

January 11, 2024, CEO Report

John Harper

County Director – Mendocino & Lake Counties (30%)

Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor Emeritus – Mendocino & Lake Counties

Prior to John's retirement in June 2023, another successful 1-week sheep shearing school was held with 15 students completing the course and certified at several levels for shearing. Unique to this school was having 3 out of the 5 instructors being former students actively employed as shearers.

John's long-term satellite forage production study was completed this year, and a summary publication is in preparation. This study will help Mendocino County livestock producers with drought, and fire estimations of forage losses and assist in bringing in Federal emergency funding when those climate change induced events happen.

John was hired back at 30% time in August to provide leadership and continuity for the administration of the two County UCCE offices. As County Director, through 2023 John was able to participate and recruit and hire our new Area Water Quality Quantity and Climate Change Advisor. He was also able to finally recruit and hire our third member of our County-paid staff to support our programs. John acquired \$10K in UCANR funding to upgrade our office space and provide technological improvements for program delivery. As in the past UCCE makes this equipment available to our Mendocino County Departments when they use our conference rooms. John is also on the search committee to recruit and hire a Mendocino Lake Cultural Burning Advisor and his full-time UCCE Mendocino & Lake Counties Director/Department Head replacement. In addition, John is submitting position proposals for both his UCCE Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor position and a 4-H Youth Development Advisor position.

Michelle Stout

Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator – Mendocino County

- ♦ The Mendocino Master Gardener program was affected severely by the Covid-19 pandemic. National and statewide data indicate that COVID-19 has significantly impacted volunteer commitment for the 2020-2021 program year and continue to impact volunteer commitment thereafter.
- ♦ 2023/2024 Reappointed 15 Master Gardener Mendocino volunteers. Volunteers are busy working on rebuilding the program within our county with focus on outreach and fundraising efforts.
- ♦ They are collaborating with one another on mentorships and updating the current project list to limit the number of projects and initiatives until volunteer commitment can be restored to a pre-COVID-19 level. Volunteers are focusing on project that align with key UC Master Gardener Program criteria and program's mission statement "To extend research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to the residents of California and be guided by our core values and strategic initiatives."
- ♦ Continuing our partnership with the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens and building new with local garden clubs, museums and historically societies.
- ♦ Planning and preparation for the 2024/2025 Master Gardner class will begin soon.

Clebson Gomes Gonçalves

Diversified Agriculture Advisor – Lake & Mendocino Counties

In 2023, the UC-Cooperative Extension (Diversified Agricultural Systems program) and multiple agencies and entities with similar goals and endeavors (NCO, EDFC, Farmer & SAA, School of Adaptive Agriculture, Kitchen Table Consulting, Mendocino County 3rd District Supervisor, Mendocino Land Trust, Mendocino County Farm Bureau, UC Hopland Research and Extension Center, Good Farm Fund, Mendo Lake Food Hub, and County of Mendocino) has begun discuss opportunities to support small farmers with land access in Mendocino County. The main objectives of this group are to launch a program to support small and beginning farmers with access to reduced-cost land. Our vision with that program is to provide educational opportunities, training, grant funding, and improve market availability and technical support for farmers. Also, preserve agricultural land for agricultural use, increase crop productivity, and ensure long-term sustainability in Mendocino County.

In the 2023 grower season, a new pest invaded the mountain pear orchard, attacking fruit and causing damage. An unknown flatheaded borer species was found feeding on pear fruit in a few orchards. Immediate actions were taken to identify this pest correctly and establish monitoring strategies so that this pest does not spread in Mendocino and Lake County pear orchards.

The case was reported to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and samples were sent for DNA analysis at the University of Tennessee. The results from the DNA tests are consistent with *Chrysobothris mail* (Pacific flatheaded borer). To keep pear growers, PCAs, and other specialists updated on the matter, in-person and virtual meetings were held in October and November. For the 2024 grower season, monitoring and management strategies will be established.

Michael Jones

Forestry Advisor - Mendocino, Sonoma & Lake Counties

- We continue to work with and support the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, helping the organization build capacity and expand services offered to the community
- We are working with CAL FIRE through a contract to help promote the value of Jackson Demonstration State Forest as a place to demonstrate sustainable forest management for small landowners and conduct cutting-edge redwood forest research. (Kyle - maybe you have thoughts on this as well?)
- We continue working with our colleagues and collaborators to develop structure hardening and defensible space policy, best practices, and resources.

Laura Garza

Area Water Quality Quantity and Climate Change Advisor - Mendocino & Lake Counties

Laura has been appointed as the Area Water Quality, Quantity, and Climate Change Advisor for Mendocino and Lake Counties. She holds a doctorate degree in Hydrologic Sciences from the University of California, Davis, specializing in Water Policy and Management, with a focus on assessing the ecological resilience of river basins under climate change.

As she embarks in this position, Laura will be supporting projects that integrate water supply and demand, sustainable groundwater management, water supply under drought and flood climate change scenarios, instream and environmental flows, resilient social-ecological systems, water quality, water storage alternatives, water resources modelling, and sustainable agricultural water management. Emphasizing

collaboration between scientists, tribes, communities, and decision-makers, she aligns herself with the mission of Cooperative Extension—dedicated to serving the local community by developing applied science and effectively communicating those results to the public. Laura is committed to both teaching and learning from the community, advocating for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion of underrepresented populations.

Laura's water management research prior to joining our UCCE team includes:

- Developed hydro-economic tools and methods for sustainable agricultural and groundwater resources management in Pajaro Valley California.
- Supported Potter Valley Irrigation District, in Mendocino County by estimating the natural and regulated flows of the Eel River Basin from 1975 to 2016.
- Quantified the impact of human activities on rivers using resilience theory if human activities have caused a permanent change in rivers and determining the carrying capacity of river systems for human development.
- Developed a database of 110 years of daily natural and observed streamflow in the Rio Grande/Bravo Basin to determine environmental flows that support conservation and restoration efforts. This database is being used in the binational setting between the United States and Mexico.
- Identification of regime shifts and anthropogenic causes on a local and regional scale to define adaptation strategies that managers and decision-makers can adopt under climate change.

Jessica Farfan

4-H Community Educator – Mendocino County

Mendocino County 4-H Program is about midway through the program year and is off to a strong start with enrollment. We currently have approximately 350 active youth (and counting!) enrolled along with a Hopland 4-H Charter Club and 4-H Afterschool Program pending approval from the Statewide office. We are projected to surpass last year's youth enrollment numbers.

Savings Bank chose 4-H as the beneficiary of their Denim Days program and awarded our local programming \$1,733.

Our Community Clubs are also gearing up for the upcoming countywide events. Presentation Day, Fashion Revue and Extravaganza this winter and spring. Youth members that place with gold medals are eligible to participate and compete at State level to obtain higher accolades and present their work to 4-H members from all over California.