

**Position Title:** Area Vegetable Crops Advisor for Yolo, Solano and Sacramento Counties

**Position:** The vegetable crops advisor will develop and conduct a research and extension program focused on vegetable crop production in Yolo, Solano and Sacramento counties with an emphasis on processing tomato production. The supporting unit will be UCCE Capitol Corridor with the position located at the Woodland, Yolo County office. A minimum of a master's degree in horticulture, plant physiology, crop science or agronomy is required with relevant vegetable crop experience and a demonstrated understanding of soil science, nutrient and pest management and irrigation.

**Justification:** Vegetable crops in the three-county region is largely dominated by processing tomatoes, which had a combined value of \$168 million in 2016, and nearly 50,000 harvested acres. Infrastructure in the region supporting the processing tomato industry includes several processing tomato canneries, such as the Woodland-based cooperative Pacific Coast Producers, Campbell Soup Company in Dixon, Morningstar and OLAM Foods in Williams and Campbell Soup and Unilever in Stockton. The Morningstar plant in Williams is the world's highest-volume processing facility. Other infrastructure includes seed companies, with two of the dominant processing tomato retail seed companies headquartered in Woodland, several tomato seed developers including Monsanto/Seminis Vegetable Seeds, and a transplant seedling company near Woodland that supplies processing tomato plants to farmers. The California processing tomato industry has maintained a billion-dollar raw product value in recent years, which has tripled since the late-1980s. Processing tomatoes has been the highest-valued commodity in Yolo County for over five decades since 1960 and Yolo County is the second-highest ranked county in California in terms of volume and value of processing tomatoes.

This position supports growers and processors of high-valued annual vegetable crops with problem solving field consultations and applied research. The research focuses on improving yields and production efficiency to remain competitive on a statewide basis. As this region is one of the oldest tomato production areas, well-established soilborne diseases, such as Fusarium wilt, and other pests remain an ongoing challenge. Water use efficiency and nitrogen use and management are two issues important to growers and deserving of future research as state regulatory programs are developed around these issues. Growers will benefit from a continued local UCCE presence to address production, pest and natural resources issues after the current Vegetable Crops Advisor, Gene Miyao, retires in July 2018. The new advisor fills a significant and historical UC role in the region as growers have developed strong ties with UCCE vegetable crop advisors dating back to the early-1960s when Mel Zobel's innovative program helped growers adapt cultural practices as processing tomatoes transitioned to mechanical harvesting. The proximity of this position to resources, collaborators and expertise at UC Davis creates many opportunities for this local Vegetable Crops program to efficiently and effectively address current and emerging issues that benefit growers in the local area and across the state.

**Extension:** The vegetable crops advisor is expected to develop a well-rounded and innovative extension program capitalizing on the proximity to UCCE specialists and AES faculty at UC Davis and other resources at UC Davis, UC Berkeley and other UCCE advisors. Peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed publications through professional journals, UC ANR publications and trade magazines as well as local outlets will be part of a successful outreach program. Oral presentations to clientele groups and professional society meetings will be expected and the advisor will be encouraged to provide guest

lectures and short course material and/or presentations to local UC campuses, community colleges and other UCCE programs. There is an established annual regional processing tomato production meeting in Woodland and an established newsletter mailing list to processing tomato growers and industry. The advisor will use traditional extension methods and develop innovative outreach using electronic media.

**Research:** Key research questions for this position include water use management through weather-based and crop developmental stage scheduling; nutrient management, especially nitrogen application rates and timing; pest management, particularly focused on existing and emerging diseases; and issues specific to the local region. Farm sustainability and whole-farm management will continue to be important topics as well as potential greater interest in large-scale organic production practices. New pests, such as the local discovery of Egyptian broomrape in 2014 and reemergence of branched broomrape locally in 2017, will continually be an important issue for the industry.

**ANR Network:** The Vegetable Crops Advisor will be expected to establish collaborative relationships with UCCE specialists and AES faculty in the appropriate departments from UC campuses with most collaboration at UC Davis and UC Riverside. This position will be complementary to existing UCCE programs in the region and will participate with a team of vegetable crop advisors in the Central Valley. Collaborations with vegetable crop advisors in San Joaquin and Colusa counties can be especially strong due to proximity and similar commodities. The close proximity to UC Davis will greatly enhance the advisor's capacity to develop collaborative partnerships and enhance UC Davis' capacity to engage local clientele and will likely continue advisory responsibilities to relevant agricultural projects at UC Davis.

**Network External to ANR:** Several stakeholder groups are well defined and include the California Tomato Growers Association, California Tomato Research Institute, California League of Food Processors, local county Farm Bureaus, California Association of Pest Control Advisors including local chapters, CA Garlic and Onion Research Advisory Board, CA Pepper Commission, Processing Tomato Advisory Board, and the California Melon Research Board.

**Support:** This position is directly supported with financial and in-kind contributions from UCCE Capitol Corridor county partners and includes the provision of an office, a pickup, personal mileage reimbursement, internet access, telephone, clerical support, a conference room and office supplies.

**Other Support:** Processing tomato growers and industry have and will continue to strongly support this position. A history of robust applied research with local cooperating growers has been well established with access to farms for on-farm trials and as well as proximity to UC Davis experiment station and to the UC Davis Russell Ranch. Financial support for research trials is available on a competitive basis through the California Tomato Research Institute, the California Pepper Commission, California Melon Research Board, CDFA Fertilizer Research and Education Program and the chemical industry.

**Location:** This position will be housed at the UCCE Capitol Corridor office in Woodland, Yolo County.

**Developed and proposed by:** This position has been developed and proposed by the UCCE Capitol Corridor team of Advisors, Agricultural Commissioners from Yolo and Solano counties, the UCCE Capitol Corridor Advisory Committee, Yolo County Farm Bureau, Solano County Farm Bureau and Sacramento County Farm Bureau.