

## Meeting Announcements

### UC Davis Dry Bean Field Day

Thursday, September 5, 2013 - 10 am - noon  
Barbeque Lunch, 1 CE Hour  
Contact 530-666-8143 if you plan to stay for lunch

### Western Alfalfa and Forage Symposium

December 11-13, 2013 at the Peppermill Hotel and Casino in Reno, NV  
Registration is now open at: <http://ucanr.edu/sites/Alfalfa/>

Hello All,

UC Cooperative Extension is merging three counties (Yolo, Solano, and Sacramento) into one unit to help streamline and reduce administrative costs. Yolo County will serve as the central headquarters, with satellite offices in the other counties. One County Director will oversee program management. The merger is planned for January 1, 2014 and will be known as the Capital Corridor unit.

We will begin recruiting for a Fruit and Nut Crop Advisor this fall and will hire a Small Farm Advisor to focus on organic production next summer (2014). All new UCCE Advisor hires will cover three counties. We have also hired Judy McClure half time, to oversee our Yolo County Master Gardener Program to help with outreach to urban gardeners. She can be reached at 530-666-8143 or [jmmclure@ucanr.edu](mailto:jmmclure@ucanr.edu). She also oversees the Master Gardener Program in Sacramento County.

For Pomology questions, contact our office to be directed to Advisors in neighboring counties for more information. For corn production, contact Farm Advisor Michelle Leinfelder-Miles, San Joaquin County, 209-953-6120, [mleinfeldermiles@ucanr.edu](mailto:mleinfeldermiles@ucanr.edu). For grain production, contact Lee Jackson, Cooperative Extension Specialist, Emeritus, UC Davis, 530-902-8852.

In February 2014 we will be hosting trainings for nitrogen management certification in Woodland, CA for Certified Crop Advisors to help address nitrate impairment of ground water. We'll also have a pollinator workshop in early October. More information will follow as the agendas are developed.

*Rachael Long*

UCCE Farm Advisor and County Director, Yolo County  
[rflong@ucanr.edu](mailto:rflong@ucanr.edu), 530-666-8734 or 530-681-7661

### Alfalfa Production

The UCCE-ANR Alfalfa and Forage Workgroup has a blog, giving weekly updates on alfalfa and forage production both locally and statewide. For more information, see: <http://ucanr.edu/blogs/Alfalfa/>. To subscribe, scroll down to the lower right and under 'My Stuff', click on 'subscribe.' For current information on alfalfa production, including statewide UC variety trial results, see: <http://alfalfa.ucdavis.edu>.

# UC Davis Dry Bean Field Meeting

Thursday, September 5, 2013, 10:00-12:00 am

UC Davis Agronomy Farm

1 CE hour (Other) approved

Join UC Davis Professor Paul Gepts for a tour of his dry bean research plots to discuss breeding and variety trials for common and lima beans in California.

**Directions to the UC Davis Farm:** Take Hutchison Dr. approximately 1.5 miles west from Hwy 113, in Davis (turning north at the first roundabout and west at the second one). Turn south on Hopkins Lane, then turn east on a dirt road with a row of olive trees; park along the fence. The dry bean field is located across from the Bee Biology Center.

## Agenda

- 10:00–10:10 Sign in, introductions, updates: Rachael Long
- 10:10-10:20 Bean breeding program - General introduction: Paul Gepts and Antonia Palkovic
- 10:20-10:35 Lima bean breeding program - Multi-location advanced yield trial of selected bush large lima lines: Sarah Dohle
- 10:35-10:45 Broadening the gene pool for yield increases - Crosses with wild beans: Jorge Berny
- 10:45-10:55 Common bean breeding - Cranberry & pink breeding: Paul Gepts & Jorge Berny
- 10:55-11:05 Common bean breeding - Determinacy introgression: Tamara Miller
- 11:05-11:15 Cooperative Dry Bean Nursery: Jorge Berny
- 11:15-11:20 Drought tolerance in common bean - candidate genes: Enéas Konzen
- 11:20-11:35 Drought tolerance in common bean - genetics in terminal and intermittent drought: Jorge Berny and Matthew Gilbert
- 11:35-11:45 Nursery for potential organic bean screening: Antonia Palkovic and Paul Gepts
- 11:45-12:00 Discussion
- 12:00 Lunch

This meeting will be followed by a free lunch of smoked tri-tip, beans, salad, fresh fruit, and sodas. Lunch offered by: Sutter Basin Bean Co-op, Manager Ray Davis; Tarke Bean LLC/Rhodes Warehouse and Ken Kirsten/Roger Peacock; One or two "Mystery" Chefs; and the Bean Group, Plant Sciences, UCD.

