

Kearney Research News



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Agriculture and Natural Resources

Research and Extension Center System

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Message from the director: Dr. Jeff Dahlberg

Another hot and dry summer, though I'm looking out the window and seeing clouds with a hint of rain! Might have to run out and take a picture if it starts raining. Whatever little rain we do get is swallowed up by our dry soils, so I'm hoping our winter months bring us lots of snow and rain to help replenish our water resources. We are all worried about our water situations and reviewing what we can do on the center to conserve water and ensure that we have water in the future to conduct research. We're looking at our wells to see if they will be adequate for the future and putting in more drip lines to help with our irrigation needs. Speaking of water needs, Larry Schwankl, our CE irrigation Specialist retired at the end of June. Larry was a great asset to our research team on the center, providing leadership and research on different irrigation strategies and their impact on cropping systems. He will be sorely missed. In the 2014 new call for positions, we put in two requests to get some irrigation help here at the center and for the valley, so keep your fingers crossed.

One would think that with little or no rainfall this year, we should not be worried about mosquitos; however, research at our center by Anton Cornel is working on new mosquito surveillance and control programs. As it has gotten warmer, these pesky insects that carry some pretty bad diseases seem to be moving further up California each year. This year was no exception. Cornel's group is testing a new mosquito death trap in Clovis, so if you'd like more information please go on-line at <http://ucanr.edu/index3.cfm?blogpost=14804&blogasset=60503> to learn more.

New researchers are coming! A new pathologist is scheduled to be here on October 1, while a new nematologist is schedule for arrival here at KARE on January 1, 2015. We are also working to hire an applied engineer with experience in spray technologies and a new communications educator to help us get the word out about our research activities and findings. The communications educator will work not only with KARE, but also at our REC Centers located at Lindcove and Westside. We're excited about the possibility of reaching out to our school communities with good lesson plans about agriculture and our research to help educate our youth about the importance of agriculture. This is also the time of year when a lot of activities are occurring at KARE, so check our website out for information about field days, research tours, and other Center activities and come join us to learn more about what we do and how we are helping the communities and counties surrounding KARE.

If you are so inclined, you can help us financially and allow us to expand our research efforts so that we can continue to research sustainable solutions to the variety of problems that face our farmers and our food systems through our "[Make a Gift](#)" on-line donation button. As always, feel free to contact me at jadahlberg@ucanr.edu, through our Facebook page, our [blog](#), or at our [website](#).



Conservation agriculture can benefit California.

After attending the 6th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in June, [Jeff Mitchell](#), UC Cooperative Extension specialist in the Department of Plant Sciences at UC Davis, and Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center, stated, "Focusing on soil care will improve soil water intake and storage...Reducing soil water evaporation can be achieved by preserving surface residues. Together these steps reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions – very important goals."

Mitchell is the chair of the [UC Conservation Agriculture Systems Innovation Center](#). CASI is exploring options to help support the implementation of conservation agriculture in California. [Read more](#).



KARE helps develop a sorghum feedstock program in California.

Pacific Ethanol, Inc., Chromatin, Inc., CSU Fresno's Center for Irrigation Technology and the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources received a \$3 million matching grant for the California Energy Commission to collaboratively develop a sorghum feedstock program in California. This includes the California In-State Sorghum Program that facilitates California's production of low-carbon ethanol from Californian feedstock so that we can meet the state's renewable fuel and greenhouse gas reduction goals mandated by the federal Renewable Fuel Standard and the Californian Low-Carbon Fuel Standard.

Jeff Dahlberg, Ph.D., the director of KARE, is part of the ANR sorghum research group. [Read more](#).



UC tests new mosquito death trap in Clovis.

In July, [Anthony Cornel](#), a UC Davis entomologist based at the UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Parlier, started a new mosquito surveillance and control program in Clovis. The goal is to abate populations of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitos, which appeared in the Clovis, Madera and San Mateo communities last year. The *Ae. aegypti*, which has the ability to spread the yellow fever, dengue fever and Chikungunya viruses, survived the winter and is now being actively tracked and eradicated by mosquito abatement officials in an effort to prevent *Ae. aegypti* from getting a strong foothold in California. [Read more](#).



UC ANR outreaches to the public at Woodlake's Bravo Lake Botanical Garden's Berry Day.

