**Position Title: UCCE Specialist in the Economics of Food Marketing Systems**

**Position:** The research and outreach program will focus on vital practical issues facing California food and farm commodity markets. The program will focus especially on food system participants between the farmgate and the consumer, such as shippers, packers, exporters, wholesalers and retailers, while recognizing that these participants are linked closely with farm and consumer issues. The position requires a Ph.D. in agricultural economics, economics, or a closely related field and will be housed in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ARE) at UC Davis. The Specialist will collaborate with colleagues in agricultural economics statewide; other CE Specialists and Advisors across the UC system, and AES faculty and researchers in departments, centers and institutes across many fields.

**Justification:** For an economically competitive, sustainable future, California agriculture must anticipate specific demands and compete with producers elsewhere to supply the product attributes for which buyers are willing to pay. The Specialist will be the go-to person knowledgeable about food markets and issues for California. Vital perennial issues include (1) quantitative assessment of demands for evolving products and attributes related to concerns such as nutrition, food safety, production methods and taste. Topics include the ability of competitors to expand production or improve quality, and changes in markets for organic or locally produced foods. (2) Implications for farms, consumers and the economy of changes in the marketing chain such as consolidation and vertical integration among shippers and retailers, use of ecommerce and delivery for food, and continued growth of food service. (3) Evaluation of collective investment in agricultural promotion by commodity groups, food companies and governments to assure enhanced demand and that the benefits of such efforts accrue to the intended stakeholders. The legal, market and policy contexts of such programs are changing and efforts need to be regularly retooled.

California agriculture depends on all markets—local, national, and global—so this Specialist will seek to understand the linkage across markets and which may be most suited for which categories of producer and market intermediaries. Some specialty products focus on very local sales while the range of export share for major California farm products ranges from near zero to more than two thirds. External stakeholders include farm commodity groups, state and federal food and agricultural policy makers, local economic development interests, and industry members.

The University of California must invest in this Specialist because production efficiency and environmental sensitivity will not assure a sustainable California agriculture *without improved understanding of markets*. Helping successful innovation in food markets requires a nuanced understanding of the economic responses of producers, consumers, marketers, and others. Evaluating markets for California agricultural products is central to the UC mission. The full range of stakeholders recognizes ANR has a central role to play in this crucial area.

**Extension:** The Specialist will provide an essential link between farms, post-farmgate members of the food industry, including government policy makers, and UC researchers. The clientele for this position includes growers; grower organizations; shippers, packers and other farmgate buyers; wholesalers, retailers, nonprofit organizations, and local, state, and national governments. Clientele will be critical participants in identifying timely topics and providing data for analysis. Key groups include: California Farm Bureau Federation, Produce Marketing Association Western Growers, United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, farm cooperatives and other voluntary grower associations, as well as marketing orders.

Expected extension activities include presentations at industry conferences and events, writing for farm industry outlets, development of web-based materials and social media presence (blogs, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), and the preparation and delivery of outreach publications.

**Research:** The Specialist will develop a research and extension program focused on agricultural markets with the objective of maintaining and enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of California agriculture. Key areas will include analysis of marketing channels and consumer demand for current and new California agricultural commodities, factors affecting competitiveness relative to producers elsewhere in the U.S. and across the globe, and how state, national, and other countries’ policies affect the competitiveness and economic sustainability of California’s agrofood sector.

Publication outlets include *Agricultural & Resource Economics Update, American J. Agricultural Economics, California Agriculture, Choices, Food Policy,* Giannini Foundation *Monograph* and *Information* publication series, *J. Agricultural & Resource Economics, J. Agriculture & Food Economics,* *J.* *Marketing Research*, *J. Public Policy & Marketing*, *Marketing Science, and Quantitative Marketing & Economics.*

**ANR Network:** No Specialist covers this key area. We currently face a huge void in providing crucial and expected applied research and extension. Other agricultural states have several economists to focus on applied research and outreach related to agricultural marketing. There is a massive demand to collaborate with researchers engaged in multi-disciplinary projects regarding competitive, sustainable food systems. This hire would complement recent CE hires in food systems by providing the vital economic component to this program. This position would also enhance the development of the CE network in economics by complementing the economics of sustainable agriculture management position (approved) by introducing post-farmgate considerations. Similarly, it would complement existing positions in livestock, rangelands and ecosystem management (Saitone) and quantitative policy analysis (Bruno, fall 2018).

There is a substantial amount of work across UC that has linkages to marketing. Yet, there is currently very limited capacity to undertake economic analysis, relative to the need for it. Dr. Roberta Cook and Dr. Shermain Hardesty’s retirements have exacerbated the shortage of capacity in these essential areas; in the absence of CE Specialist expertise, the UC Agricultural Issues Center and AES economists are trying to provide economic expertise for research teams and for outreach activities including identifying and addressing stakeholder needs and maintaining the visibility of UC as a resource for the food chain. Current stop-gap measures not sustainable. ANR needs a Specialist to fulfill the essential role of integrating applied research and outreach regarding the economics of agricultural markets.

**Network External to ANR:** The Specialist would engage in research and outreach in collaboration with members of the key stakeholder groups such as commodity groups, government officials, industry economists and others. Scientists engaged in helping develop new food attributes would draw on this specialist as a key team member. State and federal policymakers involved with issues regarding food distribution systems, food safety, and the structure of the food chain are another natural network.

**Support:** This position will have two sources of internal support: the UC Davis ARE department and the Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics (GFAE). The department will supply office, administrative, IT, and transportation support. As a GFAE member, the incumbent will have access to funding and graduate student assistants. Also, the GFAE’s Outreach Coordinator is located in the ARE department at UCD, as is ARE’s outreach coordinator, thus offering the incumbent a range of resources and assistance.

**Other Support:** USDA programs such as AFRI, CDFA cooperative agreements, USDA Economic Research Service cooperative agreements, USDA and CDFA Specialty Crop grants, CDPR competitive grants, and funds from marketing orders and other industry groups are available. This Specialist would be in great demand with opportunities for substantial funding to support applied research and outreach.

**Location:** This position will be located in UCD ARE to enable close contact and collaboration with agricultural economists and graduate students. The Davis campus provides proximity to many colleagues in disciplines engaged in studying innovations in technology beyond the farm gate, such as in the departments of Food Science and Technology and Animal Science.

**Developed and proposed by** the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, UC Davis. Department members have been provided with continual feedback from stakeholders and policymakers regarding the importance of rebuilding ANR capacity in this area.