

Position Title: Urban Agriculture, Food Systems & Environmental Issues Advisor (UA/FS/EIA): San Diego County

Position Description: The Urban Agriculture and Food Systems Advisor (UA/FS/EIA) position will conduct an applied research and extension program to meet the technical information needs of policy and decision makers, non-profit and community-based organizations, urban food producers and farmers, and professional clientele in agricultural and food systems related organizations and industries in San Diego County. The CE advisor will be a liaison between UCCE and all stakeholders in the emerging and rapidly growing urban agriculture and food production systems in the county. The UA/FS/EIA advisor has the potential to impact policy and decision making at many levels by using ANR resources to develop research-based information that will help lead and address issues impacting urban agriculture, food systems, food policy, food security, and food distribution issues to support local farmers and help sustain agriculture in the county. The ability to build partnerships, work with multidisciplinary teams to address the social, economic, and environmental challenges of urban agriculture and food systems is paramount.

Justification: San Diego County has one of the most diverse agricultural and food systems in the US in terms of food crops grown, number of farms and the demographics of county residents. San Diego also has the largest number of small farms (over 5,500), the most organic farmers (over 350 registered growers), the most certified farmer's markets (over 35), strong farm to fork movement, and one of the largest institutional food buyers in the region (over \$22.2 million annually). However, our agricultural and food systems are inefficient with only a small percentage of food produced being consumed locally, resulting in over 20% food losses. . Numerous organizations and policy makers are addressing food production, processing, distribution, and security issues in San Diego County but many of these local networks lack information, guidance and coordination needed. Hence, there is a clear need for research-based information to inform cities and county decision makers, and community organizations about how to promote efficient and successful production and distribution of food, create linkages between local farmers and urban consumers, and craft agriculture and food security policies that support these goals to sustain local farmers.

San Diego County is uniquely positioned to address food systems challenges through collective and deliberate action. The UA/FS/EIA advisor fills a critical need and represents a unique opportunity to connect and foster communication between UC, community-based and non-government organizations, urban planners, regulatory agencies, urban and peri-urban growers, farmers support and education networks, and underserved communities to develop and implement policies and programs that ensure the sustainability of agriculture and the production and access to healthy food. The CE advisor will also provide academic and administrative oversight for the UC Master Gardener Program in San Diego County which is one of the largest and most active in the state. The rapidly increasing Urban Agriculture and Food Systems will provide the advisor an excellent research opportunity and collaboration with other academics to support and increase the impacts of UC ANR Strategic Initiatives: The Sustainable Food Systems Initiative, and Healthy Families and Communities Initiative.

Research: Potential areas of research could include, but are not limited to, issues and impacts of urban agriculture, food production and distribution in urban counties, agricultural markets distortions and inefficiencies, food hub related issues, market development and promotion for imperfect produce, issues related to food waste, food distribution systems for underserved populations, policy development and operational issues for local food systems initiatives, cost and benefit analysis for farmer participation in local food systems, and addressing nutritional of immigrant and established residents of San Diego County. Research in the food systems arena can be published in California Agriculture; Journal of Extension; Western Association of Agricultural Economics (WAEA) Journal; Journal of Urban Health; Environmental Planning and Agriculture and Human Values; American Journal of Public Health; Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior; Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development; local periodicals and many others.

Extension: The UA/FS/EIA will provide research and education opportunities in the development and maintenance of an equitable, sustainable, and healthy food system in San Diego County. Extension of information will be extensive due to the many stakeholders in this arena. In addition to existing email distribution lists, the internet (web pages) and all forms of social media will be used to disseminate research results and information. Furthermore, partnering with CBO, NGO, Agency or food system initiative represents opportunities to further the reach of our efforts by acting as clearinghouses to disseminate information to constituents who participate in all aspects of local foods systems, including consumers, producers, processors, food banks, retailers, local decision-makers, and other stakeholders including those working on environmental sustainability, health, and food access.

ANR Network: Within the UCCE San Diego, advisor Ramiro Lobo covers agricultural/food production, marketing, food safety and ag tourism; advisor Gerardo (Gerry) Spinelli covers commercial horticulture, controlled environment agriculture and water quality; County Director Oli Bachie covers agronomy and row crops; Advisor Sonia Rios covers Avocado, Citrus and Sub-tropical crops; Advisor Carmen Gispert covers Viticulture; and Advisor Ali Montazar covers water and irrigation management. The UA/FS/EIA will be expected to collaborate with county and campus-based UC academics studying urban agriculture and food systems such as Advisors Julia Van Soelen-Kim in Marin County, Rachel Surls in Los Angeles, Lucy O Diekmann in Santa Clara; Alda Pires, Maurice Pitesky at the UC Davis Vet School; Elizabeth Mitchem at the UC Davis Post Harvest Center; Gail Feenstra at UC SAREP, Jennifer Sowerwine, at UC Berkeley Food Institute, Norm Ellstrand (AES) at UCR; UC Riverside's California Agriculture and Food Enterprise (CAFE), and in coordination with Katie Panarella collaborate with other Nutrition, Family and Consumer Science Advisors in California. The UA/FS/EIA advisor is expected to actively participate in relevant UCANR workgroups and program teams.

Network External to ANR: The FSA will be expected to collaborate with several local agencies, CBOs and NGOs including the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and local Resource Conservation Districts (Mission and Greater San Diego RCDs), California Alliance for Family Farms (CAFF), California Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), San Diego County Food Systems Alliance, County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health, and the County of San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures. Potential connections and collaboration opportunities may be available with the San Diego County Farm Bureau and other institutions.

Support: UCCE San Diego will be the home base for this position. The UCCE San Diego office has ample room for new advisors and ample support staff. UCCE San Diego office has a large conference room available for meetings. There are also several various-sized meeting spaces available at no cost on the County Operations Center, and the Farm Bureau in Escondido, CA. UCCE San Diego has a small number of university vehicles available for travel.

Other support: Competitive grants for Food Systems research and education can be found through federal and state Specialty Crop Block Grants, USDA-AMS Local Food Promotion and Farmer Market Promotion Program, Western Center for Management Education (WCRME) and USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). Financial and other support could be requested and secured through partnership and collaboration with local Community-based and Non-profit organizations such as the California Alliance for Family Farms (CAFF), California Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), San Diego County Food Systems Alliance, Leichtag Foundation, County of San Diego-Land Use Environment Group (LUEG) One Time Funding Opportunities, San Diego County Agriculture Weights and Measures, San Diego County Farm Bureau and from local producers.

Developed and proposed by: This position has been identified as a top priority and is being proposed by by UCCE San Diego staff and County Director ICD). The position was originally developed, revised, and proposed by former UCCE County Directors in collaboration with partner agencies and local CBOs and NGOS including the San Diego County Department of Agriculture Weights and Measures, the *Live Well San Diego* Food Systems Working Group; San Diego County Food Systems Alliance (Elly Brown, Director) and the former San Diego County Farm Bureau Executive Director. The position is Revised and proposed by UCCE San Diego staff and the current CD.