

Volume 1 Issue 4

April 2025

The RECap

*A newsletter from South Coast Research and Extension Center
and UC Cooperative Extension Orange County*



Featuring:

- Event Recap
 - Research Spotlight
 - Employee Spotlight
 - Pro Tips
 - Upcoming Events
-

Though this April did not bring many showers, I do believe we will see some May flowers!

Over the last month, we had the opportunity to connect with many new and existing partners throughout Southern California. We met with our Orange County stakeholders and UC ANR leaders to discuss the work being done throughout the county, and networked with the community at two different farm bureau events. Check out the "Event Recap" section to learn more.

Now get ready because May 4-10 is International Compost Awareness Week! Learn more below about compost and how to use it in the "Research Spotlight".

Lastly, make sure to check out the upcoming events section as registration is closing soon for some of them!

Sincerely,
Lindsey Pedroncelli, Interim Director of South Coast REC
and
Rita Clemons, Director of UCCE Orange County

P.S. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future, please unsubscribe at the bottom of this email.

Event Recap

GRAZE at the Fields



San Diego Farm Bureau's Annual Event

GRAZE at the Fields is an amazing opportunity to connect with the San Diego agriculture community and "graze" through products from local farmers, chefs, brewers, winemakers, and more. This event is hosted at the [Carlsbad Flower Fields](#), and with a VIP ticket you can even take an exclusive tour of the Flower Fields!

Several people from the [UCCE San Diego](#) and [Orange County](#) offices attended to share resources and information about the work they're doing throughout Southern California.

[More info about GRAZE](#)

2025 Steakfry Orange County Farm Bureau's Annual Fundraising Dinner

The Steakfry is the Orange County Farm Bureau's annual fundraising dinner to support student scholarships and agriculture education provided by the [4H Youth Development Program](#), [Orange County FFA](#), and [South Coast REC](#). Lindsey Pedroncelli, South Coast REC's Interim Director, had the opportunity to present at the Steakfry about the agriculture education and workforce development programming that we do at South Coast REC in collaboration with the Orange County Farm Bureau. This event took place at beautiful [Tanaka Farms](#) in Irvine.



[More info about the Steakfry](#)

Research Spotlight



This is how the organic waste arrives at the center. Since it's

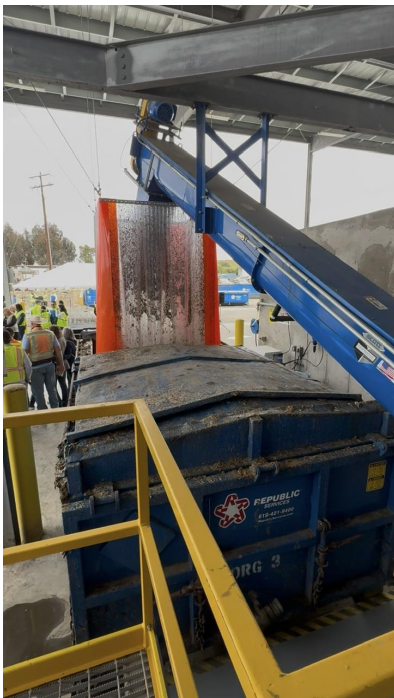
May 4-10 is International Compost Awareness Week!

Compost is so important it has its own week dedicated to it! May 4 through 10, 2025 is [International Compost Awareness Week](#).

The theme for this year is "Sustainable Communities Begin with Compost!"

[Natalie Levy](#), our Soil Health and Organic Materials Management Advisor, had the opportunity to visit the [Otay Landfill](#) to learn about their sustainability initiatives that include

bagged up, the bags need to be separated from the waste.



This is THOR, the machine that separates the organic slurry from the bags that the organic waste is transported in.



These are aerated static piles where the organic slurry will be added for composting after it has been separated from the bags. The piles are covered with Gore-Tex fabric, also known as a GORE® Cover system. It is a method that uses a breathable, waterproof fabric to cover the compost pile while introducing air through a plenum system. This system allows for controlled aeration and moisture management, reducing odors and other emissions. The Gore-Tex fabric allows gases like oxygen and carbon dioxide to move through, while also

organics recycling from residential curbside pick up as well as food waste from commercial customers.

