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Kearney Research News

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources



Research and Extension Center System

[UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center website](#)



Message from the director: Jeff Dahlberg

I don't need to tell anyone that it has been hot! You know it has been really hot when everyone around the Center gets happy that the temps will only be in the mid-to-high 90s. These hot days have made research a bit of a challenge this year; seems that we are always irrigating to try to stay ahead of our research plots. Research continues to be robust on the Center. Lots of work going on from a wide-range of groups looking at things from drought tolerance in sorghum all the way up to screening for new nematode resistant root stocks. There seems to be more technology on the Center as well. The sub-surface irrigation trials on alfalfa have seen a wide range of soil moisture probes and a tower to measure heat stress on the plants every 15 minutes. We should be developing some interesting maps of how alfalfa tolerates different irrigation applications over the whole day and what its heat signature looks like. We continue to fly several different drones on the Center evaluating their use and applications in our research projects. The sorghum drought nursery continues to garner interest by various groups, including the DOE and CDFA. Our drone work maps out the impact of drought on plant height, leaf area index, and biomass estimations on a weekly basis and we are testing its ability to estimate leaf water potential and other characteristics using various optical cameras. Interesting stuff.

We welcomed Dr. Houston Wilson to the Center. Houston comes to us from UC Riverside as an Assistant Cooperative Extension Specialist in IPM of tree nuts and stone fruit. He graduated from UC Berkeley in 2014 and will be looking to reduce the impacts of insect and mite pests on tree crops. He is interested in biological control strategies and the use of pheromones and plant volatiles to improve trapping of insects. So, if you are on the Center and run into him, say hello.

I'm looking forward to seeing our temps start to get back to something reasonable. This is always a busy time of year with harvesting and data collection and we all appreciate the time and effort that everyone in the Valley puts into ensuring that we have great fruits and vegetables. We tend to have lots of visitors during the summers as well and they all come away with a greater appreciation of what California Ag is about. Stay hydrated and cool as the summer finally begins to wind down a bit and let us know what we can do to help.

As always, you can help us financially and allow us to expand our research efforts so that we can continue to find sustainable solutions to the variety of problems that face our farmers and our food systems by donating to KARE using our [on-line donation button](#).

Feel free to contact me at jadahlberg@ucanr.edu, through our Facebook page, [blog](#), or at our [website](#).

Jeff Dahlbey



Sunpreme raisins were a big hit at the UC Kearney Grape Day 2017.

Excitement over the new Sunpreme raisins was evident at UC Kearney Grape Day Aug. 8, 2017. As soon as the tram stopped, dozens of farmers and other industry professionals rushed over to the vineyard to take a close look and sample the fruit. Raisins pulled from the vine were meaty with very little residual seed. The flavor was a deep, sweet floral with a muscat note.

Sunpreme raisins, bred by now-retired USDA breeder David Ramming, promise a nearly labor-free raisin production system. [Read more.](#)



Kearney says farewell to retiring UCCE IPM advisor Pete Goodell.

Kearney family sent off UC Cooperative Extension farm advisor Pete Goodell with a pot luck lunch and warm wishes today, his last before completing a distinguished 36-year career, the last 26 at Kearney. [Read more about Goodell's career here.](#)

The University of California has conferred on Goodell the honor of emeritus status, enabling him to fulfill his goal of working in collaborative entomology during retirement. Goodell and his colleagues will bring together a diverse group of Californians to enhance understanding of pests, pesticides and integrated pest management. [Read more.](#)



Future water leaders soak up irrigation information.

University of California students took a long journey through California to trace the state's complicated and critical water supply. The recent graduates and upper-division co-eds from UC Merced, UC Santa Cruz, UC Berkeley and UC Davis were part of the [UC Water Academy](#), a course that combines online training with a two-week field trip for first-hand knowledge about California water.

The tour began June 18 at Lake Shasta, the state's largest reservoir, and followed the water's course to the Sacramento Valley, through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and south along the Delta-Mendota Canal. Since a key water destination is agriculture, the UC Water Academy toured the [UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension](#) June 23, where research is underway to determine how the state's water supply can be most efficiently transformed into a food supply for Americans. [Read more.](#)



Pollinator week was June 19-25, 2017: bee knowledgeable!

Bees are the most important pollinators of California agriculture—helping us grow field crops, fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Honey bees receive most of the credit for crop pollination, but many other kinds of bees play an important role as well. There are 1600 species of bees in California! Take time during Pollinator Week to learn about the different kinds of bees and what you can do to help them flourish.

Bees other than honey bees contribute significantly to crop pollination. For example, alfalfa pollination by alfalfa leafcutter bees is worth \$7 billion per year in the United States. Other bees can also boost the result of honey bee pollination—in almond orchards, honey bees are more effective when orchard mason bees are present. The more bee species, the merrier the harvest! [Read more.](#)



KARE supported a soil management training at West Side Research & Extension Center in Five Points.

A very diverse and large group of farmers, consultants, public agency, and private sector folks participated in a highly successful training session on the benefits of soil management for farming systems at the site of the long-term USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture National Research Initiative (NRI) Project field in Five Points on Tuesday, June 6th. The overflow crowd took in discussions by farmers Scott Park, Jesse Sanchez, Alan Sano, and Tom Willey; UC Davis researchers [Randy Southard](#), [Rad Schmidt](#), [Howard Ferris](#), [Sloane Rice](#); and KARE's own [Jeff Mitchell](#). Attendees also participated in a number of demonstrations of soil function that were provided by [NRCSers](#) Sheryl Feit and Kabir Zahangir. [Read more.](#)



California farm demonstration network invites collaboration.

As many folks at KARE already know, the California Farm Demonstration Network was recently formed and formally launched in a MOU signing ceremony that was held May 5th at the Winters, CA orchard of Russ Lester. The Network is a partnership of several groups including the California Farm Bureau Federation, the USDA NRCS, the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, UC ANR, and the UC Davis College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, plus many farmers, local farmer associations, and other private and public sector affiliates. The attached [You Tube link](#) provides a brief introductory overview of a small part of the Network's initial efforts. [Read more.](#)

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