



Annual Report

2007-2008



Program expands statewide reach with affiliate academics, farmers

Our Mission
 Conducting research and outreach for the successful **adoption,**



Choosing a new enterprise

management,



Explaining labor regulations

& marketing



Adding up marketing costs

... of potentially profitable crops and enterprises to promote a thriving, viable agriculture of small farms
See p. 3

The past twelve months have been very productive and energizing for the Small Farm Program as we expand our efforts to complement University of California programs that focus on commodity agriculture and larger producers. Our clientele, our focus on emerging specialty crops, our interdisciplinary approach and our collaborative structure make the Small Farm Program a very distinct part of ANR.



Shermain Hardesty

Our mission is to enhance the long-term viability of California's smaller producers, who are a very diverse group. Regardless of their backgrounds, smaller producers face challenges that are different than those addressed by many other Cooperative Extension programs. These producers cannot achieve economies of scale to compete as low-cost producers; instead, they must position themselves as niche marketers. Thus, emerging specialty crops form the cornerstone of our program.

While emerging specialty crops offer potential for high prices, they also require

significant research efforts. Almost by definition, there is no funding available from commodity boards to support these research efforts; thus, the Small Farm Center plays a key role by seeking out grant funds to support the Small Farm Program advisors' research activities related to these crops.

Although the Small Farm Program advisors all have expertise in agricultural production, they must also take a multidisciplinary approach when working with their clientele. In addition to specialty crops, our program areas include organic production, food safety and postharvest handling, farm management, farmers markets, adding value, agritourism and cooperatives.

Most smaller producers are highly diversified to maximize their direct marketing opportunities. They have to be involved daily in all aspects of their farming enterprise, such as addressing production issues (e.g., salinity levels and thrips damage), arranging workers compensation insurance for family members who work on the farm, monitoring packing shed activities for outgoing farmers market loads, negotiating with a new local grocery account and planning for planting new perennial crops. Small Farm Program advisors address issues related to all of these activities in their work with producers. They

Expanding statewide — FROM P. 1

present their advice from an integrated perspective of the entire enterprise—recognizing such factors as a producer’s language skills, lack of familiarity with various government regulations, distance from urban markets and limited transportation resources. From my perspective as an economist, their objective function is to maximize the producer’s long-term profit subject to numerous constraints.

The Small Farm Program’s interdisciplinary efforts include linking producers with consumers through our programs in agritourism and urban agriculture. This year we joined forces with ANR’s Human Resources program, proposing a project to expand market opportunities for small producers while increasing healthy food choices to urban residents living in “food deserts” and incorporating traditional ethnic foods into nutrition education programs.

Collaborative efforts are key for our program. To capitalize on our limited resources, the Small Farm Program advisors collaborate closely with each other, and frequently engage cooperating clients to aid in research. We also work closely with various USDA agencies. Small Farm Program advisors collaborate with outside

... using an integrated perspective to provide research-based, scale-appropriate solutions ...

organizations such as Woodlake Pride, the Hmong-American Association of Fresno, California Rare Fruit Growers Association, CalPoly San Luis Obispo, and UCSC’s Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems to strengthen their outreach efforts.

The success of our statewide program requires more than five advisors, and so we have long partnered with other UC academics through the Small Farm Workgroup. This year, we began establishing Affiliation Agreements with UCCE advisors to formalize their collaboration with our program, and to broaden our efficacy statewide.

Our philosophy is to work with our clientele using an integrated perspective to provide research-based, scale-appropriate solutions that complement the University of California’s world-renowned achievements benefiting large-scale agricultural enterprises. We do not focus on implementing the latest technological advances in agriculture, but we do cultivate fresh, real-world solutions for today’s small farms. We take pride in continuing the tradition of the founding days of Cooperative Extension in California, as we strive to serve the large numbers of small farms to improve their profitability and by doing so, strengthen their local economies and help their communities thrive.

Shermain D. Hardisty

Clients, farm advisors & staff set the Small Farm Program apart

The UC Small Farm Program is defined by the people it serves, rather than specializing in a specific production or marketing technique.

