

# UC Agriculture & Natural Resources

## California Agriculture

### Title

EDITORIAL: UC Cooperative Extension's collaborations grow with the centuries

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6qm2x1zt>

### Journal

California Agriculture, 67(3)

### ISSN

0008-0845

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### Publication Date

2013

## UC Cooperative Extension's collaborations grow with the centuries

In June, residents of Humboldt County climbed aboard a boat to learn how oysters are grown in Humboldt Bay. The next month, residents visited a local cattle ranch to learn about a grass-fed beef operation. These tours are the first of nine showcasing Humboldt County's rich diversity and UC Cooperative Extension's role in bringing science-based solutions to the community for the past 100 years.

Humboldt County was home to the first UC Cooperative Extension program, launched in 1913. Today, county residents are actively engaged in educational activities and events—like the tours—that celebrate 100 years of their partnership with UC Cooperative Extension.

May 2014 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act, the legislation that created Cooperative Extension, a nationwide system of community-based, applied research and education established as part of each state's land-grant university. Cooperative Extension was started to help farmers, homemakers and youth use the latest university research to improve their lives. At first geared towards strengthening rural areas, Cooperative Extension became integral to suburban and urban communities as well.

In addition, UC Cooperative Extension created an innovative federal, state and county partnership between the land-grant institutions, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the county government and the emerging Farm Bureau organization.

We continue to rely on those partnerships to solve local problems. For example, when the pathogen that causes sudden oak death was detected in Marin County in 1995, UC Cooperative Extension joined forces with USDA Forest Service and CAL FIRE to try to understand what was causing the unexplained tree death. When *E. coli* was traced back to leafy greens grown on the Central Coast, UC Cooperative Extension teamed up with the USDA, California Department of Food and Agriculture and local growers and processors to develop better preventive measures.

This collaborative model has enabled California agriculture and communities to quickly address critical issues, to grow and to remain sustainable.

As communities have changed, Cooperative Extension has evolved its programs to meet their needs. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) offers free nutrition education classes in urban communities. City residents with poor access to fresh produce have benefited from programs on cultivating community and school gardens from Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener Program. And workshops and advice in 4-H youth development programs encourage children to explore science and technology. Regardless of the population served, Cooperative Extension activities are grounded in university research and developed in partnership with local communities.

UC Cooperative Extension has evolved *how* its programs reach participants as well; today websites provide research-based information around the clock.

State budget cuts since the 1980s have impacted advisor ranks, yet UC Cooperative Extension continues to maintain a presence in every California county to help address their unique problems and connect them with the trusted, science-based solutions provided by UC campuses.

Smith-Lever was signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson on May 8, 1914. One hundred years later, on May 8, 2014, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) will observe the centennial of this legislation in every county of the state. Events will not only celebrate our first hundred years of service, but also will launch us into a second century of innovation. For when we consider the future needs of California, we must look beyond our borders. California's exports of food, fiber and technology mean our work has global impact.

In April, UC ANR hosted the Global Food Systems Forum and webcast to listen to researchers, policymakers, producers and others discuss challenges and potential solutions for sustainably producing an adequate food supply to feed the world's growing population. We continue to investigate how to best apply UC ANR's research and extension to provide practical advice to California agricultural producers facing water shortages, climate uncertainty, environmental degradation, land use conflicts and invasive pests. We strive to improve the health of our families and communities through research and extension for better nutrition, youth development and economic development.

To do this, we are committed to rebuilding UC Cooperative Extension's research and extension strength. Between the positions recently filled and those under recruitment, we are on track to increase the advisor and specialist ranks statewide—30 Cooperative Extension advisors and specialists have been hired since January 2012, and recruitment is either under way or will begin in 2014 for 43 more positions.

With the state's economy recovering, our budget has stabilized and UC Cooperative Extension is on the rise. As we begin our second century of service, UC Cooperative Extension remains closely connected in California communities and committed to helping Californians enjoy a high quality of life, a healthy environment and economic success in a global economy.



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