

Mendocino County C.E.O. Report

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Activities of the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) North Coast Viticulture program for 2024, include events and resources designed to improve the information available to and utilized by grape growers in Mendocino County. Notable events which occurred in 2024 are monthly breakfast meetings for locally-licensed Pest Control Advisors, which totaled seven separate events, and an additional Pest Control Advisor Luncheon, scheduled to take place in Ukiah on November 14, 2024. Educational tours of UCCE facilities for local Mendocino college students took place at the UCCE Hopland REC. Two events in conjunction with other UCCE programs and included “UCCE Pear and Grape Field Day” and “UCCE Organic Crops Day”, both occurring in the Hopland area. Collectively, these events were attended by 58 different individuals who reside and/or are employed within Mendocino County. Participants were particularly interested in recent updates in methods of mitigating damage from drought, heat, and smoke taint in vineyards and other cropping systems. Resources for improved vineyard management practices were developed and made publicly available online at <https://ucanr.edu/sites/chenlab/>. The uploaded resources are available for use by any UCCE clientele and are available for download online. Previous UCCE presentations are also available to the public through the same website.

Research efforts were forefront and focused on grant-funded analysis of grapevine drought tolerance and berry shrivel in collaboration with UC Davis Viticulture and Enology Department; this study is based in Lake County. The data continues to be collected and will be compared among cultivar clone ~ rootstock combinations in order to identify trends in grapevine performance given heat, drought, and excessive solar radiation exposure. The objectives of this research are to identify avenues of action to support climate-adaptation in vineyards in coming decades. Other research projects have been proposed for consideration in the 2025 grape growing season. These include smoke-risk potential in vineyards of differing grape cultivars.

In July 2024, UCCE North Coast Viticulture and Water Quality and Climate Change programs were also tasked with responding to the potential damage of an urban fire called the Taylor Fire, on vineyards in close proximity to the source of the fire in the south end of Ukiah. This was conducted as a public service in response to a request by the County of Mendocino to assist in assessing risk of contamination to crops by this fire. UCCE helped develop sampling protocol and assisted in analyzing data collected from soil and water samples of surrounding vineyards.