



Report

Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

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UCCE awards for 2002 are announced

The Academic Assembly Council has announced the winners of its 2002 Cooperative Extension Distinguished Service Awards: Sharon Junge, Steve Koike, and the team of Khaled Bali, Mark Grismer and Richard Snyder.

Last year Assembly Council revamped its awards program, decreasing the number of awards and boosting the cash prize of each award. These are the first winners in the revamped program. The program now consists of two individual awards — each paired with a \$5,000 cash prize—and one team award, which garners the winners a shared \$10,000 cash prize. The new program is modeled after campus award programs for academics.

“The announcement of these awards culminates a three-year process to make the CE Distinguished Service Awards more meaningful to the recipients and for the whole UCCE organization,” said Diane Metz, Academic Assembly Council’s current president.

“The Academic Assembly
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Governor signs midyear budget cuts

By Steve Nation

Following more than three months of negotiations, Governor *Davis* and the Legislature reached agreement on Tuesday, March 18, on a series of midyear spending cuts worth \$8 billion.

Education programs absorbed a large share of the budget cuts, with K-12 spending reduced by more than \$1 billion. Higher education budgets also were affected. The 108 community colleges took a \$141 million cut, and the UC and CSU budgets were each cut by \$60 million.

Included in the midyear spending cut for UC is a 5 percent permanent reduction for Cooperative Extension. In dollar terms, the reduction equals roughly \$2.4 million.

“Because we are nearly nine months into the current budget year, Vice President Gomes has decided to manage the 5 percent reduction initially with temporary funds that are available from frozen positions and reductions in the allocation of temporary funds made earlier this year,” according to Associate Vice President *Henry Vaux Jr.*

“The effect of this action for our Cooperative Extension programs is to postpone the need to make the permanent reduction required by the midyear cut until the next fiscal year—July 1, 2003,” Vaux said.

Now that the midyear cuts have been approved in Sacramento, the governor and the Legislature are expected to turn their attention to next year’s spending plan. As we reported in earlier issues of *ANR Report*, the governor’s 2003-04 budget proposal contains a 25 percent additional cut to UC Cooperative Extension and another 10 percent cut for research.

If approved by the Legislature, this would mean a \$12.2 million permanent reduction for Cooperative Extension next year, on top of the just-approved \$2.4 million midyear cut. UC agricultural research spending, cut by \$10 million this year, would receive an additional \$9 million cut next year if the reductions are across-the-board.

The Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review and the Assembly Committee on Budget will review the governor’s budget recommendations for UC and other state programs over the next few months. Major actions are not expected to take place before the release of the May (budget) Revise around May 12.

Town-hall conference call set for April 2

Vice President *Gomes* invites members of the Division to join him in a town-hall conference call on **Wednesday, April 2, at 10 a.m.**, to discuss the state budget situation and the impact of proposed budget cuts on the University and the Division.

The call-in is part of a series of regular Divisionwide conversations Gomes is hosting to continue the dialogue about budget developments. Additional town-

hall conference calls will be scheduled over the next few months as the budget process unfolds in the Legislature. Anyone can call in to the 30-minute conference call to ask questions and make comments.

Participants should dial 1-888-464-1371
Passcode: ANR; Leader’s name: VP Gomes

To mute background noise from your phone, press *6. To speak, unmute by pressing *6 again.

AgrAbility project helps farmers cope with serious injury, illness

Farmers and farm workers who sustain a serious injury or have an ailment or condition that hinders their ability to work can get assistance from a new USDA-funded project in California called AgrAbility that is designed to help them continue farming and living independently.

“Farming is a way of life that values the family working together,” says California AgrAbility Project coordinator *Martha Stiles*. “When a family member is affected by a severe injury or illness, this way of life is challenged.” Stiles says that more than 20,000 disabling injuries occur on California farms each year. In fact, agricultural production is one of the three most hazardous occupations in the U.S. and has the highest rate of disabling injury of any industry. In addition, ag workers also suffer the same chronic illnesses and off-farm accidents that affect the general public.

