The UC ANR “Spotlight” Webinar series

https://ucanr.edu/sites/StrategicInitiatives/
UC ANR: Our Public Value

The difference we make…

• Promoting economic prosperity in California
• Developing a qualified workforce for California
• Safeguarding abundant and healthy food for all Californians
• Protecting California’s natural resources
• Building climate-resilient communities and ecosystems
• Promoting healthy people and communities
• Developing an inclusive and equitable society
Extension Programming for California’s Urban Farmers: Lessons from the UC ANR Statewide Urban Agriculture Workshop Series

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UC ANR: A Resource for Urban Agriculture
Building Success in California’s Urban Agriculture: Managing Risk and Leveraging Opportunities
Did you know?

• Several cities in CA have set up Urban Ag Initiatives and passed Urban Ag policies
• State of CA has passed laws that facilitate Urban Agriculture
• Farm Bill 2018 sets up funding and a census for Urban Agriculture
What is Urban Agriculture?

- School and community gardens
- Livestock in your backyard
- Growing healthy food for your family
- Growing and selling farm products
- All of the above
“Urban agriculture includes production (beyond that which is strictly for home consumption or educational purposes), distribution and marketing of food and other products within the cores of metropolitan areas and at their edges.”

THE GERMINATION PROCESS

• UC ANR Urban Ag Team formed in 2012/2013
• 2014 needs assessment
• Visited/interviewed 30+ CA urban farmers
A need for in-person training
What we learned...

• Most urban farmers are beginning farmers
• Farms are very small (<3 acres)
• Many urban farmers are part of non-profit organizations
  • Many also host volunteers
They face unique challenges

- Competition
- Distribution
- Zoning
- Resources
- Community Issues
- Insecure land tenure
- Financing
They’re often difficult for UCCE staff/farm advisors to reach

- Not part of MG program “non-commercial” purview
- Many crops, many questions.

“Commercial producers need help on a specific item. Urban people do not know where to start so you need to explain the process of raising an animal from start to finish.” UCANR CE Advisor
“Building Success in California’s Urban Agriculture: Managing Risk and Leveraging Opportunities” 2016-2018

• Four-part workshop series, held in:
  • Bay Area
  • Los Angeles
  • San Diego
  • Sacramento
• 16 workshops, 581 participants
Workshop #1: Production
- Soil management
- Irrigation
- Integrated pest management
- Crop selection

Workshop #2: Legal Basics
- Laws and Regulations → Permits/Zoning
- Meet the regulators
- Key resources
- Local policy landscape

Workshop #3: Business and Marketing
- Business planning
- Marketing channels
- Labor and employment law
- Understanding financials

Workshop #4: Food Safety
- Food safety legal considerations-FSMA, etc.
- Developing a farm food safety program
- GAPs and GHPs for urban farms
Lessons learned...

• Co-sponsorships with local food policy councils and other organizations are effective!
  • Help with publicity
  • Co-branding
  • Speakers

LOS ANGELES FOOD POLICY COUNCIL
Participants appreciated seeing urban farms and meeting urban farmers.
Unintended benefit—participants really appreciated networking at the workshops

• “Networking and hearing others’ experiences was very valuable.”
• “I met someone there who runs a farmers’ market and later applied to her market.”
• “This workshop series connected us to the many organizations and individuals involved in this work not only in CA but LA. Very helpful!”
A mix of UC ANR speakers and local farmer/practitioners was effective
Challenges most often mentioned by urban farmers

- **Economics of urban agriculture**—financing, marketing, sales, business planning, financial sustainability
- **Land**—Access, tenure, and leasing
- **Specific production issues**—pests and water
The impact

Surveyed after 2-3 months, participants* had used what they learned to:

• Improve their soil management (50%)
• Connect with an organization they learned about at the workshop (63%)
• Develop a new or improved marketing plan (54%)
• Identify food safety risks on their farm (68%)

*(N=90 survey responses)
If you remember one thing, remember this....

Urban agriculture bridges the gap between the Master Gardener Program and typical farms in California. Urban agriculture is an opportunity to reach these smaller growers and their customers.
Questions
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