

# Farm Smart Program

## 2023-2024

University of California | Desert Research and Extension Center



Farm Smart celebrates 200,000 participants since the program started in 2001

Since 1912, The Desert Research and Extension Center (DREC) has been at the forefront of California's agricultural innovation. Our Farm Smart program, established in 2001, is a cornerstone of our mission to educate the public about agriculture, natural resources, and environmental stewardship. Thanks to the unwavering support of our community and generous donors, we've reached an incredible milestone of 200,000 participants. Together, we're planting seeds of knowledge and fostering a deeper understanding of the source of our food, fiber, and energy, and their impact on our lives. Here's to many more years of cultivating agricultural literacy and healthy communities!

**12,130**  
total Farm Smart participants



Farm Smart hosted the 2024 Food and Ag Summer Learning Program in collaboration with the USDA & Imperial Valley College. This program offered 10 community college students a paid opportunity to explore different Agri-STEM careers in the Imperial Valley.



Farm Smart's intern student participates in USDA Carrot Field Day led by Dr. Phil Simon at Desert REC to gain knowledge to use during her carrot outreach programs



The USDA Farm to School Initiative implemented at Farm Smart has allowed us to provide hands-on learning opportunities for over 40 educators as well as offer a new curriculum year-round to 4th through 6th grade students.



**5,413** participants in offsite community activities and presentations

**6,717** participants in onsite K-12 field trips, career workshops and DREC events

**Workforce Development**  
**18** Paid\* Internships Provided  
**300+** Volunteers



1,369 participants attended the 6th Annual Farm-to-Preschool Festival, learning about food literacy, nutrition, hands-on activities, and harvesting fresh produce!

### Imperial County's 6th Annual Read with a Farmer



Local Ag Industry members brought the joy of reading to 35 third-grade classrooms and public libraries across the Imperial Valley, sharing an Ag literate book with 800 students!

*"Our mission was to nurture an awareness about natural renewable resources including agriculture so they can be conserved, managed, and available for future generations. It has been fun to watch Farm Smart continue with fresh new ideas and I hope it continues for many years."*

- Nancy Caywood, Founder of the Farm Smart Program



Farm Smart's U-Pick events provided fresh produce at no cost to 547 local community members

#### Our Partners:



#### UC ANR DREC

Director: Jairo Diaz  
Farm Smart Educators: Clarissa Abarca and Valeria Landeros

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