AgrAbility assists individuals and families coping with injuries and other conditions that make it difficult for them to do their work, such as amputations, arthritis, chronic back pain, respiratory illness, and hearing and vision losses, among other ailments. These clients can utilize a range of AgrAbility services, including practical education, technical assistance and other support.

“Our staff can help farmers and workers design and customize assistance plans according to their needs,” says Stiles, who is based at the UCD biological and agricultural engineering department. The plan they develop with the client may include any of the following: modifying the worksite, getting peer support, restructuring the job, improving farm safety, purchasing or modifying equipment, coordinating health care, providing stress management and identifying resources for funding and other services.

AgrAbility Projects are managed by state Cooperative Extension programs in tandem with local nonprofit partners such as Easter Seals. California AgrAbility Project is funded through a USDA grant to the UCCE Farm Safety Program at UC Davis in collaboration with the 13-county Easter Seals Superior Region, headquartered in Sacramento. CE specialist *Jim Meyers* is the principal investigator. California is one of the most recent states to offer AgrAbility services. There are 21 states in the U.S. with such projects.

To illustrate how AgrAbility works, here are a few success stories from programs in other states that have been up and running for a while.

- A farmer who uses a wheelchair because of a spinal cord injury has been able to drive his tractor 500 hours a year for three years thanks to a lift attached to his tractor that raises him into the cab safely. The project helped him get the lift and thereby stay productive.
- To feed his livestock, a rancher with arthritis moves bales of hay with less manual effort and has less joint stress, pain and fatigue because, with the project’s assistance, he now uses a skid steer loader equipped with a bale prong.
- A farmer whose neck was injured when a semi-truck rear-ended his vehicle resumed work after months of reha-

bilitation. But he couldn’t do some of the tasks he had always taken for granted. The project helped him identify which tasks gave him the most trouble and find the right equipment and make structural changes on the farm so that he could remain an active farmer.

- A couple has been able to continue operating their farm after the wife became paralyzed following a fall. The project helped them raise the driveway to eliminate the front step into their house and make other changes to accommodate the wheelchair that she now uses. It also helped arrange in-home services. Modifications to the farming operations are also planned so that she can resume some of those activities.

“We received our funding late last year and are now fully staffed,” Stiles says of the CalAgrAbility Project. “Right now we are doing social marketing, that is, getting the word out about our program and identifying our audience.” Besides erecting displays and drumming up media publicity, the CalAgrAbility staff are also giving presentations at workshops and meetings. On March 19, for example, Stiles gave a presentation on AgrAbility at a statewide conference to migrant housing center managers.

CalAgrAbility has bilingual staff members available to serve Spanish-speaking farm operators and workers, Stiles says. ANR’s Spanish Broadcast and Media Services has developed monthly public service announcement to promote the program among Spanish-speaking clientele in California.

CalAgrAbility currently focuses on the 13-county Easter Seals Superior Region—Amador, Alpine, Calaveras, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba—but Stiles says she is happy to assist clients in other areas of the state as well. To reach the UC CalAgrAbility staff, call 530/752-2606 or contact Easter Seals at 1-888/877-3257, ext. 117.

Food safety added as ANR’s fourth strategic direction

Food safety has become ANR’s fourth long-term strategic program area, joining genomics research and education, management of invasive species, and waste management.

For details, see the pdf document now posted on ANR’s internal website (<http://lucanr.org/internal/indexi.shtml>).

“The Executive Council discusses and reviews strategic directions systematically and recommends them for adoption by the Vice President,” said Associate Vice President *Henry Vaux Jr.* “The addition of this new strategic direction emerged from one of those reviews.”

These broad programmatic strategic directions are intended to help guide the planning process, Vaux said. The intent is that specific Division priorities will be derived from them. ANR’s strategic directions guide the activities of the program planning advisory committees (PPACs) and the Program Council, as well as the Executive Council.