**2018 UC ANR CE Advisor Position (*submitted by Rachel Elkins, CD Lake County*)**

**Position Title:** Area Diversified Agricultural Systems Advisor, Lake and Mendocino Counties.

**Position:** This position will develop and extend research-based information on horticultural and other niche crops such as edible grains, oil seeds, nursery starts, cosmetic ingredients, etc. (excluding cannabis) to an economically, culturally, and socially diverse clientele. The advisor will also assist County Directors with Master Gardener (MG) training and problem solving. Minimum of a Master’s degree in plant sciences, e.g. horticulture, pomology, vegetable crops, is required; pest management degree is acceptable if accompanied by adequate plant science-related coursework and experience. Demonstrated applied research, information dissemination, and grant-writing experience are very desirable. The advisor will be housed in Lake County and report to the Lake County Director. The advisor will work in Lake and Mendocino Counties and interact with academic staff in both counties, neighboring North Coast counties and statewide, relevant ANR Statewide Programs (e.g. AIC, IPM, SAREP), Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC), and campus-based departments, e.g. UC Davis, Berkeley, Riverside. The advisor will also interact and collaborate with external public and community partners. Future responsibility may include commercial pomology (i.e. pears, walnuts, olives, apples).

**Justification:** The advisor will address 3 major issues(using latest Ag Commissioner and Ag Census data)

1) Enhance the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of diversified agriculture in Lake and Mendocino Counties (total 2,058 farms, of which 95% of sales is non-livestock crop-related).

2) Meet the increasing demand for advice on alternative crops and farming systems not covered by existing staff. Many of these crops are of interest to the 92% of total farms classified as “small farms” by USDA: 69% have gross sales from $1000 - $250,000 and 23% have less than $1000; 81% of total farms are less than 200 acres. This group farms a wide diversity of crops (19 fruit and over 50 vegetable, herb, spice, ornamental, and nursery start) and has a wide range of experience, from none to proficient. They often have the greatest need for, but lack, innovative and economically-rational applied research and extension input.

3) Preserve the viable agricultural land use base capable of supporting a diversified, locally-based agricultural economy but threatened long-term by non-agricultural uses as the population increases.

There is great consumer and public interest in locally-produced agricultural products (e.g. 11 Certified Farmers Markets, 100 registered growers) and deep historical, cultural, social, and economic dependence on agriculture in both counties. There is thus high likelihood of significant outcomes and impacts of this position. In addition to growers and ag service personnel (e.g. pest control advisers, certified crop advisers, ag dealers), this position will also assist multiple entities with similar goals and endeavors that need locally-relevant, research-based information and advice, e.g. agricultural training programs/farm schools, farmers markets/food hubs and other economic development entities, community college ag programs, etc.

**Extension:** Activities may vary with program, season, and need, but can include: *Written offerings*: periodic newsletters, media articles, extension leaflets/handbooks/”flash cards”, etc. *Visual media*: videos, slide presentations, multimedia. *Internet*/*Social media*: email “blasts”, Internet blogs, immediate notifications (e.g. Twitter, Instagram), website pages, webinars. *Group activities*: Indoor presentations/workshops, field and “tailgate” meetings, hands-on demonstrations. *Individual consultation*: While often viewed as “old fashioned” “farm calls” are a valuable means to gain insight and become familiar with problems and issues, and will continue to be an important extension tool, especially for small and less experienced clientele. There should be close collaboration with other ANR academics versed in complementary fields of activity such as economics, marketing, value-added, and post-harvest quality, as well as external partners (see below).

**Research**: Applied research based on short- and long-term needs, clientele demand, and season/year should meet the specific demands of a unique geographical area and clientele group. Examples include: alternative crops and strains suitable to microclimates ranging from intermountain to coastal, organics, season extension (row covers, indoor growing), climate adaptation (shade cloth, planting/harvest timing), cultural input efficiency, crop transition strategies (crop rotations, fumigation alternatives, soil amendments), labor saving strategies/technologies, and post-harvest quality. Secondary programs may include economics (cost studies, beginning farmer and land use studies, marketing, ag tourism), and other complimentary disciplines. A thorough needs assessment should be undertaken in the first year(s) after hiring.

**ANR Network:** This position will satisfy the tremendous need to serve specialty crop producers endeavoring to produce high-value products for local and/or regional markets, a large and growing clientele group thus far lacking dedicated UC academic staff. The advisor will (ideally) be part of a regional team of four specialty crops/small farms production (vacant) and marketing/food safety (in place) advisors, with others based in Humboldt/Del Norte and Sonoma/Marin Counties. Other UC colleagues will be statewide commodity/specialty crop/small farms advisors with similar interests and multiple campus-based academics (Specialists, AES and non-AES scientists, REC academics). Given the wide diversity of crops, farm type, farm size, experience base, and economic resources, academic teams will vary considerably over time. Example partners may include: UCD Departments of Plant Sciences, Land/Air/Water Resources, Agricultural and Resource Economics (also UCB), Biological and Agricultural Engineering, SAREP/Agricultural Sustainability Institute, and others. A survey to ascertain grower demographics, growing conditions, crop diversity, and perceived research and extension needs will clarify specific teams. Collating and extending existing UC information and resources should be emphasized in early years.

**Network External to ANR:** The advisor will interact and partner as appropriate with growers of multiple crop types, related service personnel, public agencies (e.g. Agricultural Commissioner, USDA NRCS/FSA, RCDs, state agencies (Water Resources, CDFA, Cal DPR, etc.), educational institutions, non-governmental entities, and private entities (foundations, businesses, consultants, lenders, grower representatives).

**Support:** Lake County will provide mentoring, a dedicated office, conference room space, equipment, supplies, transportation (field vehicle and mileage reimbursement), and secretarial support.Mendocino County will provide mentoring, part time technician support, well-appointed meeting room, and administrative support for grower programs**.** Other specific support will be supplied as needed and available.

**Other support:** Potential federal and state grant support (besides ANR) includes various USDA: NIFA (SCRI, AFRI, OREI, ARME, Farm Business Mgt. SARE), Advocacy/Outreach; CDFA/CalDPR: SCBG, Specialty Crop Multi-State, IPM; Local/Private: Mendocino Community Foundation.

**Location:** Lake County will house this position based on the history of need as well as the likelihood that this position will inherit pomological programmatic duties.

**Developed and proposed by:** Lake County Director/Pomology Advisor and Mendocino County Director/Winegrowing and Plant Sciences Advisor with input from the UC Pomology Program Team and Small Farm Workgroup, Lake and Mendocino County Agricultural Commissioners, North Coast Opportunities/Lake Local Food Action Network, Lake and Mendocino County Farm Bureaus, Lake County Chapter California Women for Agriculture, Lake County Agricultural Fair District Board, Kelseyville Pear Festival Committee, Mendocino and Woodland Community College instructors, and USDA NRCS staff.