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Submitted by:

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Sutter-Yuba and
Colusa Counties

Meet our new Agronomy Advisor in Sutter, Yuba, and Colusa Counties!

Sarah Light is the new Agronomy Advisor working on field crops in Sutter, Yuba, and Colusa Counties. She will be based in our Yuba City office.

Tell us a little about yourself:

I've just moved back to California from Oregon for this position. I moved up to Oregon to for a dual master's program in Soil Science and Plant Pathology at Oregon State University. I was based at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Eastern Oregon where I conducted research projects in potato production systems. One project evaluated the impact of the accompanying anion (chloride vs. sulfate) from potassium fertilizer applications on nutrient content in potato plants, with a specific focus on the movement of chloride in the system. Another project evaluated the efficacy of essential oils and selective fertilizer application to manage Verticillium wilt, with the goal of finding alternatives to an expensive and increasingly regulated soil fumigant. I also worked as technician at the USDA Agricultural Research Service on a project that evaluated the impact of biochar application on soil water properties.



My background is a bit unique in that my first degree is in Latin American Studies with a minor in Spanish Literature, and I worked in various roles in the non-profit sector for 5 years after college, including as a professional event planner and fundraiser. I went down to Mendoza, Argentina to work on a small farm in 2010, and have been passionate about agriculture ever since. I was born and raised in the Bay Area and worked on urban farms and gardens there for several years before I started grad school. Also, I'm fluent in Spanish.

Why do you want to work with UC Cooperative Extension?

I enjoy doing applied research, solving problems, and working with people. I love science and agriculture. Extension gives me the opportunity to do work that I enjoy, while having a real impact.

What do you have planned for this year?

I look forward to developing a field crops research and education program that meets the needs of growers in the area, while continuing to protect our valuable natural resources. This year I'd like to meet as many

farmers, CCAs, PCAs, and stakeholders as I can so that I can familiarize myself with the issues in the Sacramento Valley. My crop list includes alfalfa, beans, wheat, corn, sorghum, barley, sunflower, safflower, soybean, canola, as well as other small grains and pseudo-cereals.

Is there anything we can do to help you get settled?

Yes, I'd love the opportunity to come meet with you to discuss the issues you are facing on your farm! I'm glad to come out for a farm call so feel free to call (530-822-7515) or email (selight@ucanr.edu) me if any issues arise. I look forward to meeting you!

New University of California Cooperative Extension Resources

Statewide Fertilization Guidelines: In collaboration with the CDFA Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP), Daniel Geisseler, our statewide Specialist in Nutrient Management, has been working to create fertilization guidelines that farmers can use to optimize their nutrient management plans for specific crops. This valuable resource is available online for a variety of tree, field, and vegetable crops including alfalfa, corn, wheat, sunflower, safflower, and dry bean. Check them out here:

<https://apps1.cdfa.ca.gov/FertilizerResearch/docs/Guidelines.html>

Small Grains Survey Results: The results are in! Mark Lundy, Statewide Specialist in Grain Cropping Systems, has published the results from his 2017 small grains survey. This survey was conducted online earlier this year and is intended to guide the research and extension efforts at UCCE. Read about the survey and results on the UC Small Grains Blog:

<http://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=24680>

Keep an eye out!

- Lygus bug populations are building in the area—keep an eye out for them in the field, especially in bean production.
- Sporadic high temperatures over the past 6 weeks have caused heat stress symptoms in some field crops in the area. If a field looks bad—this may be the culprit. Heat stress can be problematic and can also increase the susceptibility of crops to other pests and diseases.
- There have been a few cases on Southern blight (casual agent *Sclerotium rolfsii*) reported in Colusa County. This pathogen has a wide host range and can be severe in vegetable crops grown in rotation with bean. Call me if you have a diseased field and aren't sure what the issue is, or if you have confirmed Southern blight and want more information about ways to manage the pathogen.

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