

**University of California Cooperative Extension
Merced County**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2008**



We nurture the future.



91 Years Of Service to Merced County

UCCE Merced County Directors Over Time

J. F. Grass	1917 - 1923
John Quail	1923 - 1931
Bill Alison, Jr.	1931 - 1953
Don Peterson	1953 - 1973
Glenn Voskuil	1974 - 1983
Bob Scheuerman	1983 - 1985
Linda Manton	1985 - 1990
James Farley	1991 - 2005
Richard Mahacek	2005 - present



Agricultural Extension office circa 1919

Housed with Farm Bureau Tri-County Exchange.
Located on Canal Street,
which was L Street at that time.

Cover:

*Aerial photo of
Livingston sweet
potato field courtesy
of Larry Burrow.*



Agricultural Extension Office circa 1930's

This was originally Merced High School.
It was later the Merced County Library with the
U.C. Agricultural Extension office in the basement.
Note sign next to the stairs.



Farm Advisors' office circa 1950's

The Merced County Agricultural building was located
at "O" and 22nd Streets. This location is now a
parking lot of the library and Sheriff's storage.



UC Cooperative Extension Merced County

2145 Wardrobe Avenue

We are part of the Merced County Agricultural Center
which was dedicated in 1981.

University of California Cooperative Extension Merced County

DANR Mission Statement

The Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) is a statewide network of University of California researchers and educators dedicated to the creation, development and application of knowledge in agricultural, natural and human resources.

Daniel M. Dooley, Vice President, University of California

The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), is the DANR outreach arm. UCCE has farm, 4-H, and nutrition, family and consumer sciences advisors based in more than 50 county offices. In addition, Cooperative Extension specialists are headquartered at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and UC Riverside, where they conduct research. These specialists provide statewide leadership to teams of advisors and Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) faculty, and carry out outreach programs statewide and at the local level. As a land-grant institution, the Cooperative Extension mandate is tied to the welfare, development, and protection of California agriculture, natural resources, and people.

Cooperative Extension Mission Statement

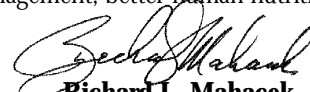
The mission of the University of California Cooperative Extension is to develop and extend through educational means the use of research-based knowledge to improve specific practices and technologies in its area of expertise. Cooperative Extension works in cooperation with county, state, and federal governments to provide local educational programs in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, youth development, family and consumer sciences, and community resource development. The system was established at the Federal level by the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 and at the State and County levels by acts of the California Legislature in 1915.

The cooperative effort with Merced County began with the opening of the Agricultural Extension (Cooperative Extension) office in 1917 with J.F. Grass as the first Farm Advisor in Merced County. The University of California provides the professional staff and Merced County provides funds for the clerical support, operation, and maintenance of the program. 2007 marked the 90th year of cooperation between Merced County and the University of California in conducting a Cooperative Extension program to serve the needs of the residents of Merced County.

Committed to Merced County

2008 was a great year for Merced County Cooperative Extension. We were excited to fill some of the voids in our programs that had occurred over the last five or so years due to retirements and transfers. These additional UC staff members have allowed us to maintain existing programs and re-established programs in agricultural crops and nutrition education and to develop a new volunteer program for Master Gardeners.

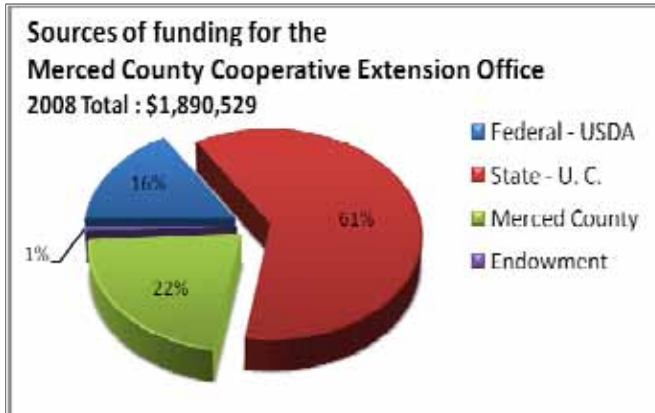
Our staff is ready to assist the residents of the county to help them through transfer of knowledge and information that has been researched and designed to assist in helping them make wise choices. Current research in alternatives to using Methyl Bromide, increasing integrated pest management for reduced pesticide use, healthy eating habits to combat obesity, replant disease control, nutrient management for reduced costs and improved milk production are all part of the work done in 2008 by the Advisors and staff in the Merced County office. U.C. Cooperative Extension Merced County staff is ready to help as we move into 2009, be it in water management, better human nutrition, economics in production, youth development, food security, IPM, or more.