To better address issues around sorting commercial food waste, this facility recently added a de-packaging and separation system (THOR) that can process 20 tons of organic waste per hour from bagged or packaged waste. This type of equipment can be used to scale up the goals of organic waste diversion from restaurants, schools, and large venues/sports arenas.



Dr. Natalie Levy (left) and Dr. Craig Kolodge (right) of San Pasqual Valley Soils whom Natalie considers to be a mentor and friend. Dr. Kolodge is a very important advocate for organics recycling and composting in Southern California.

Want to learn more about Natalie's trip to Otay Landfill? Make sure you're following us on [Instagram](#) to tune in during Compost Awareness Week!

[Check out this brochure for basic information about composting!](#)

[Check out this video for more composting tips!](#)

Employee Spotlight

Get to know the folks who work with South Coast REC and UCCE Orange County.

Get to know

Grant Johnson

**Urban Agriculture Technology
Advisor for Los Angeles and
Orange Counties**

Hi, I'm Grant Johnson, Urban Agriculture Technology Advisor for Los Angeles and Orange Counties! I've been with UC ANR for 8 years — 2 years in my current role and 6 years before that as a Staff Research Associate at SCREC. Time flies by! I left for grad school for a bit, but I always had my sights on becoming an advisor — proof that surrounding yourself with great mentors can make all the difference.



What does a "typical" day look like for you?

No two days are the same, although they all start with a cup of coffee. One day I'm setting up field trials and troubleshooting irrigation systems; the next, I'm keeping tabs on new ag technologies or chasing down funding opportunities nonstop. It's a mix of tech experiments, fieldwork, grower visits, and a permanent farmer's tan. Every day brings a new puzzle to solve, and there's a certain rhythm where everything seems to ramp up all at once.

What part of your work are you most excited about or proud of right now?

Right now, I'm especially excited about projects bringing new technology into urban agriculture, particularly for small urban farms. It's inspiring to see the excitement and heart that plant people share and propagate to each other. Merging solar power and plant shading is a current highlight, and I'm excited to begin plant trials soon. If you have crops that love shade, why not generate electricity at the same time? Many growers are incredibly crafty, and if there's a solution that works, I want to help bring that innovation to their attention and make a difference for urban growers.

What's your favorite fruit/vegetable we grow at SCREC?

You better believe I'm checking the vegetable bins daily! There are some wonderful work perks, and they're all thanks to the amazing volunteers and programs growing seasonal produce. I've discovered that mini avocados are just as delicious as they are adorable. And if you're ever lucky enough to "beefriend" the OC Bee Team, a jar of their honey is worth its weight in gold.

I like to challenge myself each season to cook with something new. Okra ended up in the vegetable bin and was my biggest surprise — I wasn't sure what to expect, but after learning a few great recipes, it quickly earned a spot on my favorites list. We'll see what new contenders pop up this year!

To get in contact with Grant, email gejohnson@ucanr.edu or [connect with him on LinkedIn](#).

Bonus fun fact:

I'm supposed to say I enjoy long walks on the beach but truthfully, I'm happiest walking through a warm greenhouse during a rainstorm.

Pro Tips

Tips, tricks, and advice from our program experts

The Victory Garden



Embrace the timeless tradition of the Victory Garden and cultivate your own patch of green while contributing to a sustainable future. Originating during the world wars, this powerful movement encouraged communities to grow their own food, fostering resilience and unity in challenging times. Today, the Victory Garden is not just a nostalgic memory; it's a call to action for environmentally-conscious individuals eager to make a difference. Transform your backyard, balcony, or community space into a flourishing garden, and join the growing movement of self-reliance and sustainability. Experience the joy of nurturing your own food, connecting with nature, and becoming part of a legacy that champions local produce and environmental stewardship. Start your Victory Garden today and sow the seeds of change. Get the [Guidebook for Beginners](#).

Urban Watershed Resilience



≡ WATER SUPPLY SECURITY



WSS #2: Rain Gardens – A Sustainable Solution for Stormwater Management

Looking for a way to enhance the beauty of your landscape whilst also mimicking the bioretention capabilities of natural hydrological systems? Read our latest blog to learn about how rain gardens can help reduce runoff pollution, increase groundwater recharge, and enrich biodiversity.

