

Position Title: Urban Agriculture/Small Farms Area Advisor (San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties)

Position Overview: The Area Urban Agriculture/Small Farms Advisor will develop and conduct an applied research and education program for small-scale growers engaged in direct and nontraditional production and marketing of vegetable and specialty crops with an emphasis on organic production in the greater Los Angeles basin (excluding desert areas which are already covered). The Advisor will also work in the emerging area of controlled-environment agriculture (CEA), a food production approach conducted in enclosed facilities in large urban centers. A minimum of a Master's Degree in plant science, agronomy, vegetable science, horticulture, or a closely related field is required. Experience in small-scale production systems and/or sustainable agriculture is preferred. Bilingual (English and Spanish) applicants are encouraged to apply. The Advisor will report to the San Bernardino County Co-Directors with input on program direction, coordination and evaluation from the other County Directors and South Coast Research and Extension Center (SCREC) Director. The Advisor will also collaborate with other Advisors assigned to the four-county area (including Sustainable Food System Advisor Rachel Surls who specializes in the non-production aspect of food systems), other statewide Urban Ag/Small Farm Advisors, campus based Specialists and Faculty, and with personnel involved with projects at SCREC and the UC Riverside Citrus Experiment Station. The Advisor will affiliate with the statewide Sustainable Agricultural Research and Extension Program (SAREP) and the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and participate in workgroups associated with the Agriculture Production Management Systems, Vegetable Crops, Pest Management, Water Resources, and Building Food Security Program Teams. The Advisor will also spend up to 20% of his/her time providing research-based information on non-commercial vegetable production to Master Gardeners (with MG programs being coordinated and managed by UCCE Community Educators in each of the four counties) who will extend information to the public.

Justification: Major industry needs include research and education on vegetable and specialty crops varietal selection; irrigation scheduling; nutrient management; CEA system technology; and, integrated pest management stressing prevention and organic approaches. Currently, no UCCE Advisor has an assignment in this programmatic area in non-desert areas of these four counties, nor is there an opportunity for a current advisor to shift or augment his/her current FTE to reasonably cover this assignment. Small scale growers currently rely heavily on non-UC sources that often lack credibility for information on crop production, creating a strong need and likelihood for significant outcomes and impacts by filling this position. Small-scale production of vegetable and specialty crops is the most rapidly growing sector of the Southern California agricultural industry and an important element of the expanding local and regional food system, potentially serving over 18 million residents of the four-county greater Los Angeles metropolitan area. Los Angeles County is offering tax incentives for new startup farms on small acreages and many traditional citrus and avocado farmers in all four counties are converting acreage to diversified, organic family farms to meet needs of a changing market. The position will fill a large geographical void that will connect the urban agriculture and community-centered agriculture sectors in the greater Los Angeles area with other statewide UC efforts in this subject matter area, strengthening the overall impact.

Extension: The Advisor will develop and extend information on producing and marketing vegetables and specialty crops grown on small acreages and in controlled environment settings at UCCE, UCR and SCREC field days, workshops and meetings and author UC ANR publications, peer-reviewed journal articles in California Agriculture, Journal of Agronomy, Soil Science, journals associated with the American Society for Horticultural Science among others and in trade publications. Key clientele include current and prospective small acreage vegetable and specialty crop producers under conventional and CEA settings, community-supported agriculture enterprises and community organizations vested in promoting viable agricultural enterprises in urban settings, and UCCE Community Educators and Master Gardeners.

Research: Key areas of research are developing low-input, sustainable cropping systems for vegetable and specialty crops that optimize production, conserve water and preserve water quality, and creating new markets. Research is also needed in the area of IPM in organic as well as traditional systems and developing new CEA technologies with industry partners. Numerous grant opportunities within and external to UC ANR exist due to

the proximity to UCR and the opportunity to partner with Specialists and Faculty in Plant Pathology, Entomology, Botany and Plant Sciences, Environmental Sciences, and Engineering (regarding CEA research). Research plots at both UCR and SCREC are available and the UC Davis Plant Breeding Center has funding to work with UC ANR scientists and farmers to improve varieties suitable for organic agriculture.

ANR Network: Filling this position will close a large research and education gap in the area of community-scale agriculture in the most heavily populated area of the state. Currently there are no Advisors covering this subject matter in this geographical area. The Advisor will collaborate with a wide-ranging network of UC ANR Specialists and Advisors as well as Faculty and Staff at UCR and at SCREC (15 miles and 51 miles from the headquarters, respectively). There is an opportunity for cross-disciplinary work with Dr. Rachel Surls, Food Systems Advisor headquartered in Los Angeles County (who does not cover production practices). Other Advisors in Southern California holding similar positions that could serve as regional collaborators/mentors include Desert Vegetable Crops advisor Jose Aguilar (based in the Indio office 80 miles away) and Ramiro Lobo, Small Farms and Economist Advisor based in San Diego (125 miles away). Statewide, the position will affiliate with SAREP and IPM and several workgroups associated with the Agriculture Production Management Systems, Vegetable Crops, Pest Management, Water Resources, and Building Food Security Program Teams. A new Community Educator funded by the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) specifically in support of this position, along with Community Educators (eg: Master Gardener Coordinators) in the four counties will serve as the conduit to over 700 Master Gardeners who will extend information to the public and community organizations.

Network External to ANR: Research and education collaborations with the USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Resource Conservation Districts, Farm Bureaus, Orange County-based organizations including Urban Produce, Sustain OC, Solutions for Urban Ag, Orange County Produce; Grow Riverside (a non-profit consortium of over 50 small-scale producers in Riverside County); Los Angeles Food Policy Council; Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust; Urban Farming Advocates and approximately 125 other urban agricultural enterprises will benefit from this position.

Support: Office space, computer, printer, cellphone, supplies, and travel will be provided by San Bernardino County. Area travel into Riverside County, Los Angeles County, and Orange Counties will be reimbursed by those respective counties and SCREC.

Other support: External funding is being provided to hire a Community Educator position in support of the position who will be responsible for ensuring that the UC continuum extends to the general public through Master Gardeners. Other position support includes the Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner, the statewide Master Gardener program, Mr. G. Kawamura, the former Secretary of Ag for California in his role as Chairman for Solutions for Urban Ag, and several grower and community organizations too numerous to list.

Location: The UCCE San Bernardino County office will serve as the position headquarters due to available office space, position need, travel support, and financial support from the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District as described above. San Bernardino is proximal to UCR (15 miles) and as close to SCREC as the LA office (50 miles) with a lower cost of living than either Orange or Los Angeles County.

Developed and proposed by: Janet Hartin and Christopher McDonald (County Co-Directors, San Bernardino County), Darren Haver (County Director and SCREC Director, Orange County), Etaferahu Takele (County Director and Ag Economics Advisor, Riverside County), Keith Nathaniel (County Director, Los Angeles County), and Rachel Surls (Sustainable Food Systems Advisor, Los Angeles County).