Richard L. Mahacek
County Director

University of California Cooperative Extension Merced County

Program Funding

2008 Support for operations and programs



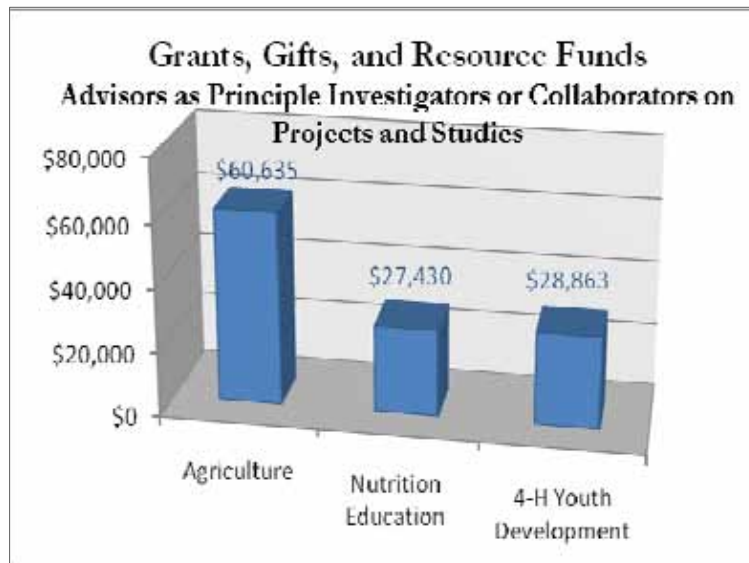
Cooperative Extension is a unique joint venture between the three levels of government. This partnership brings together the USDA at the federal level, The Land Grant University at the state level (University of California) and the County of Merced locally. While a small part is endowed each of the three partners have and play an important role in the overall functions of the Cooperative Extension office. This operations support is vital for organizing, preparing, and serving the clientele needs in our day to day functions. Clientele contacts in the office, on farm visits, by phone, via e-mail, by web, and general meetings.

Program Support

In addition to the general office support that provides an operational framework many specialized programs, studies, and research activities require additional support.

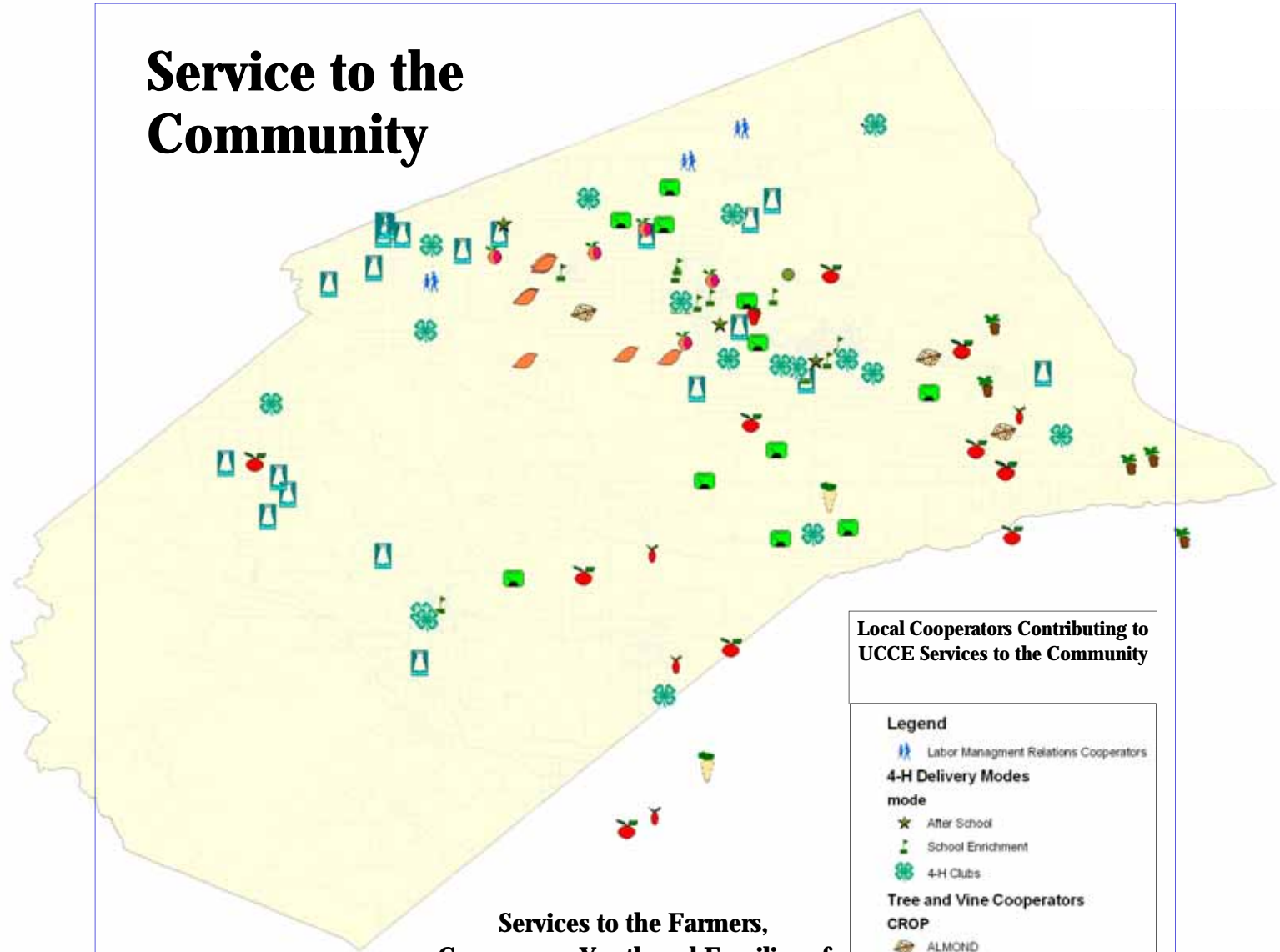
Our Advisors as UC academics have Principle Investigator (PI) status allowing them to lead and collaborate on research grants and projects.

