

Issue 5 – August 2012 - [UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center website](#)



Message from the director: Dr. Jeff Dahlberg

This past June, KARE held a [retirement party for eight members of our staff](#). We lost 235 years of accumulated experience and UC institutional knowledge in one day. This is nothing new and happens in science all the time. Typically universities hire a large group of scientists who make up the core of their research systems for 25 to 30 years and then they all seem to retire at or about the same time. We then scramble to replace them and we start the process all over again. In the past, this rehiring was typically funded through state and federal support, but those days have changed and we are looking at a more drawn out process of refilling positions as budgets allow. We have seven positions that have been requested for replacement here at KARE and I'm hoping that this will take place over the next couple of years. The positions remain posted on [a publicly accessible website](#). I would encourage you to visit the site, see the proposed positions for Kearney and comment on their importance to you.

In the meantime, we will continue to research important agricultural issues and work to rebuild our retired research staff. I look forward to the infusion of new academics and research projects at the center and we will continue to work to showcase our research results to the farmers of the valley and the state. In the meantime, good luck and happy retirement wishes go out to Charlie Summers, Mike McKenry, Walt Bentley, Diana Bulls, Kathy Montanez, Lois Strole, Sal Garcia and Stephanie Kaku. You will all be missed at the center and your contributions to California agriculture will have a long-standing impact on keeping California the leading agricultural state in the U.S.

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.



Three long-time academics among the Kearney retirees

Among the eight individuals who retired from Kearney at the end of June were three researchers. Mike McKenry, UC Cooperative Extension specialist in the Department of Nematology at UC Riverside, battled nematodes during a 40-year career at Kearney. Entomologist Walt Bentley joined UC's regional integrated pest management team at Kearney in 1994 after serving as a UCCE advisor in Kern County for 17 years. UC Davis entomologist Charlie Summers was stationed at Kearney for 42 years. "It was a dream job," he said.

Read more about the careers of [Mike McKenry](#), [Walt Bentley](#) and [Charlie Summers](#).



Pistachio farmers enlist a beneficial fungus to battle aflatoxin

Research conducted over the past 11 years at Kearney will help ensure the safety of California's \$1.16 billion pistachio crop. This summer, for the first time, a beneficial fungus is being used in San Joaquin Valley pistachio orchards to protect the nuts from aflatoxin contamination.

[Read more about this pioneering research.](#)



Vintner creates interesting new wines from research grapes

Nearly half of the 55 unusual winegrape varieties in a plot at the UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center displayed enough promising characteristics to prompt a cooperating vintner, Constellation Brands, to make 25 small lots of wine.

[Read the story and see the video.](#)



UC scientists wrestle with weed control in organic alfalfa

UC Davis and UC Cooperative Extension researchers are studying weed control in organic alfalfa on part of the 10-acres at the station set aside for organic research. A market for organic feed is being opened up by the growth in organic dairy production. Weed management is a key obstacle for organic alfalfa producers. The research results are also applicable to conventional production.

[Read more about weed management in organic alfalfa.](#)



Six-part conservation agriculture documentary premieres Aug. 6

To introduce more valley farmers to the benefits of conservation agriculture practices, Conservation Agriculture Systems Innovation (CASI) produced a six-part documentary featuring California farmers, UC researchers and agency representatives. The series premieres Aug. 6 on the [CASI website](#) with a 7-minute segment that lays out the theoretical principles and the scientific basis for conservation agriculture. Additional segments will be released each Monday for five weeks thereafter.

[Read more about the documentary series.](#)



Former Kearney intern lauded for outstanding Ph.D. dissertation

Leslie Roche of Oroshi, who served as a high school intern at Kearney, received the 2012 Shapiro Family Award for Excellence in Science for the quality of her doctorate dissertation and outstanding academic and research record at UC Davis.

[Read more about Leslie Roche.](#)



Upcoming events at Kearney

Aug. 1 – [Blackeye/Dry Bean Field Day](#)

Aug. 21 – [Pomegranate Field Day](#)

Sept. 5 – [Alfalfa/Sorghum Field Day](#)

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