



2008 Highlights

University of California Cooperative Extension
Los Angeles County

Lincoln's land-grant legacy alive in Los Angeles County

As I write my annual message, we've just celebrated the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. As former presidents go, Lincoln's been getting more than his share of attention since the election of another senator from Illinois. Among his many legacies, Lincoln helped to create the national extension movement that continues to serve our country to this day. By signing the 1862 Morrill Act into law, he made it possible for states to open public universities that would provide education for the average person, focusing on agriculture and other practical subjects. The Morrill Act offered states a grant of federal land to finance a new university. These new institutions of higher learning became known as land-grant universities, and were charged with helping the nation improve its agricultural production to feed a rapidly growing nation. Over time, it was clear that the new land-grant campuses needed to take their information out into communities where it could help people directly. By 1914, a system of county-based extension offices was in place, with each state's land-grant university sharing research-based knowledge at the local level.

In California, our land-grant institution is the University of California. There is a University of California Cooperative Extension office in most counties in the state, funded in partnership with the local county, state government and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. UC Cooperative Extension takes information developed on its campuses and makes it available to local communities. In addition, Cooperative Extension experts conduct applied research of their own to address local problems in the areas of good nutrition, the environment, gardening, agriculture and youth development.

When Lincoln signed the Morrill Act 147 years ago, the United States was a nation of farmers. Today, less than 2 percent of the population engages in farming. Yet the issues we address continue to be highly relevant to a more urban population: 1) urban residents want access to local farms and farmers markets and maintain some measure of regional food security; 2) Cooperative Extension's expertise in nutrition helps communities that are struggling with challenges, such as childhood obesity and diabetes; 3) the 4-H Youth Development Program continues to evolve to speak to new youth audiences, who learn leadership, citizenship and life skills through more than 80 projects, ranging from photography to marine biology; and 4) the natural resources program has helped find solutions to critical local environmental issues, such as management of wildfire and water pollution.

I hope you enjoy reading about the recent accomplishments of our staff and volunteers for Los Angeles County. Although the world has changed so much since Lincoln, I like to think that he would approve of the impacts his Morrill Act, along with its land-grant legacy, has created in communities like Los Angeles.

Sincerely,



Rachel A. Surls, Ph.D.



Rachel Surls,
County Director

Mission Statement

UC Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles County develops and implements community-based educational programs that address the critical needs of the county's diverse and multiethnic population.

Staff and volunteers provide and encourage the use of current research-based information in the areas of nutrition, family and consumer science; youth development; urban gardening; commercial horticulture; agriculture; and natural resources.

Teaching kids leadership, citizenship and life skills

The 4-H Youth Development program teaches young people leadership, citizenship and life skills through more than 80 different hands-on learning activities.



More than 200 4-H volunteers, along with community partners, work with our 4-H staff to conduct 4-H activities in 73 communities throughout Los Angeles, including 27 community clubs and 46 after-school clubs. In 2008, more than 3,700 youth participated in 4-H in Los Angeles County.

Annually, our 4-H youth attend the 4-H Summer Camp, held at Camp Seeley in the San Bernardino Mountains. This low-cost, one-week summer camp allowed urban youth to experience the joys of hiking, fishing, swimming, arts and crafts, and much more. Other 4-H events includ-

ed 4-H Judging Day, 4-H Field Day, 4-H Fashion Revue, and for the first time in 2008, our new Pet Symposium. More than 150 youth and adults attended the symposium, which provided workshops and demonstrations on pet care. Youth heard from experts speak about how to care for dogs, cats, rabbits and “pocket pets,” such as hamsters and guinea pigs, in a responsible manner. Participants also learned about careers in veterinary science from speakers and interactive displays from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.

L.A. County 4-H joined an exciting new national 4-H initiative—4-H Science, Engineering and Technology (SET)—which is expected to reach more than 1 million youth nationally, with 5,000 here in L.A. County. The 4-H SET initiative is designed to train new scientists for the future.