During the 2008 year Merced County Advisors leveraged over \$110,000 of funds to assist in the conducting of specific program studies and research that need more funds than the operations budget can provide.



Additional 4-H program support is provided through donations, fundraising, and participant fees. These funds are used for youth conferences, camps, and events. These are also used for recognition and awards for members and volunteers.

Service to the Community



Local Cooperators Contributing to UCCE Services to the Community

Legend

Labor Management Relations Cooperators

4-H Delivery Modes

mode

After School

School Enrichment

4-H Clubs

Tree and Vine Cooperators

CROP

ALMOND

FIG

PEACH

STRAWBERRY

WINE GRAPE

Dairy Nutrient Cooperators

Project

Meter

Nutrients

Vegetable Crop Cooperators

CROP

FM TOMATO

PROC TOMATO

SWT POTATO

SUGAR BEET

Services to the Farmers, Consumers, Youth and Families of Merced

2008 Contacts:

10,672	Newsletters mailed
117	Publications sold
104	Radio talks given
3,948	Telephone calls received
1,397	Visitors to our office
100,107	Web site visitors

2008 Formal Volunteers:

- 302 4-H Leaders
- 11 Master Gardener Applicants



Merced County Cooperative Extension Staff 2008

County Director

Richard Mahacek

Advisors

Alejandro Castillo

Dairy

David Doll

Pomology

Richard Mahacek

4-H Youth Development

Maxwell Norton

Trees and Vines

Scott Stoddard

Vegetables

Cross-County Advisors

Gregory Billikopf - Stanislaus

Labor Management

Tulio Macedo - Madera

Field Crops

Terri Spezzano - Stanislaus

Nutrition, Family, and Consumer Science

Emeritus Advisors

Jim Farley

Lonnie Hendricks

Bob Scheuerman

Bill Weir

Staff Research Associate

Daniel Rivers

Trees and Vines

Program and Support Staff

Russell Hill

4-H Program Representative

Mai Thao

4-H Program Representative - H.U.D.

Summer and Part Time Staff

Carole Dietz

4-H Program Representative - Biosecurity

Kim Heyer

4-H Program Representative - Camping

Stephanie Clendenin

4-H Program Representative - Ag Literacy

Daniel Brooks

Student Intern - Santa Clara University

Bryson Marks

Student Intern - UC Berkeley

County Support Staff

Larry Burrow

Agriculture Field Technician

Cathy Marks

Office Manager

Evie Gassaway

Office Assistant - Program Leader Secretary

Amelia Lopez

Office Assistant - Reception, Publications

Mia Torrez

Office Assistant - 4-H Secretary

County Staff

Cathy Marks, Office Manager

Once again I got to support the wonderful work that everyone does here. I served as secretary to our County Director and Advisors as well as handled the accounting for both County and UC budgets, contracts, purchasing, records, and reports. Through managing the office-work side of our office I strove to enable everyone to have the ability to provide the public with the expertise and service of our advisors.



Evie Gassaway, Office Assistant

I served as secretary to Program Leader Maxwell Norton. I arranged meetings, kept his calendar and appointment book, prepared documents, and assisted co-workers. I also did work on preserving UCCE Merced historical photos.



