

## **2026 UC ANR Cooperative Extension Position Advisor**

**Developed and proposed by:** Rita Clemons, Area Director, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange Counties; Carrie Teiken, UC SAREP Associate Director for Small Farms; Ruth Dahlquist-Willard, UC SAREP Interim Director. Supported by Sonja Brodt, Program Team Leader, Agroecology, Organic, and Regenerative Agriculture, and Mandy Parkes, District Manager, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District.

**Position title:** UC Small Farms and Specialty Crop Advisor: Riverside/ San Bernardino (UCCE Advisor)

**Headquarter location and coverage area:** UCCE building in Riverside. The position's primary clientele includes historically underrepresented, small-scale family farmers in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

**Position overview:** The Advisor will develop and conduct a research and extension program providing outreach, training, and technical assistance for production and marketing of small-acreage specialty crops in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The Advisor will support small-scale, diversified, and socially disadvantaged growers with problem solving, field consultations, technical assistance, and applied research with the goals of addressing small farm challenges including production, marketing, and regulatory compliance. Research that supports evidence-based policy and management decisions will focus on crop nutrition, organic farming, integrated pest management, and sustainable irrigation and soil health, in collaboration with other farm advisors, Specialists, and industry representatives.

A minimum of a Masters degree is required, though other advanced degrees are encouraged, in plant or crop science, plant physiology, plant pathology, entomology, soil science, agricultural economics, agronomy, horticulture, or a related discipline in the agricultural sciences.

The position will serve under the administrative guidance of the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) County Director based in Riverside County, and the UC SAREP Associate Director for Small Farms based in Davis will serve as a secondary supervisor to ensure the work is closely aligned with the Small Farms Network collaborative goals.

**Justification:** Small-scale farms in the Inland Empire produce diverse, culturally important crops that are often not addressed by traditional extension programs. The clientele includes more than 320 underserved farmers, including Latino/a/x, Korean, Lao, Cambodian, and Egyptian producers, many operating diversified and niche cropping systems, including about 50 organic farms.

There is a critical and immediate need for targeted, science-based extension and applied research tailored to these small-scale, diversified systems. Current programs are largely designed for large-scale commodity agriculture and do not reflect the limited land, labor, and capital resources of these farms. As a result, growers lack timely, locally relevant research and bilingual technical assistance needed to adopt improved practices, meet regulatory requirements, access incentive

programs, and remain economically viable. These gaps limit the ability of small farms to adapt, innovate, and sustain long-term productivity and viability.

The current Small Farms Advisor position has been funded entirely through annually renewed grants for the past four years, with current funding expiring in 2027. Without permanent funding this important program supporting small-scale farms in Riverside and San Bernardino counties will end.

**Outcomes/Impact:** This position will contribute to UC ANR's public values of **developing an inclusive and equitable society, promoting economic prosperity in California, and advancing environmental sustainability**, with the following expected condition changes: *increased community disaster preparedness and resilience to extreme weather and change in climate; increased equitable access to resources; improved food and nutrition security, food sovereignty, and access to culturally relevant foods; enhanced food systems and markets; improved workforce development for individuals, communities, and industry; improved individual and household financial stability; enhanced community and economic development; increased ecological sustainability of agriculture, working landscapes, and natural ecosystems; improved soil health and productivity; improved water use efficiency and water supply security; increased agriculture and food system resilience to extreme weather and change in climate.* In 20 years, success will look like a thriving and economically viable agricultural sector in the Inland Empire that includes a diverse mix of small-scale farms that remain profitable, support environmental stewardship, enrich cultural food systems, and improve the quality of life for both producers and consumers.

**Extension:** The UC Small Farms and Specialty Crop Advisor will develop extension programming to support small-scale specialty crop farmers in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Outreach of science-based research results and educational information will include individual consultations, presentations at grower, agency, and industry meetings, workshops, short courses, and field demonstrations, in areas such as soil health, irrigation efficiency, pest and disease management, organic systems, crop nutrition, and varietal performance. Dissemination methods will include collaborations with external partners, publications and newsletters in UC ANR and peer-reviewed journals, public comments and policy papers, technical reports to public agencies, and use of contemporary and emerging electronic tools (such as online learning, web content systems and repositories, and social media), along with specialized and public media outlets. Bilingual outreach in Korean, Spanish, and other relevant languages is a key component of this position, with language support provided by bilingual staff. Additionally, the Advisor will communicate findings to growers, policymakers, and stakeholders, representing the organization in professional and public forums.

**Research:** Small-scale and underserved farmers in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties often operate with limited resources, and their economic viability can be constrained by regulatory requirements and incentive programs that are not well aligned with the needs of smaller or

diversified farming operations. To address these needs, the Small Farms and Specialty Crop Advisor will develop and implement an applied research program that addresses current and emerging issues in production, economics, and policy. The applied research program will be guided by a stakeholder needs assessment and build upon ongoing projects. Research collaborations may include partnerships with campus and county-based colleagues, community organizations, public agencies, growers, and other partners. Field research activities may be conducted on private farms.

**UC ANR network:** The position ranked #1 on the Agroecology, Organic, and Regenerative Agriculture Program Team (AOR PT) and aligns with the priorities of the AOR PT by addressing equitable access to extension resources for conservation, agroecological and sustainable farming practices, related to diversified and niche crop systems. The position will be housed within the UC SAREP Small Farms Network and will complement existing UC ANR expertise in organic agriculture, irrigation, pest management, soils, and specialty crop production. The position is expected to collaborate with the UC SAREP Small Farms Network, in addition to other UCCE Advisors in San Diego, Imperial, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. This position addresses a key gap in extension services for small-scale, diversified, beginning, and socially disadvantaged farmers in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Existing programs primarily serve large-scale commodity producers and often do not meet the needs of farms with limited land, labor, and capital, leaving many small farmers without locally relevant research, bilingual support, or tailored, science-based recommendations. This role fills that gap through applied research, on-farm demonstrations, and culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach focused on specialty crops and small-farm viability.

**Network external to UC ANR:** The position will collaborate and interact with government agencies (e.g., USDA ARS, CDFR), non-profit technical service providers and community groups (e.g. Resource Conservation Districts, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, California Farmlink, Kitchen Table Advisors, etc.).

**Support: Transportation** - small mileage allotment from Riverside County; **Office space** - dedicated office space and small lab at Riverside location; **Supplies and equipment** - funds available for supplies and equipment through County Director General Fund based upon needed if no funding is available through program; **Research costs** – funds available through local and statewide grants, as well as UC SAREP.

**Other support:** The Advisor will be expected to secure federal and state funding (e.g., NSF, USDA, EPA, CDFR, CDPR, WSARE) and support from foundation opportunities related to small and underserved farmers. The position will compete for grants in state, federal, and private programs, with on- and off-campus colleagues as appropriate and is also be expected to compete for research funds available from UC ANR.

