



May 26, 2015

Dear fellow advisors,

I am an area-wide IPM advisor stationed at Kearney focusing on arthropod pests of almond, pistachio, walnut, stone fruit, and grape. At this time, there are approximately 800,000 and 400,000 acres of almond and pistachio respectively, so currently those two big crops account for the lion's share of my work. As I sit here this morning, I am curious how the crop landscape of the San Joaquin Valley will have changed by the time you read this letter.

For advisors current and future, challenges in agriculture have not and will not cease. And what is too often the case, those challenges are similar to ones past advisors faced. There are many (challenges) that my predecessor, Walt Bentley, faced that I must tackle still today. I will, for the sake of time, briefly mention only one that is on the fore of my mind. Almond and pistachio growers over the past few years have experienced a time of growth and prosperity. This however has come at a price to IPM practices; a valuable crop along with inexpensive insecticides has all but eliminated IPM programs. Growers and pest control advisors are reluctant to adopt new IPM practices until they are well proven. With such a valuable crop, there is no tolerance for sustaining damage, or even what might be perceived as damage e.g. spider mite injury. I am curious, do you face the same challenge? And if not how were growers moved back to IPM – the carrot or the stick?

I have worked in my position for approximately 18 months. When I interviewed, UC Cooperative Extension had nearly reached its 100th birthday. During my interview, I looked in the eyes of the interviewers and said, "UCCE is nearly 100-years-old, I look back on the outstanding contribution that Cooperative Extension has made. Challenges exist today and in the future; I want to be part this organization and contribute to the problem-solving that has made UC Cooperative Extension so outstanding."

I hope you all feel the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kris Tollerup'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping underline.

Kris Tollerup, Ph.D.