



Spotlight on Tuolumne County

UCANR Mission Statement

Our mission is to engage with the people of California to achieve innovation in fundamental and applied research and education that supports:

- sustainable, safe, and nutritious food production and delivery
- economic success in a global economy
- a sustainable, healthy, and productive environment
- science literacy and youth development programs

University of California Cooperative Extension

University of California's Cooperative Extension offices are problem-solving centers—the bridge between local issues and UC research. Our county-based staff is part of the community – we live and work in the areas we serve. We are stewards, problem-solvers, catalysts, collaborators, and educators.

The **UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) of the Central Sierra** provides science-based information and educational programs to solve local issues in areas of agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, and youth development that improve social, economic, and environmental quality for all residents of Tuolumne County.

We are grateful for the community participation, partnerships, and support of our programs and activities that made 2024-2025 a success. On behalf of our entire team, we are pleased to share our Annual Spotlight with you.

4-H in Tuolumne County

Tuolumne County 4-H served 176 youth through organized community club programming, providing consistent opportunities for leadership development, hands-on learning, and positive youth–adult partnerships. While programming during this period was concentrated within the club delivery model, youth benefited from ongoing engagement in projects, meetings, and leadership experiences that supported confidence-building, life skills development, and community connection across the county.

UCCE Tuolumne County By The Numbers 2024-2025

2,781
Public
education
interactions

9,468
Volunteers
Hours

120
Academic-led
workshops
and classes

Forest Stewardship

The Forest Stewardship Education Initiative hosted a 9-week workshop series for fifteen forest landowners and managers from Tuolumne and surrounding counties to empower them to actively manage their forestland, increase the resiliency and health of their forests, and help them meet their ecological and economic management goals. The workshop series addresses management objectives and planning, forest restoration, fuels reduction, project development, permitting, and cost-share opportunities. Active forest management helps to protect California's natural resources and utilizes current scientific methods. Three participants, who manage 70 forested acres in Tuolumne County, engaged with a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) for their free initial site visit provided by the program. With assistance from the RPFs, participants have contacted natural resources agencies and organizations to apply for cost-share funding to conduct management activities, received advice on herbicide application for invasive weeds, and created Avenza resources maps, all activities which will help them better manage their forestland. Post-workshop evaluations report that as a result of the workshop series, 100% of participants have a better idea of how to develop a forest management plan.



Forest Stewardship: Tuolumne Cohort field day in Twain Harte.

UC Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County

Through monthly presentations at the **Demonstration Garden**, the program has driven significant behavioral changes in residents:

- **100%** spend more time outdoors.
- **92%** are growing a wider variety and larger volume of edible plants.
- **90%** have successfully reduced food loss.
- **25%** have increased food donations to local community programs.

The program ensures science-based gardening advice is accessible to all via:

Direct Support: Staffing a local **Garden Hotline** and hosting information tables at the **Sonora Farmer's Market** and **Nature's Whole Food Depot**.

Mass Media: Producing the weekly "**Over the Garden Gate**" radio show (8 years running) and contributing weekly columns to the **Union Democrat** and **MyMotherLode.com**.

Affordability: Hosting a seasonal plant sale featuring affordable vegetable starts for the public.

Volunteers invest in the future of the county by providing garden education at:

Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Facility
Bellview Elementary & Cassina Alternative High School

Community Landmarks: Ongoing maintenance of the **Tuolumne County Fair Triangle Garden**.

UC Master Food Preservers

Master Food Preserver classes utilize trained volunteers to educate the community on safe and sustainable food practices. According to research found in the National Library of Medicine, poor nutrition can affect mood, anxiety and depression. In May of 2025 10 adult participants from the Tuolumne chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness attended a food preservation demonstration by UC Master Food Preservers. The attendees reported feeling increased confidence around preserving food using cold methods. They also expressed appreciation for the healthy recipes provided, stating they "will use that recipe often." Master Food Preserver educational outreach helps increase the resources available to people so they can grow their knowledge and skills related to healthy eating.

The Biomass Workshop Series — the first ANR-organized series focused exclusively on biomass and forest products — took place in the Central Sierra and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from community members

Spanning over five months, the series combined lectures with field days to share the latest research findings while allowing residents to connect directly with local bioenergy and wood-products businesses and to see emerging technologies in action. On average, 15 people attended each event.

In June, 17 participants went on a field day to Tuolumne Biomass and Jamestown Energy. A total of three lectures and three field days were organized for Central Sierra communities, plus one additional Biochar Symposium.

Post-event survey indicated that all participants improved their knowledge in biomass utilization and rated the events as "Excellent" or "Very Good".

Participants reported gaining practical knowledge they could apply in their own work and communities. Additional workshops are planned for the coming year and will expand into more counties and regions across California to strengthen community resilience and bioeconomy development.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Food and Nutrition

CalFresh Healthy Living educators lead nutrition lessons at Dario Cassina High School and Twain Harte, Columbia, Summerville, and Curtis Creek Elementary Schools. Elementary students received physical activity, cooking and garden lessons. Adults at the ATCAA Housing Shelter and Tuolumne County Enrichment Center received nutrition information and cooking lessons. Educators partnered with Infant Child Enrichment Services (ICES) to train home childcare providers in nutrition topics, update Wellness Policy, reinvigorate the on-site garden, host garden workshops, and train local school staff in garden and nutrition topics.

Community Nutrition and Health Advisor research priorities include: mental and emotional wellbeing, food waste, nutrition security, Indigenous health, and youth empowerment.



Farm Consultations

Our Local Food Systems Advisor provided **21 one-on-one consultations** to new and existing farmers on farm startup, crop nutrition, orchard establishment, irrigation scheduling, weed management, pest issues, and cultivar selection. Following these consultations, **8 growers (38%)** intended to adopt recommended practices related to orchard establishment, new farm planning, cultivar selection, irrigation, and weed management.

Additionally, **2 wine grape growers (10%)** adopted UC IPM guidelines for powdery mildew, red blotch, and leafhopper management, and **1 vegetable producer (5%)** adopted UC IPM practices for nematode management. These actions improved producer knowledge, supported informed decision-making, and enhanced on-farm problem solving. This contributes to increasing economic prosperity, improving water and land resource stewardship, and strengthening agricultural sustainability in the Central Sierra.

Integrated Pest Management

The UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Advisor had over 30 one-on-one consultations with growers in the region, 35% of which indicated they would implement or change a pest management strategy. These consultations included vineyards, olive orchards, Christmas tree farms, stone fruit orchards, and others.

A viticulture event, “Grape Day in the Foothills,” reached 46 participants throughout the region, with 86% reported learning something and 66% indicating they planned to implement new practices.

A webinar and field day were held for information on the invasive Mediterranean Oak Borer. 23 individuals participated in the in-person field day with all participants indicating they learned something new and planned to use that knowledge in their work.

UCCE Tuolumne Financial Breakdown