Amelia Lopez, Office Assistant

As an English/Spanish-speaking receptionist I greeted the public and was eager to help with information they sought. I provided clerical assistance to our Advisors, including their newsletters, and maintained our educational publications and statistical records. I also handled our classroom's reservations and office maintenance..



Mia Torrez, Office Assistant

While serving as 4-H Secretary in the day-to-day operations of enrollment, newsletters, and events I've had a busy year with the roll-out of the new 4-H Online enrollment system. Most of the year has been taken up by input, receiving training, providing training and help to other counties and following the 4-H slogan of "Learn by Doing."



Larry Burrow, Agriculture Field Technician

I provided support in field research activities, with county and cross-county advisors. This included Water Usage and Mineral Balance studies, sweet potato variety and herbicide trials, and I set up various events and projects for 4-H. Other work included managing our office's web site, GIS maps, computers, copier, and other office equipment setup and training. I also served as our Office Safety Coordinator.



Pomology



David Doll, *Farm Advisor*



David Doll and a local grower discussing the problems of growth inclusions found within poorly pruned almond trees.

*Photo courtesy of Harry Cline,
Editor of Western Farm Press*

Re-connecting the Nut Crop Orchardists with Merced County's Cooperative Extension

A vacancy of seven years within Merced County has provided challenges with the establishment of a new Farm Advisor. Even though many growers were eagerly awaiting the new hire, the long duration between Pomology Advisors forced many growers to seek information and guidance from other sources. Efforts during 2008 were focused on making growers aware of the position. Participation within grower meetings, collaboration within projects focusing on outreach, farm calls, and delivering presentations upon request were some of the means of reconnecting with the clientele.

Pest Management Alliance II Is Established in Merced County



David Doll and Greg Browne setting up an experiment to determine alternatives to fumigation for replant disease of almond.

Building upon the successes of the first Pest Management Alliance (PMA), the second PMA was envisioned to provide outreach to counties which previously did not participate. Merced County was selected to host a grower site in which UC integrated pest management guidelines were used to help advise pest management decisions. By comparing mite, scale, and other insect data with the orchard consultant, thresholds and treatment options developed in the first PMA were tested by the UC. A field day was held to make local county growers aware of the various options available to reduce the application of broad spectrum insecticides. UC speakers, the grower and his consultant, and collaborating members of Community Alliance of Family Farms (CAFF) were present to discuss orchard practices and answer any questions by the 45 audience attendees.



Pomology Farm Advisor Service for 2008

Meetings Hosted: 4
Presentations Delivered: 22
Farm Calls: 45
Research Project Collaborations: 3
Authored Publications: 15
(includes peer-reviewed publications, news letter articles, and press releases)



University of California Cooperative Extension Merced County

Trees and Vines



Maxwell Norton, *Farm Advisor*

My program focuses on specialty tree fruit crops and grapes. I am also an expert in Farmland Trusts.

In the area of public policy I co-organized and conducted the Leadership Merced Ag Day. This very successful program educates a cross-section of community leaders all about agriculture issues and problems. This event helps enlighten leaders about the importance of agriculture to our regional and state economy and to understand that our problems are interconnected. I also put on a crash course about agriculture for all the counselors in the local high school district. Counselors now understand that agriculture is a high tech industry that needs graduates with strong science and technology skills.

At the request of the County Assessor I put on a one-day trip about the county that was well-attended by the Assessor's staff and a few nearby counties. With the knowledge gained they will be able to better assess farmers and other land-owners in a way that reflects the realities of farming enterprises.



Our 2008 peach meetings were well-attended. As a result of these meetings peach growers and allied professionals learned about cutting-edge research and are able to implement the latest technologies and apply what they learned to their professions.

Farm Advisor David Doll and I organized two field lectures on monitoring soil moisture and tree water status. We also covered drought management strategies.



Experimental machine that will reduce the cost of growing peaches in Merced County by mechanically thinning peach blossoms.

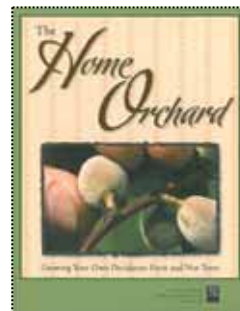
Alternating with Advisor Scott Stoddard, I had a weekly radio segment that was aired twice Tuesday mornings. A broad array of people were made aware of Cooperative Extension as an agency and they now have information they can now use in their daily lives.

Tree & Vine Notes newsletters were produced and mailed. Almost a thousand readers now have on their desks current, research-based information to help them make better decisions in their professions.



Strawberry variety test.