We serve limited-resource farmers, many of whom are immigrants with a variety of cultural perspectives and language barriers. A large segment of our clientele is highly entrepreneurial and dedicated to sustainable agricultural practices. Other clients have become involved in agriculture as a second career, often returning to operations previously run by other family members. Our clients vary widely when it comes to:

- **Ethnicity, race and culture:** Our clients are white, Hispanic, Southeast Asian and Chinese; they are refugee farmers, fifth-generation farmers, and post-urbanites—both men and women.
- **Language and literacy:** The Small Farm Program serves farmers who do not speak English and those who hold advanced University degrees.

- **Land access:** They grow on small plots of land that they’ve leased for the season, but they also cultivate acres that have been passed down in the family for generation. They’re located in rural reaches, in metropolitan centers, and along urban edges.
- **Philosophy:** California’s small-scale farmers include every flavor of motivation, goals, and production methods.

In order to serve the wide array of clients encompassed in the category of “small-scale farmers,” Small Farm Program advisors and staff must specialize in a variety of production, marketing and outreach methods

All of the current Small Farm Program advisors are bilingual, and all of them have made in-roads into their local farming communities to perform valuable outreach. Many of their clients have not been



previously served by traditional extension or were not aware of the resources available to them. The one-on-one contacts between farm advisors and clients new to Cooperative Extension are invaluable—and not only to the clients who’ve found a new resource.

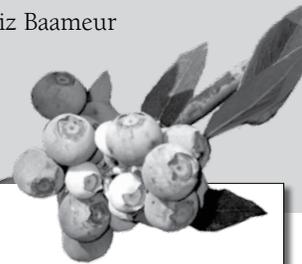
With 85 percent of all California farms considered “small” by USDA standards, ensuring that small farmers are choosing the safest, most efficient ways to grow fruits and vegetables makes a difference in the lives of all Californians.

¹Translation: (Ramiro) Lobo and (Manuel) Jiménez, through their advice and research, play an important role in the success of the growing number of small-scale farmers in California, the majority of whom are Latin American and Asian immigrants.

Blueberries: The SFP in one tiny bite

Consider it a case study: A decade ago, Manuel Jiménez and Richard Molinar planted blueberry field trials when few believed blueberries could be a profitable California crop. Today every Small Farm Program advisor in the state works with these antioxidant-rich jewels. SFP advisors' ongoing trials in blueberry production, include coastal and valley looks at varieties, plant size, spacing, mulch and irrigation. Like many niche crops developed with small-scale farmers in mind, interest in California blueberries has expanded rapidly. Milestones this year included:

- Field days were combined for **A Week of Blueberries**, from Kearney to Ventura. The events shared a blueberry expert from Florida, in addition to UC speakers, and organizers Jiménez, Mark Gaskell and Ben Faber.
- **International acclaim:** Grower representatives from Europe, South America and North America participated in the field day at Kearney. "People in Chile know about this field day ... and there will be more people coming to this field day from Chile," volunteered one Chilean participant.
- California blueberries had their **first peer-reviewed taste test** published in *California Agriculture*; Jiménez and Molinar were two of its co-authors.
- **Organic blueberries** may be the next frontier. Aziz Baameur partners with CASFS and Mark Gaskell partners with coastal farmers to research organic blueberry production. Gaskell also keeps tabs on the emerging organic blueberry market.



The Small Farm Program has helped jump-start research in once-new fields such as organics, farmers markets, agritourism, and blueberries ...

What's Next?

coffee & tea

It took years to get the materials and establish plants, but locally grown brews are on their way.

blackberries

This high-maintenance crop can be a high-value attraction at farmers markets.



specialty melons

New flavors, sizes and colors can help farmers create a niche at wholesale and farmers markets.

lychee & longans

Demand exists for these Asian fruits, but consistent fruit production and yield remains a challenge.

