

CROP CURRENTS

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Farm Advisor Retires

On July 1st, I will retire after more than 30 years with UC Cooperative Extension. As an East Bay native I feel fortunate to have spent the last 28 of those years as the Farm Advisor in my home counties of Contra Costa and Alameda.

Agriculture has changed a lot in this area over the years. This has been largely in response to changing market conditions, increasing regulations, and new pest introductions. It's been my job as Farm Advisor to bring the science-based resources of the University to bear to help address the challenges and issues that come along with change and to help sustain our local agriculture.

I worked closely with a wide range of UC colleagues as well as LOTS of folks from our local ag community to accomplish this end and I believe we've had some success over the last few decades:

- We developed mating disruption and other effective, reduced risk pest management approaches to replace some of our more traditional materials.
- We published the very first organic production manual in the UC system (Organic Apple Production) leading the way for future organic research on other crops.
- We developed better monitoring programs for corn earworm and other critical pests.
- We eradicated Cherry Buckskin disease, Glassy Winged Sharpshooter, and Vine Mealy Bug.
- We had a successful program in place to control Spotted Wing Drosophila within a year of introduction and continue to fine-tune this program.
- We tested and released an effective UC rootstock to control the major impediment to walnut production here - Walnut Blackline Disease.
- We found out that we don't need to sucker sweet corn and may not need to prune walnuts in the early years.

- We helped to fine-tune irrigation management in response to drought conditions, new regulations, and new water conserving irrigation systems.
- We changed the county General Plan, the California Health Code, and the California Food and Ag Code to allow for more diverse, direct marketing opportunities for local growers.
- We provided pesticide safety training to over 3000 farmworkers over the years to improve farm safety and to help growers address new regulations.
- We provided science-based information to local growers on an on-call basis on a whole variety of topics from solving specific field problems to starting a new farm or enterprise.

Of course none of the above would have ever been possible without the good ideas, direction, generosity, patience, time, resources, trust and support provided to me by the local ag community. Thank you! I feel honored to have been a part of this community and hope to continue to be - but in a slightly different capacity.

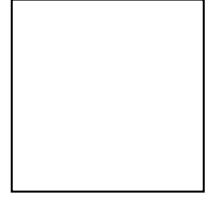
After a summer break, I intend to return on a limited basis to continue with some ongoing research trials and a few other selected activities until a new Farm Advisor is on board. And thanks to the strong letters of support from our local ag community, the new Farm Advisor position has been approved and recruitment is scheduled to begin next spring or summer. Meanwhile, I'm really looking forward to the first summer vacation I've had in 28 years!

With kind regards and much appreciation,

Janet Caprile, Farm Advisor

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