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# UCCE Imperial County to add 2 advisors

**BY TOM BODUS**  
Editor in Chief

HOLTVILLE — The University of California Desert Research and Extension Center at 1004 Holton Road will soon be home to two additional Cooperative Extension advisors.

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources recently announced it has released 48 more UCCE advisor positions for recruitment statewide over the next 12 months thanks to increased 2021-22 state funding.

This brings the total to 89 new UCCE Advisor positions since July 2021 when Gov. Gavin Newsom and the state Legislature provided a budget boost for UC ANR. During the last six months of 2021, UC ANR released 41 other UCCE positions that have been filled or are under recruitment.

One of the two positions slated to join the UCCE staff in Holtville is a food safety and organic production area advisor for Imperial and Riverside counties. Oli Bachie, UCCE director for Imperial and San Diego counties, said the new advisor will be on hand to help producers avoid food contamination issues, such as the E. coli outbreak in romaine lettuce traced to Yuma, Ariz., in spring 2018. He said in a region where produce is grown in fields that border feedlots and dairy operations, vigilance is a priority.

In addition, the new advisor will be responsible for providing support for the Valley's growing number

of organic farmers. Bachie estimated the number of organic producers in Imperial County has more than doubled over the past eight years, and they have been in need of better support.

Bachie said he expects the food safety and organic production advisor post to be filled "very soon."

The other new advisory position that has opened in Holtville is a pathology area advisor for Imperial, Riverside and San Diego counties. The new hire will allow the Desert Research Center to diagnose plant pathogens — fungi, bacteria, viruses — locally, as opposed to sending sample to UC Davis or UC Riverside for testing.

Additional UC Cooperative Extension Specialist positions will be announced for recruitment in early April 2022.

"We appreciate the people across the state who worked with UCANR to develop the UC Cooperative Extension advisor position proposals," said Glenda Humiston, University of California vice president for agriculture and natural resources. "Input from community members and partnering agencies and organizations was critical to informing the prioritization of these UCCE positions. Now we hope our supporters will help us recruit the best scientists to work with California's communities."

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