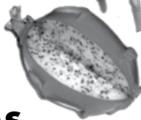
rainbow carrots

Fun for kids, nutritious for everyone. New varieties of old favorites allow small farmers to compete.



pitahaya

Water-efficient crops are important to arid California. Current research examines varieties' genetics.



Asian vegetables

Finding a mainstream market for these well-loved varieties could help ethnic farmers profit.



niche meats

Studies fine-tune demand for niches, from grass-fed beef, to goat meat, to Kosher processing.

Helping farmers help themselves

Many of the Small Farm Program's projects allow small-scale farmers to make better informed decisions in pursuit of diverse goals.



Choosing a new enterprise

Ramiro Lobo co-authored the "Market-Driven Enterprise Screening Guide" to help farmers self-evaluate their competitive edge relative to new crops and agricultural enterprises.

Clarifying regulations for family employees

Richard Molinar sought to assist farmers who employ



family members comply with state laws and avoid hefty fines. He and Michael Yang publicized the information, assisted farmers in securing workers compensation insurance and paved the way for farmers to continue their family traditions in safe and legal ways.

Adding up marketing costs to increase profit

	Total Wholesale	Farmers Market	CSA
21	\$1,337	\$1,508	\$11,648
22	\$5,528	\$5,350	\$38,532
23	\$0	\$39,050	\$3,900
24	\$16,882	\$18,843	
25	32%	24%	
26	4,811	\$126,301	
27	\$172,174		
28	42%		

Shermain Hardesty shared results of her case study "Grower

Returns in Alternative Marketing Channels" in several presentations which examined farms that sell produce through farmers markets, CSAs and wholesale. She also made her spreadsheet of calculations available to farmers who wanted to determine their most profitable options.

adoption management marketing

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Event highlights

A reminder of some other places you've seen us this year.

Events we hosted

- Solarization Field Day (7/2)
- Weed Management meeting for Chinese growers (8/17)
- Mini Watermelon Field Day (9/6)
- Fertigation workshop (10/10)
- Food Safety workshop for Hispanic growers (3/13)
- Organic Strawberry Production meeting (4/16)
- Blueberry Week field days (5/19-05/22)
- Blackberry Field Day (5/28)
- Small Farm Workgroup (6/11)

Specialty Crops Conference

The Small Farm Program organized and hosted a two-day Specialty Crops Conference and Tour in December. The first day included presentations at UC Davis on a wide variety of niche crops. The second day's tour took participants to explore Bay Area markets that work with small-scale farmers.

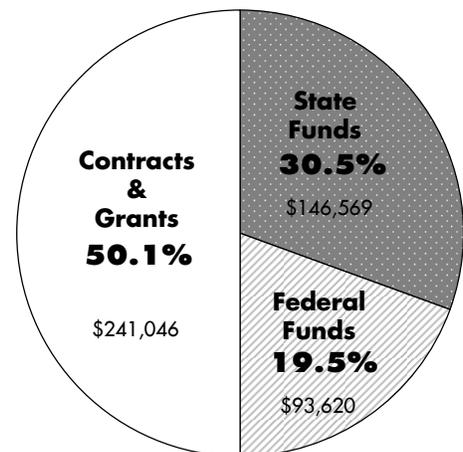
Event participation

- Strawberry growers meeting (speaker)
- Placer Grown Farm Conference (speaker)
- Pomology Conference (tour)
- Niche Meat Marketing Conference (speaker)
- UCCE Agritourism Conference (speaker)
- Commercial Goat Milk Producers Workshop (sponsor)
- Maximize your Farmers Market Experience (speaker)

Small Farm Conference

We were an organizing sponsor, with members on the executive and planning committees. Academics presented short courses and workshops regarding production and marketing. We offered special workshops to women, Spanish speakers, and Hmong speakers.

Funding sources 2007-2008



Small Farm Program extramural funding exceeds government allocations, just over a 1:1 ratio.

Approximately 50% of grant funds are used by Small Farm Program advisors for research projects and local needs.

Small Farm Center staff supports advisors' local efforts, and aids in sharing results and information statewide.