Upcoming Events

Avocado Pop-Up at South Coast REC



[Register Here](#)

PLEASE NOTE For best results, please use either **FireFox** or **Chrome** browser to register.

Questions? Please contact Tammy at: tjmajcherek@ucanr.edu

SPECIAL POP-UP EVENT!!

ORDER YOUR BAG OF AVOCADOS FOR \$30.00

Bags are limited, register today!

Approximately 10lbs. of Mixed Avocado Varieties

Pick-up date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Pick-up time: 7:30AM - 3:30PM

Pick-up location: 7601 Irvine Blvd. Irvine, CA 92618

All proceeds to benefit educational programming for youth and adults.

- Purchases payable online by credit card only
- Limit of (3) bags per purchase while supplies last.
- All sales final. Sorry, no refunds.
- Purchases must be picked up as designated - directions and pick up instructions provided once payment has been confirmed.

Fire Safe Solutions for Design, Building, and Upkeep Webinar

May 5, 2025
6:30-7:30pm PST

Learn from **Yana Valachovic** with the **UC ANR Fire Network** about:

- Hazardous fuels reduction
- Home hardening
- Fire safe building design

Tempered glass helped this home survive the Palisades Fire.



Radiant heat from a burning hedge broke this window in the Camp Fire.

THE UC ANR FIRE NETWORK
PRESENTS

FIRE SAFE SOLUTIONS FOR DESIGN, BUILDING, AND UPKEEP WEBINAR

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Fire Network

We often equate reducing community risk of wildfire with hazardous fuels reduction. While that is one component, new research highlights the importance of home hardening and building design. **Join the UC ANR Fire Network to learn about simple, low-cost actions that you can do to protect your house and property.** This webinar is intended for all of California's homeowners, renters, and interested community members.

Presenter **Yana Valachovic**, a registered professional forester and scientist with the Fire Network, is a leader in developing and delivering local and state strategies to improve wildfire resilience. Yana will **share recent insights from the Los Angeles fires**, give an overview of issues regarding building design, insurance, best practices for homeowners, and strategies for community leaders.

DATE/TIME: MAY 5, 2025
FROM 6:30 - 7:30 PM PST

**REGISTER FOR THIS FREE
WEBINAR BY MAY 1, 2025!**

<https://bit.ly/FireSafeSolutionsWeb>

Register Here

**Register for this
FREE webinar by
May 1st!**

California Agritourism Summit



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Sustainable Agriculture Research and
Education Program



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Cooperative Extension

California Agritourism Summit

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025 AND THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA

Registration & travel assistance now available for a limited number of small-scale California farmers & ranchers to attend the Summit! More information and the Registration & Travel Support Interest Form can be found [HERE](#). Interest Forms must be received by April 30th.

On behalf of the **University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP)** and the **UC Cooperative Extension San Diego office**, we are pleased to invite you to attend the

2025 California

Agritourism is a growing economic force in California, with over **2,000 farms and ranches participating in activities such as direct sales, outdoor recreation, educational events, lodging, and more.** The industry has seen remarkable growth, with

Agritourism Summit

May 14-15, 2025
in San Diego County

UC
CE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Population and Natural Resources
Cooperative Extension

California Agritourism Summit

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025 AND THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA

FOR DETAILS VISIT THE
SUMMIT
WEBSITE

DESCRIPTION:

The California Agritourism Summit will bring together agritourism stakeholders to share current initiatives and industry developments, gain practical tools to start or expand an agritourism business, develop strategic partnerships, and create a collective vision for the future of agritourism in California. The event will feature expert panels, roundtable discussions, presentations, networking opportunities, and tours of successful agritourism operations in San Diego County.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

Many stakeholders are critical to the success of agritourism, including farmers and ranchers, producer and community-based organizations, state and local governments, destination marketing organizations and tourism professionals, and economic development professionals. The Summit will provide actionable examples of each stakeholder's role in contributing to a vibrant agritourism industry.

BECOME A SUPPORTER!

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about support opportunities.

