

Spotlight on El Dorado County 2024 -2025

UC ANR Mission

UC ANR cultivates thriving communities, sustainable agriculture, resilient ecosystems, and economic prosperity in California through development and sharing of equitable and collaborative science-based solutions that have national and global impact.

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 El Dorado 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.



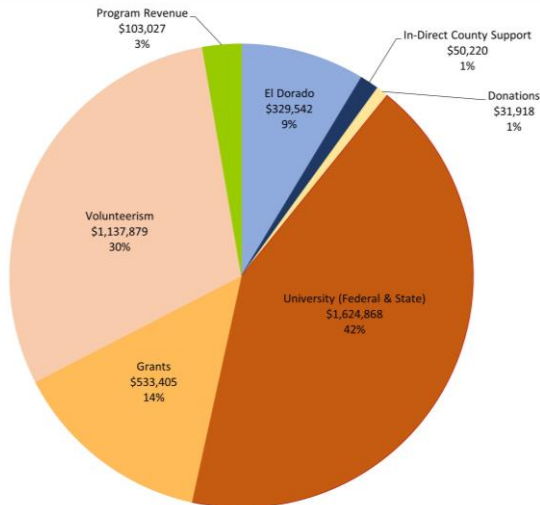
Increasing agricultural efficiency & profitability



A member of the team uses a weed-eater to mechanically control invasive weeds.

To facilitate proper **management of invasive plant species** that displace desirable plants, reduce biodiversity, reduce rangeland forage quality, can be injurious to livestock, and cause economic losses to agriculture, **UCCE Farm Advisor (Oneto)** worked with a research team to develop WeedCut, a tool that has information on 18 herbicides commonly used by wildland weed managers and allows users to filter effective tools by selecting any of 293 species.

“Best comprehensive website for land managers to examine weed control strategies” — Field technician



Increasing ecological sustainability of agriculture



(Left) Damage caused to unripe olives from Olive Fruit Fly in El Dorado County. (Right) Up close image of an Olive fruit fly (*Bactrocera oleae*) collected in El Dorado County.

The **UCCE Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Advisor (Patton)** and **Local Food Systems Advisor (Singh)** had over 50 **one-on-one consultations** with growers in the region, nearly 40% of which indicated they would implement recommended strategies related to pest management, orchard establishment, farm planning, cultivar selection, and irrigation.

UC IPM guidelines were adopted by 10% of wine grape growers for powdery mildew, red blotch, and leafhopper management, and 5% of the vegetable producers visited adopted UC IPM practices for nematode management. Site visits 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.

To support the foothill wine grape industry, UCCE Advisors (Singh, Patton) hosted a **Foothill Grape Day** addressing emerging insect pest management challenges. Providing growers with research-based strategies for managing key pests affecting grape yield, quality, and vineyard longevity, a post-workshop evaluation showed that 86% learned something new and 66% intended to implement the knowledge gained.

Additionally, 100% said they would recommend the workshop, indicating strong value and relevance to the grower community. This work contributes to improving producer knowledge, encouraging adoption of IPM practices, and supporting the long-term viability and sustainability of foothill viticulture.



100%
Would recommend the workshop

66%
intend to implement the knowledge gained

Improving Water Use Efficiency

An **on-farm irrigation research trial** launched by UCCE Advisor (Singh) in collaboration with UC Davis, compared irrigation regimes under foothill conditions. Preliminary data from year one showed approx. 35,000 gallons of water were saved, demonstrating the potential for **significant resource conservation**. This work promotes water use efficiency, improving grower knowledge and decision-making, and delivers economic and environmental benefits to foothill agricultural producers.

UCCE El Dorado County by the numbers

- 13 academics assigned to the county
- 16 activities bringing research to policy
- 120 academic-led workshops, field days, and classes
- 11 news media program mentions
- 9,778 educational interactions with the public

590
Participants
of academic
-led
activities

Cultivating teen leaders and educating students

El Dorado County 4-H served 343 youth and 74 adult volunteers through year-round club programming that included camp, leadership development, presentations, and officer training. In addition, 133 youth participated in Farm Day through hands-on agricultural education.



Youth developed leadership, communication, teamwork, and practical life skills, while adult volunteers strengthened their capacity to mentor and support youth learning. Together, these programs **expanded access to high-quality youth development and agricultural literacy** across El Dorado County.

Building Community Partnerships

UCCE IPM Advisor (Patton) engaged with El Dorado County Agricultural Commission to train UC Master Gardener volunteers to identify the invasive Glassy winged sharpshooter, resulting in **increased monitoring of Glassy-winged Sharpshooter outbreaks** and 21 additional monitoring locations in El Dorado County, supporting healthy, sustained agriculture in the county.



Promoting Healthy Communities

School garden tours provide hands-on learning to youth in El Dorado County. UC Master Gardener volunteers engaged over 4,000 members of the community with garden and horticulture related outreach events, over 1,200 in classes, **increasing outdoor activity levels and increasing home food gardens.**

73% Reported starting to grow edible plants in their garden after a class.

Improving Food Safety

UC Master Food Preservers in El Dorado County connected with hundreds of seniors as partners of the El Dorado County food bank to distribute food safety materials, **helping to secure food access and food security as well as teach about the safe handling of food.**



19
Site visits

14
Prescribed burn events

279
Residents engaged



Improved Food Security

The CalFresh Healthy Living program partnered with Food Service Directors at three El Dorado County School Districts to improve healthy eating behaviors in school cafeterias and **develop procurement systems** for local and school-grown produce.



CalFresh Healthy Living staff partnered with New Morning Youth and Family Services to teach 36 cooking and nutrition lessons to 40 at-risk youth in FFY25. These lessons build practical skills among the county's most food-insecure residents by **teaching youth with unstable home lives to independently cook healthy** and delicious meals. Recipes utilized foods available at local food banks, ensuring residents incorporate commodities into their everyday eating habits. Additionally, CFHL installed irrigation in the Ashby House garden, provided seeds and hand tools, and led twice weekly garden lessons with residents.

"Nos favorece para conocer cuales son los mejores alimentos, sus nutrientes y como consumirlo." (It helps us to know which are the best foods, their nutrients and how to consume them.)

Helping to build resilience to wildfire

The El Dorado / Amador Prescribed Burn Association (EAPBA) continued to work with landowners in El Dorado and Amador Counties to help them **implement prescribed burns** on their own properties.

UCCE Forestry Advisor (Kocher) hosted two Learn-to-Burn workshops and conducted 19 site visits to provide technical assistance to landowners and helped them write six burn plans. We engaged 279 people at burn events, tabling and workshops. Our monthly newsletter with information on how to prepare for and conduct prescribed burns reaches 470 subscribers.

With our assistance, EAPBA members hosted 14 burn events and burned 43 acres this year, 37 with broadcast burning and 6 with pile burning

The PBA has helped establish prescribed burning as an accessible land management tool in the counties and led to improved land stewardship and increased ecological sustainability of working landscapes and natural ecosystems.

In collaboration with El Dorado County, UCCE Advisor (Chen) hosted the Biochar Symposium – lecture and **on-site biochar kiln demos** reaching residents and local industry leaders. Biochar kilns reduce biomass and removes fire fuel threats with less smoke and ash than pile burning.



EAPBA burn event in El Dorado County. Photo credit: Susie Kocher, used with permission

