

2021 Mid-Year Project Update

We are a partnership between Sutter and Yuba Counties and the University of California, who all support our work with funding and resources. We bring science-based research and programming to everyone in the community through a variety of different programs. We are one of the oldest of the 64 Cooperative Extension offices located across California, established in 1918 — we turn 103 in 2021!

Invasive Insect Trapping

Yuba-Sutter Cooperative Extension has opted to participate in an invasive insect trapping and monitoring program within Yuba County. As part of a State-wide effort to monitor the Invasive Shot Hole Borer (ISHB) led by University of California Integrated Pest Management (UC IPM), our office has partnered with farmers/ranchers, private property owners, and the Sierra Foothills Research and Extension Center, as well as utilizing public access points to place traps across Yuba County. Areas of interest include urban/wildlife interface, field borders or loadout areas, riparian corridors, public parks, or private property with more than a few deciduous trees. The ISHB pest has only been found in Southern California to date and it is known to target host species native



to California. These host species include oaks, willows, sycamores, and alders just to name a few. This pest, which is the size of a sesame seed, bores into host species and cultivates a strain of Fusarium fungus. This fungus then feeds up to millions of progeny and eventually causes the dieback and death of the host. The ISHB is a different species than the borer that infests fruit and nut trees.

Our monitoring efforts have included setting up traps, (which use a pheromone lure to attract the pest) and

monitoring those traps monthly from April - November 2021. Currently, our office has installed 24 traps across Yuba County. The chosen locations represent a wide range of native and landscaping flora and these traps are spread across several habitat types, moisture regimes and topography. Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner's office is conducting the same trapping protocol in Sutter County. This project is part of a statewide effort to trap in every county across California.

New UC Walnut Variety

Sutter and Yuba Counties together rank high among walnut-producing counties in statewide production. Over the decades, several local walnut growers and the UCCE walnut advisor have cooperated closely with the UC Davis Walnut Breeding Program to field-test their walnut selections for potential release as new walnut varieties. This long-term collaboration has contributed greatly to growing the local economy through the now industry standard 'Chandler' variety (released in 1979) and several other UC walnut variety releases.

The newest variety recently released, 'UC Wolfskill', is performing and yielding well on sixth leaf trees in local field test blocks. 'UC Wolfskill' harvests earlier than



'Chandler', 'Howard', or 'Tulare'. Harvest timing is similar to 'Solano' with better kernel color, and a thinner shell. Trees yield abundantly at maturity. The smooth-shelled nuts are similar to 'Chandler', with an

attractive appearance and solid seals.

Data from more than a decade of evaluation across seven locations including the Sutter-Yuba area show that 'UC Wolfskill' kernels are slightly larger, and nuts are consistently better-filled than Chandler trees of the same age, with excellent, Chandler-like color. In multiple years of blind kernel evaluations provided by a major commercial walnut processor, 'UC Wolfskill' nuts have consistently been misidentified as 'Chandler', suggesting that their commercial value will be comparable.

'UC Wolfskill' is the result of a 2003 cross between 'Chandler' and 'Solano'. Leafing, flowering, and harvest dates are similar to 'Solano', and kernel quality and color are similar to 'Chandler'. Given the earlier leaf-out, blight management similar to other early varieties may be necessary depending on local weather conditions. 'Chandler', 'Howard', or 'Tulare' are all suitable pollenizers for 'UC Wolfskill', which offers growers an early harvest option with 'Chandler' nut quality attributes.

'UC Wolfskill' is now commercially available to California growers and can be ordered from any licensed nursery. You can learn more about the attributes and other recent releases and industry standards at <https://www.sacvalleyorchards.com>.

