

## Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center



Located in Santa Paula in Ventura County, the Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center (HAREC) is one of nine centers under the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural

Resources. HAREC provides land and resources for researchers and focuses on methods for improving plant productivity through new and innovative irrigation methods, as well as lead and facilitate extension and education programs within the broader California agricultural and natural resource learning community.

### Controlling a Killer of Citrus Trees

The Asian citrus psyllid (ACP), an exotic pest native to Asia, has been expanding northward in Southern and now Central California since 2008, raising the threat of Huanglongbing disease. Work at several of UC ANR's Research and Extension Centers has been investigating various ways to control the insect, since there is no cure for this deadly disease of citrus, which has devastated the Florida citrus industry.

Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center (HAREC) is funding a project to look at a natural enemy of the ACP, a parasitoid wasp from Pakistan. The *Tamarixia* wasp was released in more than 400 different areas in Riverside, San Diego, San Bernardino, Orange, Imperial and Los Angeles counties. To date, results are promising, with the apparently successful predators being recovered as far away as 5-8 miles from their release site.

The wasp is one tool in the Integrated Pest Management kit and the team hopes for a 30% parasitism rate year-round (the wasp is more able to find prey during the summer months). For every psyllid larva the wasp kills, it is one less ACP for the growers to worry about, and the wasps are out there working 24/7/365 for free. As improved control strategies are developed, biocontrol may have a positive role to play in commercial conventional orchards.

Research conducted by Mark Hoddle



### Youth Education Outreach

Hansen hosts 4-H Youth Agriculture literacy programs, as well as youth from pre-school age to 6th grade, to increase their understanding of where food comes from and the importance of water in their foodshed. Activities include:

- Farm Field trips (California standards based) – hands-on activities explore plant growth and development, nutrition, and Ventura County agriculture.
- Classroom Outreach – (California standards based) lessons teach the importance of Ventura County agriculture and other topics such as edible plant parts, composting, and plant science.
- Preschool Open House – Pre-K youth and families discover what healthy food is and where it comes from through fun activities that promote healthy eating habits and physical activity.
- After School Program – to expose students to agriculture and nutrition.
- Curriculum – to teach 4th and 5th graders about the water cycle and water use in Ventura County.



### Abundant Table

The *Abundant Table Farm Project* leases 3.65 acres from HAREC and grows produce for a Community Supported Agriculture program. Produce grown in this program is also sold to the Ventura Unified School District for salad bars as part of the Farm to School program, creating revenue to continue to grow more crops and train people how to farm.

Agriculture is a vital part of Ventura County's culture and tradition but many youth (and adults) lack an appreciation for the science and hard work required to put food on our tables. *Join the Farm* organizes outreach to schools and provides an annual farm camp to youth. With innovative and age appropriate lessons, the program raises awareness of local and global food systems—as well as creating lifelong summer memories of fun on the farm.