Richard Molinar and I produced a strawberry extension meeting where we presented information about food safety and production practices.



Publications written by Maxwell Norton.



Vegetable Crops



Scott Stoddard, Farm Advisor

Methyl Bromide fumigation alternatives for sweetpotato hotbeds in California.

Scott Stoddard, UCCE Merced County; Mike Davis, UC Davis Plant Pathology; Antoon Ploeg, UC Riverside Nematology; Anil Shetha, KAC Weed Ecology; Jim Stapleton, KAC Plant Pathology.



Methyl bromide is the current fumigant choice for most producers for sweetpotato hotbeds to ensure good transplant production, but for environmental and regulatory reasons, this chemical is being phased out and will soon be unavailable for use. This USDA-ARS sponsored project began in July, 2007, to evaluate alternatives to methyl bromide and is located in a commercial hotbed operation near Atwater.

Tomato Powdery Mildew Control Trial.

Brenna Aegerter, UCCE San Joaquin, Scott Stoddard, UCCE Merced, Michelle LeStrange, UCCE Tulare

Powdery mildew is a fungal pathogen that usually does not cause significant harm to tomato production in California; however, a new biotype has appeared that has become problematic for many producers in the past two years. Efficacy trials were conducted in various locations in Merced County in 2007 – 2008 on late-planted fresh market tomatoes. The UC Integrated Pest Management (IPM) spray model is also being re-evaluated as part of this project.



National Sweetpotato Collaborators Group Variety Trial.

Scott Stoddard, UCCE Merced, Deborah Golino, UC Davis Foundation Plant Services, Don LaBonte, LSU, Craig Yencho, NCSU



The Collaborators Trial is so named because it is a long-term variety evaluation trial (> 40 years) that is a collaborative effort between breeders in North Carolina and Louisiana and multiple AES/ Extension personnel in other states where this crop is grown. The objective of the trial is to evaluate new breeding lines of sweetpotatoes for their quality, yield, and storage characteristics for California conditions. It is the only controlled sweetpotato variety trial in the state. It is conducted in a commercial field and requires grower cooperation. The trial directly benefits growers by screening new, disease resistant varieties for their potential commercial fit in California.

Other Projects During 2008:

Beauregard Clone Evaluation Trial.

Morning glory leafminer control in sweetpotatoes.

Murasaki-29 Sweetpotato Virus-Tested Seed Trial.

Sandea Herbicide Trial in Fresh Market Tomatoes.

Sugar Beets. Evaluating best management practices for *Cercospora* leaf spot control in over-winter sugar beets.

Sweetpotato Storage Trials: Variety Differences, Storage Conditions, and Fertilizer Effects.

Tomato Spotted Wilt Monitoring Project.

Tomato Worm Control Trial.

UCCE Statewide Processing Tomato Variety Evaluation Trials, 2008.

Dairy Science



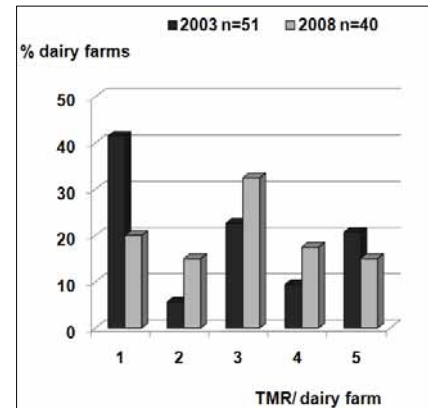
Alejandro Castillo, *Farm Advisor*

In 2008 activities were focused on feed management practices related to production efficiency and environmental regulations.

Feed Management Practices Improved



Based on research and education I provided, dairy producers in Merced County improved their feed management practices by increasing the number of diets or total mixed ration (TMR) for lactating animals. These changes resulted in decreased manure production (reduced environmental impact) and increased milk yield per unit of feed consumed (improved production efficiency).



The number of dairy farms feeding more than one kind of TMR increased from 2003 to 2008.

Mineral Balance Research

Mineral balances, including feed, milk, and water mineral composition, were carried out on 40 dairy farms to evaluate the efficiency of mineral utilization. Preliminary results suggest producers are overfeeding certain minerals.



Water Usage Research

Water use was evaluated on 20 dairy farms. Included in the evaluation was the drinking water chemical composition and its impact on mineral excretion in lactating animals, with particular attention to minerals with possible environmental impact.



excretion in lactating animals, with particular attention to minerals with possible environmental impact.

Research Information Shared

Meetings were held with dairy producers, private nutritionists, and private companies selling mixed mineral packages to evaluate the Mineral Balances data, and discuss possible solutions



to reduce feed costs for dairy producers, implement best management practices for waste water lagoons, and minimize environmental impacts.