L.A. County 4-H also conducts research on youth-related issues and disseminates the information. In 2008 4-H Youth Development Advisor Keith Nathaniel published an article on teen driving behaviors and was interviewed by LA Parent Magazine. Recently, he launched a study on how 4-H participation helps youth develop social capital. Nathaniel worked with colleagues throughout the state to develop a series of publications for teens on financial literacy called “Money Talks.” Nathaniel is frequently invited to speak on topics such as the quality of after-school care, youth culture, developmental assets, adolescent development and college access.



The 4-H SET Initiative is designed to train new scientists for the future.



A volunteer works with youth on a 4-H project.

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Helping Los Angeles residents lead healthier lives

The Nutrition, Family and Consumer Science Program is an important program of the UC Cooperative Extension in Los Angeles County. The program's mission is to provide Los Angeles County families and individuals with the information and skills to help them lead healthier, safer and more productive lives. Staff work with families, agencies and individuals to deliver science-based knowledge in the areas of human health and nutrition, food safety, and community and economic viability through fun, innovative curriculum and recipe demonstrations created by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP).

In 2008, Cooperative Extension delivered EFNEP and FSNEP education to low-income families residing in many Los Angeles County communities: South Gate, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Norwalk, Long Beach, East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights, Pasadena, Watts, Compton, Lynwood, Florence-Firestone, South Central Los Angeles, Chinatown Inglewood-Crenshaw, Lennox, Hawthorne and Gardena. Classes were conducted in various community settings, such as schools, Head Start sites, rehabilitation centers, local grocery stores and several county housing development sites. During 2008, our efforts to extend knowledge to families with limited resources was more important than ever due to the downturn in the economy and increasing rates of obesity and other chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and stroke.

Translated into numbers, the FSNEP program reached 341 food stamp-eligible families and EFNEP reached 995 families. Staff reached 2,231 children with the program's education and messages. Ninety-three percent of participants improved one or more nutrition practices; 91 per-

cent improved one or more food resource management practices; and 86 percent improved one or more food safety practices. The data were collected by pre- and post-education surveys.

The Youth EFNEP and FSNEP programs, offshoots of the original programs, train teachers and program leaders to present the same topics in a learning environment. In 2008, our EFNEP and FSNEP youth coordinators trained 226 teachers, who in turn went on to educate 6,440 children on the benefits of good nutrition. All of our nutrition programs are free of charge, reaching low-income youth throughout Los Angeles County.

In August 2008, Cooperative Extension welcomed Brenda Roche, a registered dietitian, as the new nutrition, family and consumer sciences advisor. Prior to joining Cooperative Extension, Roche interned at UNICEF-India to evaluate nutrition programs for girls and lactating women; assisted with a study by the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University on caloric restriction; and directed a community-based nutrition program, serving HIV-positive clients and their families at Iris House, Inc. in Harlem, New York. Roche received her bachelor's degree in human nutrition from Cornell University, and her master's degree in food policy and applied nutrition from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University.



Demonstrations created by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program were helpful for families and individuals.



Youth nutrition education is an important part of the Nutrition, Family & Consumer Science program.

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Getting families to eat right and exercise

Children's Power Play! Campaign

The *Network for a Healthy California—Children's Power Play! Campaign* continues to encourage 9, 10 and 11-year-olds with limited resources to eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables and be physically active for better health.

In 2008, the *Power Play! Campaign* participated in the *Kid Healthy—Steps to Healthy Living Campaign* to respond to the growing crisis of childhood obesity in the United States. The rise is particularly evident in regions like Los Angeles County. In order to lower the incidence of childhood obesity and prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes, hypertension and other diseases that threaten the quality of life of children, the *Steps Campaign* promotes messages about good nutrition and encourages increased daily physical activity. A mass media effort was launched to reach a broader audience in the form of public service announcements and features on Los Angeles' ABC-7. Cooperative Extension is pleased to announce that the *Steps Campaign* successfully reached nearly 20,000 children in the county and recruited 361 community youth organizations. It developed new partnerships with organizations, such as the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation, E.N.E.R.G.Y. (Eating Nutritiously, Exercising Regularly & Growing "Y"-isely), Boys and Girls Club of Burbank and Carson, and Woodcraft Rangers; and conducted many tours in supermarkets and farmers markets. In addition, staff took part in school events: Walk to School, Mustang Bowl, Nutrition Month and Taste of California. It was a very busy and successful year.

