

FARM DAY DRAWS CROWDS TO HANSEN REC

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The UC Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center (Hansen REC) was proud to once again participate in Ventura County Farm Day, organized by SEEAG (Students for Eco-Education and Agriculture).

Our gates opened at 10 a.m. on Saturday, November 5th, and visitors of all ages were greeted by UC staff and volunteers. Maps were handed out to each group and visitors began their self-guided walking tour of the Center, ready to enjoy all the fun and educational activities provided by the UC. The weather could not have been more perfect.

The first stop was Ventura County's Top Ten Crops, a small plot featuring the ten highest-value crops in Ventura County.

Blackberries were the newest crop to join the list this year! The next stop was a drip irrigation installation demonstration presented by knowledgeable Master Gardeners.

The Master Gardeners provided the bulk of the activities for the day inside the immaculate demonstration gardens. There was truly an activity for all ages to enjoy, from a scavenger hunt and plant-a-seed to composting and tree pruning demonstrations and so much more. The Master gardeners offered a total of 10 free activities and a paid hands-on workshop where participants learned to decorate a pumpkin centerpiece with succulents.

A honeybee exhibit was also a popular attraction for all ages. Visitors were able to see the bees and their queen in an observation hive presented by T&A Farms. Visitors could also observe some of the research trials at the heart of the mission of Hansen REC: cover crops, apple tree pruning, climate ready landscape trees, and a special experimental planting of chia.

In the 4-H area, youth and adults alike were able to learn about 4-H and enjoyed hands-on activities, such as a felting craft and an interactive cow milking booth. Visitors seemed to be most impressed by the solar cooking exhibit, demonstrating how you can harness the power of the sun to cook a meal!

The last stop was a U-Pick activity aimed at children age 12 & under. The highlight for many was watching the little ones pick their own snap peas, pumpkins, and herbs. Helping children understand where their food comes from is an important step in their development.

Approximately 250 visitors entered through the gates of HAREC on November 5th. Many departed with goodies but all walked out with a little more knowledge of the importance of agriculture and sustainability. Also, a huge thank you to the many Master Gardener and 4-H Volunteers and UC Staff who made the 10th Ventura County Farm Day a resounding success!

