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## New extension advisor finishes first month on job

STAFF REPORT 7 hrs ago



Yu Meng

HOLTVILLE — The University of California Cooperative Extension service has a new youth, family and community advisor serving Imperial County.

Yu Meng started work on Jan. 2. Her responsibilities will focus on providing community development programs in the area of youth, families, and communities with major outreach to the Latino youth and families, according to the extension service's website.

Meng is originally from China, where she studied food science and engineering. After she graduated with a bachelor's degree, she worked for food industries and started to notice the nutrition issues with processed foods and their effects on children's health. With that in mind, she came to the United States and earned master's and doctorate degrees from Utah State University and Oregon State University, respectively.

Before coming to Imperial County, she worked for a USDA-funded project known as "the WAVE~Ripples for change" in collaboration with the OSU Professionals and Extension, community partners, high school soccer coaches, and school districts, and some dedicated volunteers to prevent unhealthy weight gain among 15- to 19-year-old soccer players. Most of the youth she worked with were Latinos and from low-income families.

During this time, she helped develop and test the first sports nutrition, physical activity, family and consumer sciences curriculum for active youth. Her work resulted in positive developments in reducing youth added sugar intake, maintaining fruits and vegetables intake over time, and improving the awareness of sports nutrition. Participating youth also applied additional skills they learned from gardening and cooking workshops at their homes and shared the lessons and practical applications with their respective families.

As a youth, family and community advisor for Imperial County, Meng is expected to continue to utilize her knowledge and skills for positive youth development and nutrition and improve people's quality of life for Imperial county communities.

Her desired goal is to ensure the applicability of the UC Agriculture and Natural Resources initiatives with research and extension of knowledge in a way it helps better lives, and address a healthy, diverse youth, families and communities living in Imperial County and adjacent communities.

Yu Meng can be reached by calling (442) 265-7700.