

UC Cooperative Extension Butte County 2020 Update



Rice Farming Systems Advisor: *Luis Espino*

During 2020, the rice project continued research and outreach focused on arthropods, diseases, and weeds of rice. Armyworm moths and larvae were monitored across the Valley, and the results were shared with growers and PCAs weekly. 2020 was a blast year, especially in the west side of the Valley. In some fields, yields were severely affected. Most likely, warm temperatures during June and the smoke in August created good conditions for blast. A survey of weedy rice was completed this year, showing that this problematic weed has not expanded much. The UC rice team held a Virtual Rice Field Day in August, with more than 120 attendees that were updated on the latest research conducted by UC academics.

Orchard Systems Advisor: *Luke Milliron*

Despite a pandemic and wildfires, orchard research and education continue. Following the start of the pandemic, grower meetings moved online. During the spring and summer, the orchards program co-organized eight grower meetings, reaching hundreds of growers. A major focus of the meetings was sustainable irrigation management. Irrigation management in almond, walnut, and prune orchards is also a major research focus of the program. A new field trial is testing whether the start of the almond irrigation season can be delayed by directly checking tree water needs with the pressure chamber technique. A walnut grower who recently adopted the technique on 2,000 acres notes that his trees are looking healthier and that he is saving on electricity costs.



Nutrition Education Program: *Jona Pressman and Rita Palmer*

The CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program have been reaching students and their families virtually through live Zoom lessons focused on hand hygiene, physical activity, and nutrition. Students at Little Chico Creek Elementary School in Chico and Oakdale Heights Elementary School in Oroville will soon be receiving “Grow It Show It” garden lesson activity kits, that include soil, seeds, a ruler, a magnifying glass, a garden journal and instructions. Students will be learning how to start and monitor their seeds using their kit supplies. CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Nutrition Educators and UC Master Gardeners will provide a virtual learning experience for students receiving the kits.

4-H Youth Development Community Education Specialist: *Ryan Cleland*

The UCCE Butte County 4-H program continued with its mission to educate young people. The program resumed normal activities during the 2019-2020 program year – offering projects on topics ranging from robotics to rangeland, animal husbandry, and leadership. We were fortunate to have held all our annual events, with the exception of summer camp, before California imposed shelter-in-place. The program used funding granted by the Support Group to educate area youth about poultry embryology with hands on experience. For the 2020-2021 program year, we will be adapting our great programming to meet the demands of the time, with content that can be delivered virtually when needed and in person when possible.





Master Gardener Program Coordinator: *Karina Hathorn*

The UC Master Gardeners of Butte County are as busy as ever. The pandemic presented this volunteer-led group with an opportunity to reimagine how to support Butte County’s home gardeners. In March, 30 new volunteers were able to complete their training online, and then joined the program on July 1st. The Master Gardeners put together a successful plant sale in the spring, following all the appropriate safety protocols. In-person workshops have been replaced with virtual workshops, including the three-part series “Gardening from the Ground Up” and, in collaboration with CSU Chico, “Firewise Landscaping”. This year, a new edition of the “Garden Guide and Three Year Journal” was produced. The hotline continues to be active through phone and email, the “Real Dirt” column in the Chico ER is now published weekly, and maintenance and development at the two-acre Demonstration Garden at the Patrick Ranch continues.

Dairy Advisor: *Betsy Karle*

The dairy program serves producers and allied industry by conducting research activities to guide on-farm management decisions. Information about management practices for all types of dairies is available and programmatic activities are driven by clientele needs. Specific projects include evaluating the effects of wildfire ash on forage crops, developing animal health risk assessment tools, managing manure and compost for environmental quality & regulatory compliance, and researching antimicrobial use and stewardship practices and protocols.



Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor: *Tracy Schohr*

Schohr is conducting extension, education and applied research focusing on livestock production, economics, and sustainable range and pasture management. She is developing solutions to the complex issues facing commercial livestock producers in the region. A research program highlight for 2019-2020 includes investigating the impact of the drying of the Miocene Canal on local ranching and agricultural operations as a result of the Camp Fire. Schohr also develops technical resources for livestock producers on local topics and hosts educational events.

UCCE Butte County

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Support Group of Butte County UCCE

Created in 1999, the Support Group of Butte County UCCE works to promote and support Butte County Cooperative Extension programs and services. Any person or entity making an annual donation of at least \$100, or the in-kind equivalent, is conferred membership and is eligible to join its Board of Directors. Funds raised by the Support Group are used to support UCCE’s research and extension activities in Butte County.

Current Directors of the Support Group are Phil Wilson, Nick Bertagna, Rory Crowley, Jed Walton, Paul McGowan, Kay Perkins, and Matt Stone.



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