Please RSVP with the UCCE office in Woodland at 530-666-8143 or [kmchurchill@ucanr.edu](mailto:kmchurchill@ucanr.edu) if you plan to stay for lunch. If you have any questions or need special accommodations, please contact Rachael Long, Farm Advisor, in Woodland (530) 666-8734 or [rflong@ucdavis.edu](mailto:rflong@ucdavis.edu).

## Onion Seed Production

We just completed a 3-year study on factors affecting onion seed production in Yolo County, via a \$250,000 grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Applying more than four insecticides to the crop for thrips control, (including tank mixes and applied pre-bloom), results in a decline in honeybee visitation to onion seed fields and a reduction in yields. Onion thrips are the main vectors of iris yellow spot virus, a serious disease of onion. Onion thrips generally start to increase in onion fields in early March, so if sprays are needed timing would begin then. Fungicides applied pre-bloom do not appear to affect honey bee activity. We also found that over or under irrigating onion fields (causing excessively wet or dry soil conditions) results in a decline in nectar production and lower honey bee activity with corresponding reduced yields.

## Hedgerows

In good news, I received a grant from the Department of Pesticide Regulation for \$125,000 to focus on extending information on hedgerows to the agricultural community in the Sacramento Valley. Hedgerows consist of rows of shrubs, forbs, trees, and perennial grasses that surround farm fields. This includes California lilac (*Ceanothus*), toyon, California buckwheat, elderberry, coyote brush, coffeeberry, and redbud. The many benefits of hedgerows include replacing weedy vegetation on field margins with managed vegetation, helping to reduce pest insects and increase beneficial insect activity around farms for enhanced pest control in adjacent crops. They also enhance native bee activity, helping to pollinate crops. Hedgerows also provide habitat and food for migratory and summer resident birds.

During the next several years, we will be conducting surveys on landowner and grower interest in hedgerows, as well as holding field days to showcase practices for establishing hedgerows on farms. We will also be planting five demonstration hedgerows on farms. If you are interested in establishing a hedgerow on your farm, please let me know. For more information on hedgerows, see the UC ANR publication 8390, *Establishing hedgerows on farms in California* by Rachael Long and John Anderson, available at: <http://ucanr.org/pubs.cfm>.

## Straw Itch Mite

Is your hay biting you? The straw itch mite (*Pyemotes ventricosus*) is a predator living in oat hay fields. It is an extremely small mite (1/125 inch long), elongate, and whitish to translucent in color. It feeds on small insects and mites in the field and also continues to feed on these prey in the hay bales. This sounds very positive and beneficial, but this mite can also be a severe pest. Every year there are reports of bites and dermatitis associated with handling, given lots of oat hay. The straw itch mite will move out of hay bales and readily bite humans and other animals. At the time of the bite a prickling sensation may be felt with the “full force” of the bite being felt several hours later. Some people are not bothered by the bites while others respond with large, red, itchy welts. Some people exhibit flu-like symptoms from the bites with low-grade fevers.

Other commodities such as grains, beans, and cottonseed have also been reported to be sources of this predatory mite. Alfalfa has not been reported to be a host but alfalfa bales can be infested if stored next to infested stacks of other hay, such as oat hay. Mixed alfalfa hay (alfalfa with forage grasses) could be infested in the field with straw itch mites. Populations decline slowly in stored hay and generally reach a tolerable level after winter storage.

**UC Cost of Production Studies:** Cost studies for a variety of different crops, including a 2013 organic alfalfa production study, are available at: <http://coststudies.ucdavis.edu>.