Latino Campaign

The goal of the *Network for a Healthy California--Latino Campaign* is to empower low-income Latino adults and their families to consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables and enjoy physical activity every day in an effort to reduce the risk of chronic diseases. The campaign airs Spanish television and radio advertisements and operates mobile billboards. Bilingual spokespeople present the important issues to the media and conduct community-level interventions through festivals, farmers/flea markets and health service providers.

In 2008, staff worked hard to multiply their reach with the campaign's message. Altogether, approximately 2 million county residents were either directly or indirectly exposed to the *Latino Campaign's* message of good health through the partnership with retail outlets, farmers/flea markets, festivals, direct service providers and the media.

One of our many successes was our big event, "Good Health in Bad Times." In celebration of Latino Health Awareness Month in September, the University of California Cooperative Extension, in collaboration with the *Network for a Healthy California—Latino Campaign*, hosted a community fair for the residents of East Los Angeles and its surrounding neighborhoods. The event was also a celebration of Cooperative Extension's grand opening of its community demonstration kitchen in East Los Angeles. Now, the kitchen is available for use by local community groups for a variety of Cooperative Extension programs. The fair offered free health screenings, nutrition education and resources, recipe demonstrations, gardening and yoga workshops, and prizes. The attendance was high and the event was covered by both English and Spanish media organizations.



Staff conduct a cooking demonstration for a group of low income families.



Exercise is an important part of the *Network for a Healthy California Campaign*.

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Growing food and knowledge with families

The Common Ground Garden Program maintains two important projects: the Master Gardeners Volunteer Training Program and Fresh from the Garden. Both projects assist Los Angeles County residents — particularly low-income and

local community or school garden — at least 50 hours of service within one year of their certification. In addition, volunteers must earn at least another 15 hours of continuing education. The coveted title of Master Gardener is not gained easily.



traditionally under-served families — to garden, grow their own food and prepare it in a healthful manner.

The Master Gardener Program trains volunteers to be community educators, who provide science-based information on horticulture and environmentally sound gardening methods to many community gardeners throughout the county. The volunteers' passion for gardening is revealed in the classroom and in the number of volunteer hours they give to a

In 2008, the Master Gardener Program trained 51 new volunteers, which brought the total number of volunteers trained since 1993 to 806. One hundred and eighty-three active Master Gardeners volunteered 9,272 hours by assisting 87,376 low-income gardeners at 91 community, school, homeless/battered women's shelter and senior gardens. In addition, Master Gardeners attended 16 fairs and farmers markets to field questions and conduct mini gardening demonstrations and conducted 25 hands-on gardening workshops for low-income county residents, including those living in Los Angeles County housing developments. In 2008, the Master Gardener Program garnered quite a bit of attention from the local to the international media, such as the Pasadena Star-News, Associated Press, Los Angeles

Times, La Opinion, Sunset Magazine and the London Financial Times, to name a few.

As an effort to extend UC knowledge on various topics, such as pest identification, landscape management, and environmental and natural resource issues, staff have conducted approximately 30 presentations at conferences.



First graders from Lincoln Elementary School proudly show off the pumpkins they helped grow.

Left: Yvonne Savio, Common Ground program manager, leads a gardening workshop.

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Helping Los Angeles' green industry grow

Cooperative Extension environmental horticulturists are enthusiastic, hands-on experts in urban landscape trees and shrubs, recreational turf, athletic fields, efficient water use and integrated pest management. They are experts in the valuable "green industry" economy of L.A. County.

Don Hodel, Cooperative Extension's environmental horticulture advisor, identifies problems and seeks out solutions for landscape managers, county parks, nurseries, growers, and landscape architects. He does this by extending the practical, research-based information he has gathered over many years. In 2008, Hodel has carried out 15 research projects concerned with the selection and management of landscape plants, co-authored 18 publications, and conducted 38 lectures and presentations to more than 1,700 owners, managers and operators of businesses involved in the installation and management of landscape plants.