The Soil Health Connection

Agronomy Advisor Sarah Light started a YouTube Channel with co-host Liz Harper, Executive Director of the Colusa County Resource Conservation District. Sarah and Liz have been working together on a cover crops research project involving UC Cooperative Extension, the RCD, and local landowners and growers. The Soil Health Connection features interviews with soil health experts including producers, industry partners, conservationists, and researchers. The interviews capture real-life experiences with on-farm management and the benefits of using soil health practices, as well as potential challenges in implementation. Recently, Light and Harper went to a cover crop variety trial site and did an informal walk-through of the plots to evaluate overall performance, root growth, nodulation from nitrogen fixation, and pollinator activity. The twenty-eight episodes have been produced in the last year and cover a range of soil health topics including hedgerows, cover crops,



grazing, biochar, water dynamics, pollinator habitat, and nutrient cycling. Subscribe to the channel to stay up to date on new episodes and email Sarah Light (selight@ucanr.edu) if you have a topic of interest or would like to be a guest on the channel. Interviews are posted in both English and Spanish and links can be found on the CE Sutter-Yuba Field Crops page.

New Drought Decision Support Tools for Ranches

Rangeland livestock producers are often the first to feel the effects of drought. Dry conditions during the winter and spring can mean reduced forage production and little or no stock water, not to mention cutbacks in summer irrigation water. With grant funding from the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, Livestock and



Natural Resources Advisors Dan Macon and Grace Woodmansee are evaluating the costs and benefits of weaning cattle early as an annual rangeland drought strategy. Through the project, the team will also develop decision support tools to help ranchers understand the economic consequences of a variety of drought management strategies, including early weaning, culling, supplemental feeding, and stock water development.

Early weaning, according to Macon, allows ranchers to reduce forage demand while maintaining the genetic base of an operation's cow herd. The 2-year study, conducted at the UC Sierra Foothill Research and Extension Center, will quantify the amount of forage conserved, as well as the revenue lost by selling lighter calves. The decision support tools will allow ranchers to compare the costs and benefits of specific strategies, while also establishing critical dates for making drought decisions.

Macon says one of the key lessons learned during the 2012-2015 drought was that the difficult decisions faced by ranchers can be stressful and isolating.

Sharing ideas with other producers who are facing similar challenges can be helpful. The Farmer-Rancher Drought Forum on Facebook is a closed group limited to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural professionals – and it is a great way to share ideas and learn from other producers.

Many ranchers are facing hard decisions in the months to come – and some have already implemented some of these difficult choices. If you have questions – or simply want to talk through some of the drought-related issues you're grappling with, contact Dan at dmacon@ucanr.edu or (530) 889-7385.

Master Gardeners Plant Sale

Our UC Master Gardeners drive-thru Plant Sale was a huge success! More than 150 members of the community passed through with their families and friends buying plants while receiving gardening and pest management advice. The plants were raised by our Master Gardeners and included 400 tomatoes and vegetables and 200 succulents. Proceeds of the sale will go to current and future gardening programs benefiting the community such as The Learning Garden at the Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds.

The Master Gardener program help desk is open to home gardeners in Sutter or Yuba Counties: if you have a gardening question or problem, give us a call or drop a sample off at our office for identification!



Advice to Grow By....Ask Us!

4-H Fashion Revue

The Sutter-Yuba Counties 4-H Youth Development Program was excited to be able to host County 4-H Fashion Revue this year! The annual event was held Sunday, April 25 at the 4-H office with a little different, socially distanced format.

We had a lot of great participants and outfits – both sewn and purchased – which inspired appreciation of clothing, textiles, consumer science, and personal development.

This year had a fun photo booth, a professional photoshoot, and cookies for all participants.

Billie Perozzi Sutter County Award

Emma C., Franklin 4-H Club

Ernestine Ruff Yuba County Award

Annalynn B., Browns Valley 4-H Club



UCCE Advisors

Whitney Brim-DeForest, County Director, Area Rice Advisor
 Janine Hasey, Emeritus Tree Crops and Master Gardener Advisor
 Sarah Light, Area Agronomy Advisor

Franz Niederholzer, Orchard Systems Advisor
 Amber Vinchesi-Vahl, Area Vegetable Crops Advisor
 Nicole Marshall-Wheeler, 4-H Youth Development Advisor
 Dan Macon, Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor

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