

**Farm Advisor
Final Performance Plan
FY 2008-09**

I. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Farm Advisor-University of California (UC) Cooperative Extension program is to sustain a vital agriculture, environment, and community in Marin County by providing UC research-based information in agriculture, natural resource management, nutrition, and youth development.

II. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Farm Advisor's programs operate through a unique partnership between the County, the University of California (UC) system, support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other private funds. Backed by the resources of the UC campuses, the department's educational programs use practically applied research information to solve community problems. The Farm Advisor, with its supporting partners, consults with individuals and organizations, publishes newsletters, produces information for mass media, and conducts seminars and workshops.

The UC Cooperative Extension program provides countywide services through an agreement between the County and the University of California that has existed since 1921. The University provides research and education services through three university professionals who are funded by the State. In addition, four Sonoma-based UC advisors work cross-county between Marin and Sonoma counties. The County provides support staff and basic operational costs.

The Farm Advisor provides the following services:

- Sustainable Agriculture
- Urban Horticulture
- Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Coordination
- Water Quality & Watershed
- Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP)
- 4-H Youth Development

III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY 2007-08

- Partnered with Marin Municipal Water District to provide bay-friendly landscaping materials and information to MMWD customers with \$33,981 contract
- Partnered with College of Marin, the Marin Conservation Corps, and the Workforce Investment Board to create a hands-on garden learning site for corps members and others. A \$33,000 grant provided by the county Board of Supervisors for planning consultation is moving the design forward towards groundbreaking
- Provided Spanish materials on invasive plants to local landscape crews; translated Sudden Oak Materials and made available on line, and offered summer-long Saturday bilingual "clinica planta enferma" to 35 residents at local Spanish market
- Completed an evaluation of water quality/conservation practices on 102 riparian sites in Marin, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties and used results to document positive and negative outcomes from restoration projects, improve revegetation project design, and justify additional funding requests for future work
- Secured \$397,250 in grants and donations to support the programs offered to Marin residents, and work in natural systems

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- Completed a 30-minute high-definition video ("Hidden Bounty of Agriculture in Marin") for broadcast via public and community access television, and the G-channel to make more Marin residents aware of our agricultural bounty and challenges and how to connect to our local food system
- Completed website upgrades that added information such as "resources for farmers" section on Grown in Marin site; added "resources for teachers" site with school garden materials, ag literacy curriculum, and MALT farm and ranch map

IV. GOALS AND INITIATIVES FY 2008-09

GOAL 1: Strengthen the viability and long-term success of agriculture in Marin County by educating producers on issues such as business diversification and environmental stewardship

FY 2008-09 Initiatives

1. Conduct county conference on climate change and county agriculture in winter 2009 with funding from the Marin Community Foundation
2. Continue to publish the Grown in Marin newsletter as a communication link among all groups, including community members and local decision-makers and update and maintain the Grown in Marin website and joint electronic listserv
3. Conduct farmer-to-farmer tours and workshops in marketing, farm succession, organic conversion, and value-added ventures
4. Distribute high-definition video to community groups and make available on G-channel and community access television

GOAL 2: Increase bay-friendly water conservation and landscape practices and increase reuse of green and animal waste with on-farm composting

FY 2008-09 Initiatives

1. Provide Bay Friendly programs to professional landscape industry and residents
2. Collaborate with Marin Resource Conservation District in on-farm green waste project funded for West Marin
3. Continue Phase II project with Marin Conservation Corps and College of Marin to create horticultural training program at IVC campus
4. Conduct research project on efficacy of various SOD treatments with USDA-FS funding

GOAL 3: Improve County response to Sudden Oak Death disease

FY 2008-09 Initiatives

1. Hire technical outreach staff for Sudden Oak Death (SOD) education and training efforts

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FY 2008-09 Initiatives

2. Incorporate SOD suppression, treatment and management information into all public meetings and interactions with professionals and the public
3. Conduct workshops in communities impacted by tree disease and mortality to address questions of disease progression and spread, fire and fuels, and treatment options

GOAL 4: Improve water quality in Tomales Bay and its environs with science-based research and information

FY 2008-09 Initiatives

1. Develop and initiate a comprehensive monitoring program for the Marin Resource Conservation District (MRCD)
2. Provide technical and process assistance in the development of conditional waivers for grazing livestock on agriculture lands
3. Collaborate with MRCD staff on carbon sequestration and soil fertility study and demonstration project for increasing biocapacity

GOAL 5: Provide direction on Countywide funding for habitat restoration

FY 2008-09 Initiatives

1. Administer County funds for wildlife and fisheries habitat improvement projects through oversight of the County Wildlife and Fisheries Committee and funding partnership with the Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program

GOAL 6: Develop leadership, community service, and life skills among Marin County youth using hands-on, project-based learning in science literacy and environmental education

