

Issue 2 – November 2011 - [UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center website](#)



Message from the director: Dr. Jeff Dahlberg

Welcome to the second installment of the KARE Kearney Research News, our e-newsletter. If you had a chance to visit the center in the last couple of months, you'll have noticed a couple of new research programs starting. We are researching new ways to control weeds in organic alfalfa, thus utilizing our 10 acres of certified organic land. You may have also noticed some tall grasses at Kearney. That is new research being done on forage sorghums, a drought-tolerant forage crop for the dairy industry which can also be used as a bioenergy feedstock. So, along with the crops you know about, these are a few more things that might be of interest. We received some feedback on our first e-newsletter and we'd love to hear more, so please feel free to [contact me](#) to let me know what you think. Enjoy the upcoming holidays.



UC research will help table grape growers face the rainy season

An early October rainstorm in the San Joaquin Valley provided UC viticulture specialist Matthew Fidelibus an ideal opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of plastic vine covers for protecting late-season table grapes from inclement weather. Fidelibus, who is based at Kearney, installed the covers in September on a Redglobe vineyard near Easton. Some farmers choose to grow late season table grapes – such as Autumn King, Crimson Seedless and Redglobe – to market in the fall when prices are typically highest. However, they run a greater risk of being rained on. Exposure to moisture within six weeks of harvest can cause rots and molds to render the grapes worthless.

[Read more about the table grape cover research.](#)



Sorghum and alfalfa innovations featured at Kearney field day

Drought tolerant, fast growing and nearly pest free, forage sorghum has the potential to be a valuable feed crop in California, says Dr. Jeff Dahlberg, a sorghum expert. Dahlberg introduced San Joaquin Valley farmers to a new sorghum variety trial during the Alfalfa Field Day Sept. 8. The trial, which compares 80 varieties of forage sorghum, is also being conducted at the UC West Side Research and Extension Center in Five Points, Calif. At Kearney, the 10- to 12-foot-high plants were grown in 84 days with just 8 inches of irrigation water. "I'm going to push this to be a sorghum state," Dahlberg said.

Also at the field day, UC Cooperative Extension alfalfa specialist Dr. Dan Putnam described an alfalfa trial at Kearney where a Roundup Ready cultivar is growing across the road from a conventional crop. During the first year of the study, tests have shown that there has been no discernible gene flow between the two fields.

[Read more about Kearney sorghum and alfalfa field trials.](#)



Pomegranate meeting

The public is invited to a pomegranate meeting at the Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 29. The following topics will be covered:

- Summary of acreage trends by Merced County farm advisor Maxwell Norton
- Black heart disorder and tree decline issues by UC Davis plant pathologist Themis Michailides
- Insect pest update by integrated pest management entomologist Walt Bentley
- Interesting selections in the USDA germplasm collection by USDA national clonal germplasm representative Jeff Moersfelder

RSVP to Yolanda Murillo at ymurillo@ucdavis.edu or (559) 600-7285. The \$10 registration fee may be paid at the door with cash or check. [More information.](#)



UC researchers screen promising new winegrapes at Kearney

A new winegrape variety trial at the Kearney may help local vintners add a touch of distinction to San Joaquin Valley wines. During Kearney Grape Day, Aug. 16, UC Cooperative Extension viticulture specialist James Wolpert introduced growers to the 55 unusual varieties from Portugal, Spain, Italy and France being evaluated at Kearney. Also during the field day, New York-based USDA-ARS plant breeder Peter Cousins explained his grape root stock variety trials at planted at Kearney. Cousins and his staff screen 3,000 to 4,000 seedlings a year. The best prospects are sent to California, where 140 experimental root stocks are growing.

[Read more about Kearney Grape Day.](#)



Kearney scientist receives Distinguished Service Award

UC integrated pest management entomologist Walter Bentley has received the UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Extension in recognition of his 34-year career dedicated to the development and delivery of practical, relevant and sensible pest management programs to the people of California.

[Read more.](#)



Jeff Dahlberg recognized for contributions to sorghum industry

The National Sorghum Producers recognized Dr. Jeff Dahlberg as the 2011 NSP Outstanding Achievement Award recipient during the 28th Biennial Sorghum Research and Utilization Conference held Sept. 14 in Stillwater, Okla. Dahlberg served as research director for the National Sorghum Producers and the United Sorghum Checkoff Program. He also previously served as the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) curator for sorghum. He returned to his home state of California in December 2010 to work as director of the Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

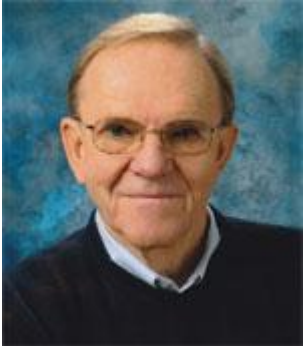
[Read more.](#)



Late season blueberry field day features rabbiteye varieties

Some people say rabbiteye blueberries get their nickname from the circle on the blossom end the fruit. Others say the fruit's tendency to turn pink before going blue is reminiscent of a rabbit's eye. Whatever the reason, late ripening rabbiteye blueberries can provide San Joaquin Valley growers the ability to harvest fruit through the end of August, capturing a potentially lucrative market window, says UC Cooperative Extension farm advisor Manuel Jimenez. Jimenez hosted blueberry growers at the Kearney to test the taste and texture of late-season blueberries. The participants also saw Jimenez demonstrate proper pruning techniques and had the opportunity to practice pruning on blueberry plants in Jimenez' test plots.

[Read more.](#)



In memoriam: Beloved extension educator Peter Christensen passes away

L. Peter Christensen passed away peacefully at Hinds Hospice in Fresno, on Sunday, Sept. 25, 2011. After graduating from UC Davis, Peter was a UC Cooperative Extension as a farm advisor in Fresno County for 23 years. In 1984 he advanced to the position of viticulture specialist in the Department of Viticulture and Enology, stationed at the UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center, where he retired in 1999.

[Read more about Peter's extraordinary life and career.](#)

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