fred Jensen.](#)

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