FY 2008-09 Initiatives

1. Collaborate with Marin Conservation Corps, MALT, and other youth-serving organizations to expand agriculture literacy to more educators and youth countywide
2. Expand FSNEP participation in Marin day care centers and elementary schools to increase the number of youth who receive healthy nutrition information in school

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V. KEY CHALLENGES AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- Securing permanent UC funding for Dairy Advisor position, which will be critical in responding to growing technical needs of North Bay dairy industry, including organic transition and production assistance, value-added technical expertise, and environmental compliance regarding water quality practices. This advisor position was approved and lost to budget cut-backs in 2004. It is in the queue for UC funding for this FY.
- Continued support for agriculture ombudsman position is critical for timely and expert assistance to challenges facing Point Reyes National Seashore rancher lessees and other landowners hoping to diversify their operations. There are development code improvements that are high priority and have short term timeframes that a contractor could assist CDA in completing. These include agriculture-related code criteria and standards review and updates and the Local Coastal Plan update.

VI. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Sustainable Agriculture is a key County priority due to its important role in the county's economic health, historical heritage and open space values. Producers need on-going assistance with diversification tools that enhance their ability to remain or become more profitable. Retaining Marin County's agricultural heritage is a key component of the Countywide Goal of Environmental Preservation and equally important in maintaining a diverse economy.

Activities in support of Sustainable Agriculture have been effective in helping Marin County's 250 agricultural producers with new crop and product diversification that has improved their economic bottom line. The UC Cooperative Extension Range Advisor and Specialty Crops Advisor, both based in Sonoma County, work with the Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator on this effort.

OBJECTIVE: Increase the planned number of on-farm diversification projects to help producers sustain profitable agriculture enterprise

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Estimate	FY 08-09 Estimate
Workload Measures			
Number of information workshops conducted	8	8	10
Number of attendees at workshops	266	312	275
Effectiveness Measures			
Percent of workshop attendees indicating they are planning to develop on-farm diversification projects	92%	88%	83%
Change in number of operators in agriculture	270	280	280

Department Comments:

Measures provide important regarding data the direction and focus of programs and technical information important to local agricultural operators.

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OBJECTIVE: Increase the number of pasture conversions to help producers improve their profitability margins

Measures	FY 05607 Actual	FY 07-08 Estimate	FY 08-09 Estimate
Workload Measures			
Number of staff hours spent on visits, consultations, and other assistance	435	675	575
Efficiency Measures			
Number of staff hours per acre conversion	5.3	6.6	3.1
Effectiveness Measures			
Net increase in acres of pasture conversion	2,318	1,628	3,000

Department Comments:

Measures provide important feedback regarding success of programmatic efforts.

WATER QUALITY AND WATERSHED

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Providing clean water that supports a vibrant biotic community in the Bay, and surrounding watersheds, restores fisheries, allows recreational activities, and maintains viable aquaculture and agricultural industries are all long term-desired outcomes.

OBJECTIVE: Improve management practices on agricultural operations resulting in lowered pollutant loading in the watershed and to the bay

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Estimate	FY 08-09 Estimate
Workload Measures			
Number of participating ranch or dairy landowners	10	10	14
Efficiency Measures			
Number of water and soil samples collected	300	400	300
Effectiveness Measures			
Number of conservation management practices implemented on-farm	5	25	5

Department Comments::

Participating landowners are the target audience for which behavioral change through the implementation of water quality improving practices is the goal. Samples collected document the level of effort to generate the water quality data needed to determine conservation practice effectiveness.

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On-farm management practices implemented document the implementation of measures to improve water quality in runoff from livestock agriculture. Management practices monitored documents the number of conservation projects evaluated for their effectiveness in improving water quality and habitat in the area watersheds.

URBAN HORTICULTURE

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Bay water quality will be improved by expanding educational outreach on water conservation and other bay friendly practices to MMWD customers that will help reduce the amount of potential nutrients reaching Marin streams, improve water quality in target streams and result in wider adoption of bay-friendly landscape and water conservation practices by Marin residents.

OBJECTIVE: Increased bay-friendly water conservation and landscape practices resulting in lowered water and pesticide use in the watershed

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Estimate	FY 08-09 Estimate
Workload Measures			
Number of participating residents and homeowners in education outreach	n/a	n/a	180
Efficiency Measures			
Number of resident surveys completed	n/a	n/a	180
Effectiveness Measures			
Number of residents who changed conservation practices	n/a	n/a	90
Amount of water usage reduced after education (millions of gallons)	n/a	n/a	2.25

Department Comments:

These measures provide important feedback as to the success of the Farm Advisor's programmatic efforts, guide current and future direction of programs, and provide technical information to the Marin Municipal Water District.