

University of California, RREA Popular Report, FY 2024

The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources administers the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) Program of California and uses RREA funds allocated annually to implement a competitive grants program for proposals that address the educational and outreach needs in the management of California's valuable renewable resources on forests and rangelands. Over \$286,000 were leveraged from other sources such as federal, private, and local government funds. Six UC RREA projects were funded focusing on these RREA Critical Issues; Landowner Engagement, Invasive Species, and Wildfire Prevention and Management.

❖ Promoting best practices for land management of irrigated pastures

This project focused on promoting sustainable management strategies that enhance water efficiency, forage production, and ecosystem services on irrigated pasturelands. Irrigated pastures are a critical summer forage resource for livestock in California, but their water use and viability are increasingly challenged by drought, climate change, and regulatory pressures such as the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. UCCE created informational resources, led workshops and trainings, and established a demonstration site to share best land management practices that promote water efficiency and water quality. These efforts spurred the adoption of no-till drilling practices in the region, with two producers managing over 2,600 acres of irrigated pasture purchasing no-till drills. The no-till drills are used to interseed their pastures with new forage seed while leaving existing vegetation intact. This strategy improves pasture and water productivity.



Client using no-till drill to interseed pasture

❖ Restoring meadows with improved land stewardship



Prescribed burn clears land for meadow regrowth

This project aimed to restore meadows at Whitaker's Forest Research Station, addressing degradation caused by climate change and wildfire suppression, which led to tree encroachment into meadow habitats. UCCE demonstrated land management strategies and worked with teams of land managers, college students, and government agencies like Cal Fire to implement treatments designed to enhance meadow resilience amid changing disturbance patterns. Under UCCE's leadership, the teams successfully conducted two prescribed fires and gained valuable hands-on experience and knowledge for restoring and managing meadow habitats.

"Having the opportunity to take part in the burn allowed us to apply what we have learned in class and gave us the chance to hone our technical skills," - Student majoring in Ecosystem Management and Forestry.

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