Labor Management

Gregory Billikopf, Farm Advisor
(Cross County with Stanislaus/Merced /San Joaquin Counties)



Gregory produced a new publication aimed at conflict resolution. The new, online book titled, *Party Directed Mediation*, was made available free in adobe format and linked from multiple websites including CE Merced. In addition, *Emphatic Listening Skills*, a downloadable audio file is available



Personnel management
Publication written by
Gregory Billikopf

Agronomic Crops

Tulio Macedo, Farm Advisor
(Cross County with Madera/Merced Counties)



While serving as Farm Advisor for field crops, Tulio continued his research through cotton variety trials in both Merced and Madera Counties. Weed management and control were part of his work with both counties. 21st Century Agronomics newsletter was distributed to farmers.

Research Support

Daniel Rivers, Staff Research Assistant



Dan continued his work in projects in fig and strawberry studies in cooperation with Farm Advisor Maxwell Norton and local growers in a variety of areas, including: Using Sunflowers in the Control of Oriental Fruit Moth in Peaches and with Micro-irrigation System Maintenance

Summer Support

Daniel Brooks, Intern



Daniel Brooks, a Santa Clara University student, and Bryson Marks, a U.C. Berkeley student, spent the summer assisting Farm Advisor Scott Stoddard in his research projects in pest control, fertilizer, and variety trials in sweet potatoes, melons, and tomatoes.



Bryson Marks, Intern

Master Gardener Program



David Doll, *Farm Advisor*

Merced County's First Master Gardener Class is Selected

Eleven volunteers from three different communities within Merced have been selected to participate as the first UC Master Gardener Class training for Merced County. Working in collaboration with Mariposa County, trainings will be held in Catheys Valley four hours every Monday for the first 16 weeks of 2009. Of the 11 volunteers, four are from Le Grand, six from Merced, and one from Atwater. The individuals are from various backgrounds, bringing experience from several career paths. Upon starting their coursework and determining needs of the community, class members will determine the focus of their efforts for the 2009-2010 year. We are looking forward to the continual development of this program and the certification of our first class.



Community members participated in an information session held to inform the future volunteers of the UC Master Gardener program.



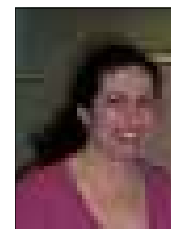
Mitchell Elementary School Gardens are re-vitalized with Merced County Master Gardener Help

Merced County UC Master Gardener Diane Penders has found a way to continue her love of educating our youth after retiring from teaching in 2006. Working with Mitchell Elementary School in Atwater, CA, Diane has helped re-start the school gardening program that works to introduce children to the concepts of gardening, science, and nutrition. Planting everything from chrysanthemums to squash, children participate in the garden activities that include planting, weeding, watering, and harvest. Teachers have also taken an interest in the garden which provides them with a means of teaching our youth principles of science in an applied setting. Diane assists in the operation of the garden at Mitchell Elementary on minimal funds acquired through donations and limited after school program monies. Maintenance work within the garden is often performed during breaks, lunch, and after work hours with the help of the groundskeeper, Jose Valenzuela, instructor Om Channa, and other teachers.



Nutrition, Family, and Consumer Science

Terri Spezzano, NFCS Advisor (Stanislaus/Merced)



I began my work in Merced County as a Program Representative doing a needs assessment and developing plans to restart the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP). The FSNEP program would be my major focus of my NFCS Advisor role in Merced County. The needs assessment provided me with a great background and ability to use it to direct services to the needs in the county. In Merced the Nutrition, Food, and Consumer Science program focuses on childhood and adult obesity. Obesity has increased greatly in the last 20 years and is significantly associated with diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, asthma, arthritis and overall poor health status.



Table 1. Merced County Health Profile^a

Obesity Indicators	Merced County	County Rank 1 = Worst	California
% of Babies Born with Low Birth Weight	6.2%	28	6.7%
% of 7 th Graders with Unhealthy Weight	36.2%	10	32.3%
% of 7 th Graders with Unhealthy Aerobic Capacity	32.4%	38	37.8%
# of Overweight or Obese Adults	109,000	N/A	14,800,000
% of Overweight/Obese Adults	66.7%	3	56.1%
# Of People with Type II Diabetes	12,000	23	1,516,000
# of Diabetes Related Deaths, Annually ^d	65	50	6,997
Breastfeeding Rates	82.7%	15	83.7%
Infant Mortality Rate ^b	6.2 / 1000	Not available	5.4 / 1000

^a Source: California Food Policy Advocates. County Profiles.

