UC CE | UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Agriculture and Natural Resources | UC Cooperative Extension

Spotlight on Calaveras County

UC CE CENTRAL SIERRA

CALAVERAS 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:

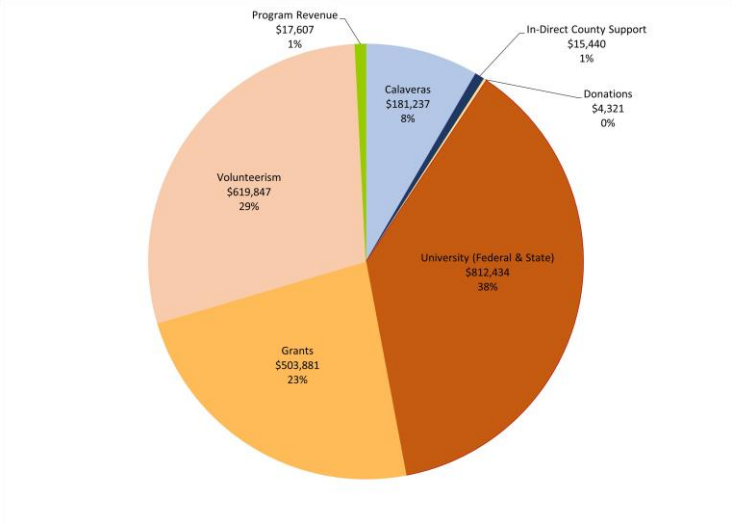
- sustainable, safe, and nutritious food production and delivery
- economic success in a global economy
- a sustainable, healthy, and productive environment
- science literacy and youth development programs

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 Calaveras Couty.

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.



UCCE Calaveras County By The Numbers: 2024-2025

3,864 Public education interactions

16,522 Volunteer Hours

120 Academic-led workshops and classes

Pest Management in Calaveras County

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.

The IPM Advisor presented to local Calaveras Wine Grape Alliance Growers Meeting on "Integrated Pest Management of Common Vineyard Pests," with 100% of participants indicated they learned something and 75% indicating they will implement new practices.

Vineyard displaying potential salinity and disease issues.
Taken by MacKenzie Patton during a field call Calaveras County.

4-H Youth Development

Calaveras County 4-H served 280 youth through organized community club programming, providing ongoing opportunities for leadership development, hands-on learning, and positive youth–adult partnerships. In addition, 566 youth participated in school enrichment programs and 110 youth engaged in after-school programs using 4-H curriculum, expanding access to educational and developmental opportunities beyond traditional club settings.

4-H programming reached 958 youth, supporting skill development, academic enrichment, and meaningful community connections throughout Calaveras County.

958 Youth reached in Calaveras County

Master Gardeners

The Calaveras Master Gardener program utilizes expert volunteer labor to foster sustainable gardening practices, food security, and youth education throughout the county.

Volunteer Force: **70** active Master Gardeners.
Community Contribution: **5,380** total volunteer hours.
Educational Impact**: 9** public events held, resulting in significant sustainable behavior changes:

- 100% of attendees now select low-water-use plants.
  - 20% have increased water conservation efforts.
  - 20% began capturing rainwater or using reclaimed water.

UC Master Food Preservers

The Master Food Preserver Program of Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties served over 1,200 people between June 2024-July 2025. A total of 11 in-person public education classes, 7 online classes and 3 hands on “Make and Take” classes were hosted over the course of the year. There are a total of 26 active UC Master Food Preservers representing all 3 counties. Master Food Preservers attended 15 outreach events including the Kids in the Garden event at the Master Gardeners of Calaveras Demonstration Garden and the Calaveras County Fair.

During a time when food prices are climbing, respondents who attended Master Food Preserver classes reported feeling more confident and better prepared to preserve common foods and reduce food waste. By providing food safety and preservation education, this program helps the community better manage household meal planning.

Small Farms/Urban Agriculture

Our Farm Advisor, Hardeep Singh 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.

Picture of walnut nuts and leaves affected by black sooty mold at an orchard in Ione.

Picture of a moringa seedling being planted at the San Andreas demonstration garden.

CalFresh HEALTHY LIVING

1,844 Participants reached

Food and Nutrition

CFHL educators trained 11 Calaveras High School students to lead physical activity lessons and healthy snack tastings with younger students at San Andreas and Valley Springs Elementary Schools. Teens took 3 field trips to neighboring elementary schools, teaching and modelling healthy living behaviors to nearly 550 students. This program builds youth leadership abilities, improves opportunities for healthy living, and enables teenagers to be positive change-makers in their communities.

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

The WeedCut Decision Support Tool for Invasive Plant Management

Invasive Plant Management

California has over 1,800 non-native plant species, many of which are invasive in natural ecosystems. Invasive plants displace desirable plants, reduce biodiversity, reduce rangeland forage quality, can be injurious to livestock, and cause economic losses to agriculture. Proper management depends on several factors and can be difficult for land management professionals.

WeedCut Tool

The WeedCut tool is an online decision support tool that helps land managers choose the best methods (chemical and non-chemical) for invasive plant control by inputting weed species and site conditions, offering guidance from expert-backed Best Management Practices for specific situations, improving integrated weed management for better outcomes. Developed by a team of academics across the state, including Farm Advisor Oneto, the tool has information on 18 herbicides commonly used by wildland weed managers and users can filter effective tools by selecting any of 293 species.

The Impact

WeedCut empowers land managers to make **smarter, more targeted decisions** in invasive plant management. Its implementation enhances both the efficiency and ecological sustainability of weed control programs. Since the release the site been used over ***240,000 times***!

"As a new county inspector for the Department of Agriculture, this tool has made it so much easier to onboard and learn about weed control", — Agricultural Inspector.

Weed eater being used in the Central Sierra.

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 giving residents an opportunity 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 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

Livestock in a Post-Fire Landscape

The Issue: Expanding the Use of Prescribed Grazing for Fuel-Load Reduction

Prescribed livestock grazing – the planned management of livestock to achieve resource goals – offers a cost-effective, landscape-level tool for fuels management and post-fire recovery throughout the Central Sierra region. UCCE is addressing policy and resource planning questions, research needs, and producer education to expand the use of this tool.

What UCCE Central Sierra is doing...

UCCE Central Sierra Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor Dan Macon co-led the development of a policy brief outlining strategies for expanding prescribed grazing for wildfire resilience across California. These policy recommendations will be incorporated into the 2026 update of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan. Macon presented this information to policymakers, ranchers, and researchers at the 2025 Rustici Rangeland Science Symposium at UC Davis. UCCE is leading research into the effects of grazing in post-fire silvicultural management. Research in the 2022 Mosquito Fire burn scar at the UC Blodgett Experimental Forest is helping develop new management strategies for controlling brush and re-establishing conifers in post-fire landscapes.