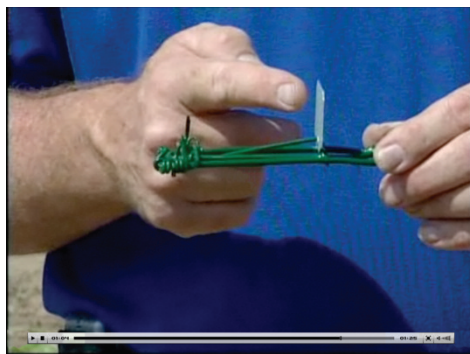
In addition, he offered his assistance and guidance to nursery staff in local community gardens and worked with about 100 clients, ranging from government organizations, such as The Arboretum and Botanical Garden of Los Angeles County, to nonprofit organizations running a landscape project.

Like Hodel, conducting research for and extending knowledge to industry professionals and the general public play a central role for **Dennis Pittenger**, Cooperative Extension's area environmental horticulture advisor. In 2008, he completed a research study, for which he collected data on minimum water needs of selected landscape plants in order to reduce overwatering; continued his research on new ornamental pear hybrids for use as landscape trees; and conducted a series of seminars on palm horticulture and management with Don Hodel and Jim

Downer, environmental horticulturist in Ventura County. Additionally, Pittenger co-authored eight publications and maintained his Web site for landscape professionals and landscape-related clientele (the Center for Landscape and Urban Horticulture:

<http://groups.ucanr.org/CLUH/>), while he developed a new Web site for California home gardeners (UC Urban Garden Web Project), which he hopes to have it up and running in late spring 2009.

Each year, **Cheryl Wilen**, Cooperative Extension's area integrated pest management (IPM) advisor, steps up to the challenge of developing effective methods of communicating information on pest control to her audience of professional and nonprofessional applicators. In 2008, Wilen worked with the Urban Ant Pest Management Alliance to coordinate outreach; developed videos about gopher baiting and trapping (for example:



<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7433.html>); and helped produce an educational Web broadcast video on ants around the home and pesticide safety for the UC Agriculture and Natural Resources' Spanish Broadcast and Media Services. She was interviewed for a short video on the topic of organically grown food, "The Truth About....Organics with Cheryl Wilen." It can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVEIqhnYrPM>. (continued on page 8)



New ornamental pear hybrids for use as landscape trees.

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8 Environmental Horticulture (continued)

John Kabashima, Cooperative Extension's cross-county environmental horticulture advisor, is a major authority on the red imported fire ant, giant whitefly, citrus leaf miner, diapaese weevil, and the glassy-winged sharpshooter. He continued to work with public agency partners, homeowners, and the agriculture and nursery industries to identify and eradicate these pests.

Through his efforts, the nursery industry was able to maintain a record of greater than 99.9 percent of nursery stock free of glassy-winged sharpshooters under the California Department of Food and



Agriculture's glassy-winged sharpshooter shipping protocol. In turn, the industry is capable of shipping plants throughout California without posing a threat to other agricultural crops that are susceptible to *Xylella fastidiosa*. The glassy-winged sharpshooter is much larger than the native California sharpshooters, thereby making it a better vector of *Xylella fastidiosa*, which is the causal organism of Pierce's Disease, creating sporadic problems for grapes and walnuts. In addition, Kabashima was and continues to be a vital member of the Urban Ant Pest Management Alliance, which is funded by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. The team consists of university researchers and extension specialists. The team is actively involved in laboratory and field research and outreach with the structural pest control industry. The primary goal of the alliance is the implementation and adoption of least toxic integrated pest management.

Janet Hartin, cross-county environmental horticulture advisor (serving Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties), focused on sustainable landscaping for much of 2008. She served as co-principal investigator on a recently acquired contract for \$450,000 from the California Department of Water Conservation Office of Water Use Efficiency for a project titled, "Evapotranspiration Adjustment Factor Study." The study will showcase 30 large water-conserving landscapes in California, planted in various plant densities and plant mixes. She was lead author of a 91-page handbook, "Compost Use for Landscape and Environmental Enhancement," which was funded by the California Integrated Waste Management Board. The user-friendly handbook includes information on newly developed standards to ensure uniform product quality and lists preferred ranges for pH, salinity, soil moisture and other physical and chemical properties for compost-based soil amendments, soil erosion control agents, turf topdressings, water quality enhancers, and more. It is available at no cost online at ciwmb.ca.gov. Hartin also authored a book titled, "Become a Landscape Company Owner," which includes everything from horticulture concepts and practices to small business management, methods for charging customers and promoting your company. It is available online as a hardcopy book that can be ordered or as a downloadable CD at fabjob.com. Finally, Hartin conducted 27 presentations to professional horticulturists and Master Gardeners on topics such as water conservation, compost and greenwaste use, and integrated pest management.