Funding for the California Agritourism Summit was made possible by a grant agreement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Services and supported by USDA/NIFA under Award number 2023-70027-03445

UC ANR is an equal opportunity provider and employer. (<https://ucanr.edu/sites/canrstaff/files/210214.pdf>)

Click to enlarge images.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Sustainable Agriculture Research and
Education Program

California Agritourism 2025

What is Agritourism

Agritourism is an important component of California agriculture, serving as a viable source of economic stability and diversification for California's farms and ranches, contributing to rural economic development, and connecting the public to the food system. The University of California defines agritourism as "a commercial enterprise at a working farm or ranch conducted for the enjoyment and education of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner or operator." This definition encompasses on-farm direct sales, outdoor recreation, educational activities, entertainment, and lodging.¹

California Agritourism by the Numbers

It is estimated that over 2,000 farms and ranches in California offer agritourism activities. The U.S. Census of Agriculture shows the number of California farms and ranches offering agritourism grew by 81% from 2007 to 2022 and the revenue grew by 184%.² Agritourism is now nearly a \$100,000,000 industry in California. There are agritourism operations in nearly every county of California.

Agritourism Activities Offered³

On-Farm Direct Sales	73%
Education	59%
Events	55%
Lodging	27%
Outdoor Recreation	25%

Results from 2019 survey of California Agritourism operators n=130

2022 Census of Agriculture

Number of Farms Offering Agritourism



Income from Agritourism



The census includes a limited definition: agritourism and recreational services such as farm or winery tours, hay rides, hunting, fishing, etc. On-farm direct sales such as farm stands and U-picks are not captured, therefore while the census provides insights, the number of agritourism operations and revenue are undercounted.

For county statistics see: [Ag Census 2022](#)

¹ California Overview 2019 Survey of Agritourism Including On-Farm Direct Sales. <https://ucanr.edu/sites/canrstaff/files/202405.pdf>

² Income from Farm-Related Sources: 2022 and 2017. USDA NASS. https://www.nass.usda.gov/CensusofAgriculture/census2022/farm_income2022.pdf, https://www.nass.usda.gov/CensusofAgriculture/census2017/farm_income2017.pdf

³ Chapter 1. State Layer California ANR_1_2021_2024.pdf

Footer text goes here

More information here

Register Here

an 81% increase in agritourism operations and a 184% revenue increase from 2007 to 2022, now approaching a \$100 million industry statewide.

Exciting Speaker Lineup & Discussions:

- **Caroline Beteta, President & CEO of Visit California, and Secretary of Agriculture, Karen Ross will discuss Visit California's newly released draft strategic tourism plans and their impact on agritourism.**
- **The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) will present insights on California Jobs First's Economic Blueprint, which identifies agritourism as a key economic growth sector in multiple regions.**
- **Panels will address regulatory challenges, liability concerns, and economic development opportunities to support agritourism expansion across California.**

Event Highlights:

- **Day 1: A guided farm tour showcasing agritourism in action, followed by an evening networking reception.**
- **Day 2: A full day of learning and collaboration, featuring industry experts, regional planning discussions, and networking with key stakeholders.**

California Master Beekeeper Program Events



Interested in learning about beekeeping? Sign up for a CAMBP OC Workshop for Beekeepers!

Workshop topics include:

- Checking overwinter colonies
- Managing for honey production
- Swarming & robbing prevention
- Checking for diseases & queen health
- Preparing a split to requeen
- Feeding techniques
- Completing a hive inspection
- Strategies to requeen
- Mite test load & control
- Honey extraction technique

Upcoming workshops are on:

- July 12, 2025
- October 18, 2025

Register Here



Have you ever toured an apiary? Sign up for a California Master Beekeeper Apiary Tour!

Tours are from 10am-12pm on the following dates:

- Friday, May 16th
- Saturday, May 24th
- Friday, June 6th
- Saturday, June 14th
- Friday, July 11th
- Saturday, August 23rd
- Saturday, September 6th

Register Here



How did you like this email?



Fill out [this survey](https://bit.ly/TheRECapNewsletterContent) to let us know what kind of content you want to see in future newsletters: bit.ly/TheRECapNewsletterContent



Try email marketing for free today!