Podcasting as an extension tool

Phoebe Gordon, Ph.D.
Orchard Systems Advisor, Madera and Merced Counties
University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
What strengths does podcasting have?

- Style can range from formal, newslike broadcast to an informal hangout session with friends
- Can have one host to several hosts
  - Style of podcasting may change depending on the number of hosts
- Easy to produce (no, really!)
- Requires few resources
What weaknesses does podcasting have?

• Not an effective teaching method for all concepts
• Maintaining an audience can be a grind
  • Requires regular posting
• For the producers, it can take years before you get a significant audience
• Not for everyone
  • Only about 1/3 of the US regularly listens to podcasts
  • Only 2/3 has ever listened to podcasts
Podcasting is a tool to elevate other extension personnel, too
Where does podcasting fit into my extension program?

• Maintain a podcast
• Hold grower meetings
• Articles in my newsletter as well as industry newsletters
• Invited talks at meetings
• Maintain a website for posting articles and meetings
What do you need to produce a podcast?

- A website to post episodes to, that has an audio RSS feed
  - RSS = Really Simple Syndication
  - Standardized way for people or apps to access website content
  - UCANR websites cannot do this
- Audio equipment for recording
- Editing software
- Bonus: recording area
  - Area that allows for sound waves to be absorbed
  - Closet, pillow fort, blanket, recording studio
How do you evaluate a podcast’s success?

- Word of mouth
- Website analytics
  - How many?
  - Where from?
- Podcast app analytics
- Professional services like Podtrak
- Survey? We tried this early on, very little success
- Use multiple types of analytics!

Websites will tell you:

How many visits, unique visits

Where those visitors are coming from (within the web, where in the US and world)
How do you get financial support for your podcast?

• My cohost and I are lucky to be primarily funded by agricultural commodity boards that will happily support (cheap) educational efforts

• Many big granting agencies are now requiring extension... ask for funds if people want an “extension person” to help them be more competitive

• Very cheap to run a podcast - website services are only a few hundred $ a year

• Decent mics for cheap