Compost Use for Landscape and Environmental Enhancement



Janet Hartin authored the 91-page handbook, "Compost Use for Landscape and Environmental Enhancement."

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Improving the natural environment in Los Angeles

UC Cooperative Extension's Natural Resources program offers timely research-based information for residents of Los Angeles County. Advisors partner with local, state and federal agencies, local nonprofits, and educational institutions to address LA County's critical issues, such as resource management, wildland fire, watershed protection, conservation, marine and water quality, and invasive species.

For the second consecutive year, **Sabrina Drill**, natural resources advisor, worked on The Sustainable and Fire Safe (SAFE) Landscapes project. The guidelines for creating and maintaining fire-safe, environmentally friendly landscapes in the wildland-urban interface were first created in 2007 for the 2008 LA County SAFE Landscapes Calendar. The 2009 calendar contains updates and additions to the 2008 version and copies were distributed to more than 30,000 L.A. County residents in the wildland-urban interface as well as to fire agencies, environmental groups and members of the green industry, such as nurseries and landscape design firms. Drill has also presented valuable fire-safety information at several

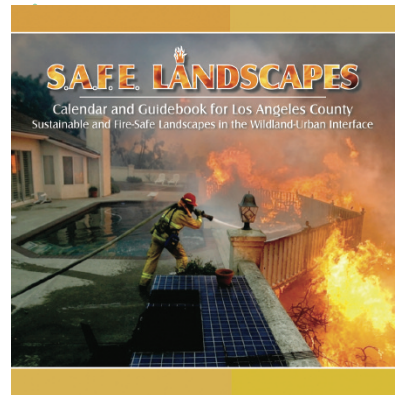
part in the new North Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance.

Another issue which is becoming increasingly problematic in Southern California is the New Zealand mudsnail—a pest that has already invaded the Santa Clara River. Drill has conducted field work to map and evaluate the impacts of this self-cloning snail.

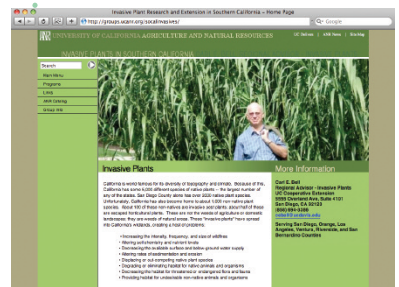
Like many Cooperative Extension advisors, Drill spends much of her time researching new information to extend to county residents and organizations. In 2008, she conducted field research to evaluate the ecology of steelhead trout from a stream in the Santa Monica Mountains, which led to a paper that has been accepted for publication in 2009 in the Bulletin of the Southern California Academy of Science and a presentation on conservation of southern steelhead at the World Fisheries Congress in Yokohama, Japan.

Carl Bell, Cooperative Extension's regional advisor in invasive plants, initiated several new field research trials on controlling invasive plants in riparian habitats in Southern California. These plants include the giant reed, common reed, cattail and the perennial pepperweed. In addition, his research on invasive annual plants, in areas burnt by the wildfires of 2003 and 2007, provides scientific support for methods to enhance and expedite the recovery process of these areas to their natural vegetation condition.

In other areas of his work in 2008, Bell, was the lead author of a peer-reviewed paper, "Effective fennel control with herbicides in natural *(continued on page 10)*



The Sustainable and Fire Safe (SAFE) Landscapes 2009 Calendar.



Invasive plant research and information on the Internet.

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symposia, served as a technical advisor on research programs to examine the impacts of fire on water quality, and took

habitats in California.” It was published in the inaugural issue of *Invasive Plant Science and Management*. Further, he chaired a symposium on the giant reed and common reed for the Western Society of Weed Science, and he launched a Web site that showcases information on invasive plants, results from his field research, and links to other reliable sources of information. The site can be found at <http://groups.ucanr.org/socalinvasives/>.