In June, Woodlake's Bravo Lake Botanical Garden hosted a berry day, which attracted over 500 people. Many UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources groups helped make the event an enjoyable day of learning about a healthy lifestyle, including growing and eating fresh produce. The UC ANR groups contributing to the program's success included some of [UC Cooperative Extension, Tulare](#) County's Master Gardener volunteers, Healthy Families staff, and advisors; [Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center](#); and [Lindcove Research and Extension Center](#). Attendees were provided prepared samples of fresh produce, including cherries, peaches, oranges, figs and berries. Attendees were also able to pick and eat produce directly from the plants as they strolled along the agricultural botanical garden's pathways.



Larry Schwankl retires after 28 years of service to UC Cooperative Extension.

[Larry Schwankl](#), UC Cooperative Extension irrigation specialist in the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources at UC Davis, based at the UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Parlier, retired at the end of June after 28 years of service to UC Cooperative Extension.

Schwankl's research emphasis was in drip, sprinkler, and flood irrigation. He worked on irrigation system maintenance and chemigation, irrigation scheduling using soil moisture monitoring and evapotranspiration techniques.

[Information on academic positions now under recruitment.](#)

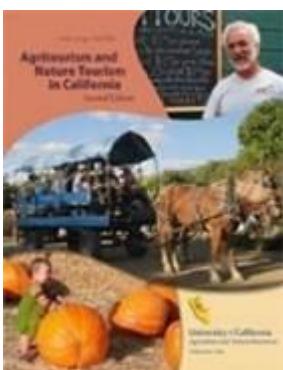


Napolitano presents UC initiative to state food and agriculture board.

On July 1, University of California President Janet Napolitano presented the university's plans for a comprehensive food initiative to the [California State Board of Food and Agriculture](#) in Sacramento.

"This initiative grows out of a commitment made by all 10 UC campus chancellors and myself," Napolitano said. "It is a commitment to work collectively to put a greater emphasis on what UC can do as a public research university, in one of the most robust agricultural regions in the world, to take on one of the world's most pressing issues."

[Read more.](#)



UC offers a publication on agritourism and nature tourism.

UC's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources offers many [publications](#) to help people help themselves. If you are interested in exploring the possibility of providing agritourism or nature tourism, the publication, [Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California - Second Edition](#), by Holly George and Ellie Rilla may interest you. It is 151 pages and costs \$25.



Agritourism an option in the San Joaquin Valley.

Even though the typical San Joaquin Valley farm is focused exclusively on food production, local growers can profit from increasing interest in agritourism, reported Helen Tracey-Noren in the [Fresno Bee](#). The concept was touted at a recent forum in Fresno where CDFA secretary Karen Ross and the CEO of Visit California, Caroline Beteta, spoke about the agritourism trend.

"It's about, 'here's what farmers and ranchers are doing as your neighbors,' their environmental stewardship," said Ross. "It's about the pride of what we produce here, and it's about this wonderful lifestyle and supporting the economy at the same time."

[Read more.](#)



Local residents learn more about how KARE helps them.

Over 30 nonprofit, educational and government organizations attended Parlier Earth Day in April, where about 2000 local residents increased their awareness of how these groups can help them. Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center provided information on how we work on integrated pest management strategies and uses for biopesticides to help ensure an abundant supply of affordable and safe food.

Attendees were very interested in discussing how this work at Kearney directly helped them.



No blues for California blueberries.

Summer is upon us, and nothing quite says summer more than eating freshly picked blueberries or using them in delicious desserts. California blueberry growers can find an additional treat – the newly published [UC IPM Pest Management Guidelines for blueberry](#) on the UC IPM web site. California is quickly becoming a top producer of blueberries, and the new guidelines can help with management information on blueberry pests such as thrips, light brown apple moth, and spotted wing drosophila with additional information on pesticides and resistance.

In 1997, California grew less than 200 acres of blueberries. With the help of the [University of California Small Farms Program](#) and cooperating farmers, California now grows over 4,700 acres spanning San Joaquin, Tulare, Kern, Ventura, and Fresno counties. CDFA statistics show that over 40 million pounds of California blueberries, worth \$133 million, were harvested in 2012. [Read more.](#)

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