

## **MyPlate: Advancing ANR Leadership and Excellence in Nutrition Education**

*Cathi Lamp, Nutrition, Family, and Consumer Sciences Advisor*

UC ANR has led the way nationally in the development and testing of the “plate” approach to nutrition education. UC ANR advisors and specialists tested a graphic almost identical to MyPlate several years ago and the work was shared with USDA prior to the adoption of MyPlate by USDA as the new graphic to remind Americans about healthy eating at mealtime. Through our work we discovered that clients need to see the plate in action via photos with real food combinations. This is essential in helping people apply the Dietary Guideline message to real-world food choices. Thus, we have continued our work and photos and messages have been developed, tested with targeted stakeholders (low-income families). However, additional funding is needed to finalize these materials and integrate them into existing ANR curricula (Farm to Fork, Healthy Happy Me, Plan, Shop, Save and Cook and several others) and educational materials.

This project will allow us to incorporate our MyPlate photos, tested messages and other work into current ANR curriculum for adults and youth and at the same time update the curricula from MyPyramid to MyPlate concepts. The curricula are used extensively to promote healthy behaviors to prevent childhood obesity in schools and community settings throughout California and reach more than 100,000 adults and youth each year. This work will also benefit the two large multi-year, ANR-funded obesity prevention projects funded in the previous year, by strengthening the school and community education components.

The concepts presented in MyPlate are based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, a document that provides the basis for all nutrition and physical activity related USDA recommendations and is the product of a very rigorous review of the scientific literature. The Dietary Guidelines serve as the basis for all USDA-funded nutrition and nutrition education programs, including UC CalFresh, EFNEP and 4-H Healthy Living.

As a research and extension-arm of USDA, UC ANR has a responsibility to promote the evidence-based messages of USDA. One of the most important ways to accomplish this is to make sure that ANR curricula reflects the changes USDA has implemented. Supporting and promoting these messages will assist in meeting maximum behavior change outcomes. In addition it is imperative that ANR has the most current research-based materials to maintain excellence in our research, education and outreach efforts at the community and state level. Revision of curricula currently used in ANR programs sends a strong message to our partners and clientele that ANR is committed to being a leader in education.

This project will also provide an opportunity to conduct regional training sessions on the new materials for program staff and 4-H volunteers. The project promotes healthy eating and physical activity to prevent obesity addressing the Healthy Families and Communities Initiative-Promoting Healthy Behaviors for Childhood Obesity Prevention, while at the same time creating more demand for California agricultural products with low-income families (fruits, vegetables, nuts, rice and grains, milk and dairy products, eggs, poultry, beef, seafood, etc.), secondarily addressing the initiative to Enhance Competitive, Sustainable Food Systems (“expand the uses and markets for existing commodities”). The integration of the materials created in our “plate” research provides a unique window of opportunity to promote California agriculture in our nutrition programs. This cross discipline work will enhance our efforts to improve the quality of life of all Californians.

To summarize, this project will: 1) Create a unit providing guidance on how to adapt MyPyramid to MyPlate 2) Update ANR nutrition and healthy living curricula integrating USDA MyPlate concepts and ANR "plate" research, tested visuals and messages; promoting California agricultural products. 3) Conduct regional training for nutrition educators, youth development staff and volunteers 4) Evaluate behavior change results of ANR curricula with MyPlate additions using tested instruments.