Monique Myers, coastal community development advisor, continued her efforts in the area of wetland contamination research and water conservation. In 2008, she submitted a proposal, as co-principal investigator to the UC Marine Council California Environmental Quality Initiative. Their research proposal, “Fate, Persistence, and Source Identification of Pathogens, Pathogen Indicator Bacteria, and Human Specific Markers in Coastal Beach and Wetland Sediments of Southern California,” was awarded \$100,000. One of the research sites is in the Malibu Lagoon.

In 2007, Myers created a series of “Green Sheets” to address water conservation issues from permeable driveways to saving topsoil. The information sheets were well received and recognized with honorable mention at the Mar Com Awards, and in 2008, Myers received funding to work with **Valerie Borel**, watershed and wildlife education coordinator, to create four to six more “Green Sheets” for Los Angeles and Ventura county planning offices. The sheets can be found at <http://www.csgc.ucsd.edu/BOOKSTORE/greensheets.html>.

In 2008, working with Susan Schlosser, Sea Grant advisor, Myers obtained funding from the California Sea Grant to create a new program area—climate change. The funding will allow them to address mass media outreach for California climate change research. So far, Myers has interviewed some of the most prominent climate change researchers in California and that list includes directors of the UC Climate Change Centers, gubernatorial appointees to the Air Resources Board, Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change authors, and Kelly Redmond, the Western Regional Climatologist. Currently, ANR communications experts are adding video images to the interviews and creating a Web site where the interviews will be available to the public as transcripts and video. The Web site is expected to be up and running in spring 2009.

The quagga mussel, an invasive species originally introduced to the Great Lakes, recently has established a presence in several lakes in Southern California. These mussels are extremely prolific and clog water delivery systems and displace native species. Funded by the California Department of Fish and Game, Myers worked with Marine Advisor Carrie Culver, Drill and Borel to provide a database of potential participants for an early detection monitoring network in Southern California. They presented four workshops for small lake managers at various Southern California locations.



Green sheets address water conservation issues.



The invasive and prolific quagga mussel has recently established a presence in several Southern California lakes clogging water delivery systems and displace native species.

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A new agriculture and environmental issues advisor

In October 2008, Andre Biscaro was named Cooperative Extension's new agriculture and environmental issues advisor for Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties.

Brazilian-born Biscaro completed his master's degree in agronomy and soils at Auburn University in Alabama, and earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Sao Paulo in Piracicaba, Brazil.



Before joining Cooperative Extension, Biscaro consulted with Amyris Biotechnologies in Atmore, Ala., where he managed a sugar cane nursery field intended for biofuel production. In Brazil, he was involved in several research projects led by the University of Sao Paulo and worked for 18 months as a consultant for APagri, a precision agriculture organization.

Biscaro has spent much of his time in 2008 getting to know the Antelope Valley environment and its landscapes. He has consulted with high desert growers and local agricultural and natural resources agencies to identify priority research and educational programs. As his first research endeavor, Biscaro initiated a project on phosphorus and potassium management with a local grower and hopes to publish the results.



Agriculture and wild flowers coexist in the diverse Antelope Valley.

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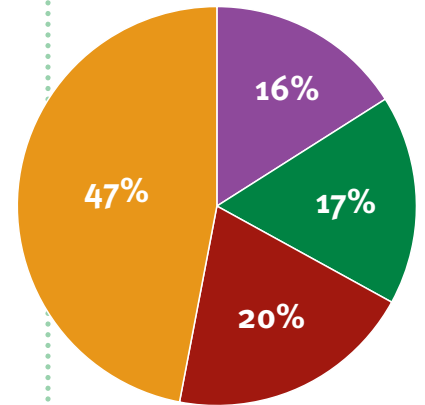
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Also, we would like to thank our 4-H volunteers and Master Gardeners for their support and dedication to our programs throughout the year. They make our successes possible!



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- County 16%
- UC 17%
- Federal 20%
- Gifts, Grants, Contracts and Endowments 47%

From the campus to the community



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