

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Ask Laura Newsletter Column
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Q: I hear that UC Cooperative Extension Santa Cruz County, like the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, is celebrating its 100 year anniversary this year. But didn't you just have your 100 year anniversary?

A: Yes, you are correct in that, as a state, UC Cooperative Extension celebrated its 100 year anniversary in 2014. But in Santa Cruz County, UC Cooperative Extension is 100 years old this year, which coincides with Farm Bureau's 100th year too!

Perhaps some background would be helpful. Although our organization's roots go all the way back to the federal Morrill Act of 1862 (a May 2014 Farm Bureau newsletter column discusses the history more fully), the establishment of a County Cooperative Extension office depended on a few additional actions. First, there needed to be federal support through the USDA, and state support through the state's land grant college—in our case, the University of California. Perhaps most importantly, there needed to be local support from county government *and* a locally formed Farm Bureau. Humboldt County blazed the trail in 1913. For Santa Cruz County, all of the pieces fell into place in 1917, when both the local Farm Bureau was formed *and* the UC Cooperative Extension was established.

Henry Washburn was Santa Cruz County's first "farm adviser" (now spelled farm advisor), having been appointed in 1917. Excerpts from *The County Farm Adviser* (University of California Circular No 133, July 1915) best characterize both the job and the responsibilities at that time: "A farm adviser is a man trained in agriculture, usually a graduate of an agricultural college, who has had some practical experience in the broad phases of agriculture and who is conversant with the particular problems that concern the locality..... The work of the farm adviser may be divided into four general branches.

1. Advisory work with inquirers.
2. Organization work of the civilizing forces of the community.
3. Investigation into the larger problems of farm management.
4. Demonstration of these principles and practices through the co-operation of interested farmers."

While the advisory work, demonstrations, and larger problems of farm management included topics such as "soil treatment, crop culture, and the increase of net returns to the farmer", one may ponder what the "organization work of the civilizing forces of the community" meant in 1917. Two examples given are providing assistance to boys' agricultural clubs and schools.

Interestingly, much of the essence of the "four general branches" of a farm advisor's job and responsibilities in 1917 still holds true in 2017. Notably, though, at least one thing has changed. Women now figure more prominently in the mix, as farmers, farm advisors, and in youth focused clubs! The programs and services of UC Cooperative Extension have also evolved over time to meet the challenges associated with the "particular problems" of the locality—challenges one would not have imagined 100 years ago. One thing has not changed, though, and that is the focus of our work: to provide practical, trusted, and research-based information to the members of Farm Bureau and the agricultural and local community.