^b Source: County Health Status for 2008. Merced. ca.gov

Healthy People 2010 Objective

The Healthy People 2010 Objective has the goal of reducing the number of adults over 19 reporting being obese to less than 15%. Neither Merced nor California have met that objective. The percentage of obese adults increased in Merced County as well as California from 2001 to 2005 according to California Health Interview Survey. Moreover, in each survey year, Merced had higher percentages of obese adults and children than California (Table 1).



Food Stamp Nutrition Program

In order to combat the problem of obesity in Merced, we have reinstated our Food Stamp Nutrition Program (FSNEP). The program's main emphasis is education in schools and partnership agencies. Currently, we are providing nutrition curriculum to two school districts, Dos Palos – Oro Loma Joint Union School District and Gustine Union School District. The agencies we partner with include the Food Stamp Office, Merced County Lao Family Community, Inc., Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), and The Foster and Kinship Care Education Program (F&KCE). We educate both the youth and adult populations in Merced county on the importance of nutrition and physical activity by providing research based nutrition curriculum, workshops, and activities.

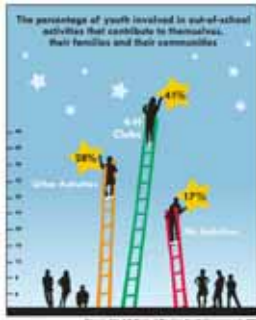
University of California Cooperative Extension Merced County

4-H Youth Development



Richard Mahacek, 4-H Youth Development Advisor

As 4-H Youth Development Advisor I focus on both engagement of youth and in youth development. In advancing the field of youth development I serve on the county WIA Youth Council and the P-16 Council. I represent non formal education and positive youth development and have assisted in goal setting, k-12 indicators, and in sharing on youth development and developmental assets.



Tufts study shows 4-H participants are more involved than youth in other programs or not in any youth program.

4-H Study of Positive Youth Development

2008 was the first year that California 4-H participated in this National Study on Youth Development. Richard Learner of Tufts University has been working to look at how positive influences in the lives of youth help protect them from getting involved in "problem behaviors." This was the fifth year in this longitudinal study about youth development. I recruited youth, obtained consent forms, administered the surveys online, and collected youth data for this Tufts study. I collaborated with the WIA Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) to use a computer classroom and encouraged many of their participants to be involved in the study as well as youth both in 4-H and youth not in 4-H. As a longitudinal study I will be repeating the survey collection in the spring of 2009. Data from the prior years shows positive impact in youth development and specifically in 4-H programs.

Find more by visiting the Tufts web site at:

<http://ase.tufts.edu/iaryd/documents/4HStudyFindings2008.pdf>

National 4-H Science Engineering and Technology Mission Mandate

I have been one of the key players in the development of the national 4-H SET program efforts. I serve on the national 4-H SET Leadership Task Force and am part of the four person Leadership Team for the California 4-H SET Initiative. At the state level we have developed a 5-year plan for 4-H SET including a framework for counties to implement their own plans and providing resources and ideas to accomplish their goals in SET.

I oversaw the sub group on Program Development and made presentations to staff, and co-ordinated a September "Ready, SET, Go" kick-off conference for California 4-H staff.



In October, Congressman Dennis Cardoza promoted science education at the annual "Lights On Afterschool" event in Merced.

The National Youth Science Day and Experiment

I worked with National 4-H Council to encourage congressional support of a new 4-H event "The National Youth Science Day". As a result our Congressman Dennis Cardoza was instrumental by sponsoring H.R. 1390, a congressional resolution that officially designated October 8, 2008 as 4-H National Youth Science Day. As a part of this day, millions of 4-H youth across the nation participated, along with Congressman Cardoza, in an experiment with water-absorbing polymers.



4-H Youth Development continued



Russell Hill, 4-H Program Representative



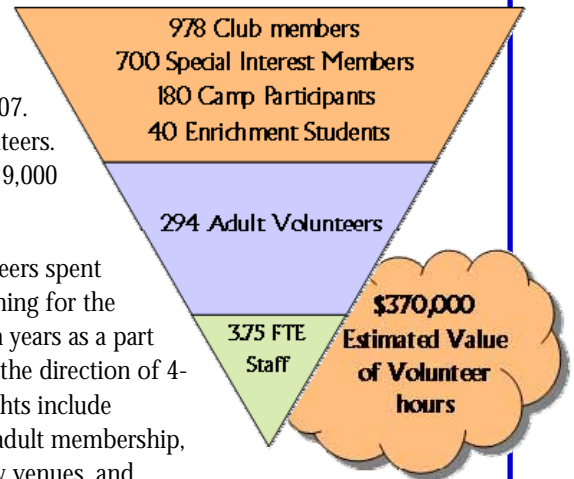
Young people become confident, mature adults ready for success in today's challenging world through 4-H. 4-H is the largest youth-serving organization in the United States. Merced County 4-H celebrated its 90th year in 2007 from its humble beginnings as a rural youth program to a more vibrant program that adapts and expands to meet the needs of all youth today.

4-H Delivered

In 2008 Merced had an increase in membership of three percent over 2007. Seventeen clubs represent almost 1,000 youth and nearly 300 adult volunteers. Those volunteers held over 1,500 educational meetings with more than 19,000 hours of project activity.



4-H youth and volunteers spent numerous hours planning for the next one, five, and ten years as a part of a strategic plan for the direction of 4-H in Merced. Highlights include increasing youth and adult membership, promoting 4-H in new venues, and more inter-club interaction.



The Annual 4-H Recognition evening was once again held at Playhouse Merced. In addition to enjoying the show, the Clover Awards for each 5 years of leadership are presented by 4-H, city, county, state, and national representatives to the volunteers.



County Supervisor, Jerry O'Banion and State Assemblywoman Cathleen Galgiani (background) present 4-H volunteer Joan Mires with her 15 year Pearl Clover Award.



Mai Thao, 4-H Program representative HUD

Bringing 4-H to new audiences is important and I have been working with a grant from the Housing Authority to develop 4-H programs in the Housing sites in Merced and Livingston. The Merced site has been very active with members participating in conferences and camp, helping at the fairs and in the milk bar and Friends Helping Friends. Participation in leadership, Emerald and All Stars, and technology highlight our work. Local community leadership is a goal since the support for this grant will be ending in early 2009.



4-H Youth Development continued

Citizenship, Leadership, Life Skills

Youth leaders, club officers, county All Stars, adult volunteers, club leaders, and members of our county management team attended a leadership retreat at Camp Pacifica near Oakhurst. The retreat was a direct result of our strategic plan to promote more interaction between club members from throughout the county. Youth planned the year for their community clubs, developed a budget, and learned specific tools to carry out the duties of their office.



Working with teen and adult volunteers the annual two-day Merced Focus conference was planned and coordinated. The program had an assets focus based around the theme of Youth in Governance and sharing of youth views.

This was a great learning experience for the teens in letting the youth really govern themselves in the planning and conducting of the program. California and Washington Focus programs were active also this year with action plans on water conservation.



Biosecurity - Carole Dietz, Program Representative - Animal Science

As part of a statewide effort of the UCD Vet Med Extension and specialist Martin Smith, we collected baseline and data on animal contact and exposure during fairs and exhibits. This data will be used in developing new curriculum and educational activities. Some of these materials have been piloted in Merced County by five 4-H clubs.

4-H Tech Team

We have worked with and recruited other volunteers to support the 4-H programs in the SET areas. This has included youth in the 4-H Tech Team covering a variety of topics including computers, gis/gps, robotics, and other technology including the use of our computer-controlled sewing machine and woodworking router. One school enrichment group is working on a GIS program.



Agriculture Literacy - Stephanie Clendenin, Program Representative - Ag Literacy

Nearly 10,000 visitors toured Old MacDonald's Farm, an agricultural literacy project that we partner with Merced County Fair. Included in this tour were almost 700 school-aged children who signed up for group tours. Individuals, projects, and clubs each develop, design, and create displays that showcase the value of agriculture to consumers.

Science and Adventure Camp - Kim Heyer, Program Representative - Camp

Birds, Bugs, and Beyond was the 2008 Science and Adventure Camp theme where 22 high school staff, 14 adult chaperones, 120 campers in 4-8th grade, and five other helpers worked together for five days and four nights at Camp Sylvester in Pinecrest, CA. The focus included entomology, bird identification, habitats, and water quality, with the campers each making water tests from the lake.



Cooperating with and serving Merced County since 1917



Farm Advisors ...

... work to enhance California agricultural productivity and competitiveness. Together with farmers, pest control advisors, and industry representatives, they identify current and emerging agricultural opportunities and problems. The advisors collaborate with campus-based Cooperative Extension specialists and Agricultural Experiment Station scientists to research, adapt, and field-test agricultural improvements or solutions and promote the use of research findings.

Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Advisors ...

... focus on nutrition, food safety, food preparation, food preservation, and finance management. Collaborative partnerships with government and private agencies extend the reach of UC advisors. Workshops, public meetings, newsletters, the mass media, and other communications tools bring information to the community.

4-H Youth Development Advisors ...

... provide meaningful, learn-by-doing educational activities to children in 4-H clubs, camps, school enrichment and after-school programs. They also provide information and resources for youth development to the community.

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