

Farm Advisor FY 2010-11 Performance Plan

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
- Integrated Landscape Management
- Water Quality and Watershed
- 4-H Youth Development

III. FY 2009-10 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted 300 home garden water conservation consultations through the Bay-Friendly Water Walks Program a partnership with Marin Municipal Water District and Marin Master Gardeners, which reduced annual water usage of homeowners that received consultation by up to 15 percent
- Had the largest recent enrollment (80 students) in the first two offerings of the "Principles of Farming" college course at the College of Marin Indian Valley Campus courses; staff connected students with employment opportunities on Marin farms and in community-based organizations
- Designed, installed and hosted the Victory Garden demonstrations at County Fair where over 1,500 fair goers visited demonstration gardens for growing vegetables, conserving water, and creating bee and pollinator habitat as well as the integrated pest management kiosk
- Won the 2009 Western Fairs Association Achievement Award in the area of Community Outreach for 15 presentations with approximately 900 attendees by the Master Gardeners on topics ranging from composting to lawn replacement to growing vegetables from seed
- Conducted two workshops with ranchers on department developed ranch plan and annual certification templates on conditional waivers for grazing land waste discharge requirements regarding water quality regulations
- Led the second year of the Marin 4-H Naturalist Leader Project with Conservation Corps North Bay, where 22 AmeriCorps volunteer leaders practiced presentation skills, organized and conducted

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lesson plans, and met community leaders and mentors in order to bolstered their confidence in leading school youth groups throughout Marin, including the Caesar Chavez clubs

IV. GOALS AND KEY INITIATIVES FOR FY 2010-11

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

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Goal and activities directly reflect and integrate department's priority for facilitating agricultural operation viability and environmental stewardship with countywide goals and priorities of environmental preservation, healthy communities, and sustainable communities.

FY 2010-11 Key Initiatives

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| 1. Organize the 2010 Agricultural Summit - Viability for Sustainability |
| 2. Conduct young farmer development and training |
| 3. Improve production and ecosystem services through farm soil management |

Goal 2: Provide integrated landscape management to increase bay-friendly water conservation and landscape practices, increase reuse of green and animal waste with on-farm composting, and reduce landscape threats related to sudden oak death

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Goal and activities directly reflects and integrates department's priority for sustainable landscape management, including environmental stewardship, with countywide goals and priorities of environmental preservation, safe communities, and healthy communities.

FY 2010-11 Key Initiatives

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| 1. Reduce the spread of Sudden Oak Death through plant nursery operations through outreach and education |
| 2. Promote research and education on carbon sequestration in soils through livestock grazing management and stream restoration |
| 3. Continue delivery of Bay-friendly Water Walks with expanded sustainable landscaping content |

Goal 3: Improve water quality in Tomales Bay and its environs with science-based research and information

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Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Goal and activities directly reflects and integrates department's priority for facilitating agricultural operation viability and environmental stewardship with countywide goals and priorities of environmental preservation, healthy communities, and sustainable communities.

FY 2010-11 Key Initiatives

1. Expand the Conditional Waiver Program to increase on-farm implementation of water quality and improve conservation practices
2. Collaborate with Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPP) to contribute to the implementation of the San Geronimo Salmon Enhancement Plan
3. Collaborate with the Marin Resource Conservation District on implementation of stream bank stabilization projects in the Walker Creek watershed to reduce sediment and mercury impacts to the water course

Goal 4: Provide direction on countywide funding for habitat restoration

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Goal and activities directly reflects and integrates department's priority for facilitating watershed and habitat restoration with countywide goals and priorities of environmental preservation and managing for results.

FY 2010-11 Key Initiatives

1. Administer county funds for fish and wildlife projects through oversight of County Fish and Wildlife Commission and funding partnership with Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPP)
2. Complete annual programmatic review of soil and water conservation practices completed on private ranch lands since the 1950s

Goal 5: Develop leadership, community service, and life skills among Marin County youth using experiential, inquiry-based learning in science literacy and environmental education

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Goal and activities directly reflects and integrates department's priority for youth development and bridging the education gap with countywide goals and priorities of healthy communities and community participation.

FY 2010-11 Key Initiatives

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FY 2010-11 Key Initiatives

1. Formalize the Naturalist Leader Training with the Conservation Corps North Bay, using the results and feedback from the two-year pilot program
2. Collaborate with Conservation Corps, Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), Boys and Girls Club, and other youth serving organizations to expand science literacy to educators and youth countywide

V. KEY CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

- Facing continuous program delivery challenges as a result of ongoing budget reductions affected by the economy
- Continuing conversion of farms to organic and maintaining organic certification given the new organic standards for pasture use and animal welfare recently passed by the National Organic Program
- Identifying project funding totaling \$22,000 for the Bay-Friendly Water Walks if the Marin Municipal Water District is unable to resume funding in FY 2010-11
- Maintaining support for agriculture ombudsman position is critical for timely and expert assistance to challenges facing Point Reyes Nation Seashore rancher lessees and other landowners hoping to diversify their operations

VI. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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

Measures	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Actual	FY 09-10 Estimate	FY 10-11 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of information workshops conducted	10	7	7	5
Number of attendees at workshops	250	389	299	250
Effectiveness Measures				
Percent of workshop attendees indicating they are planning to develop on-farm diversification projects	80%	84%	83%	80%
Number of operators initiating or completing diversification projects	8	6	6	6

Story Behind Performance: In addition to effective workshops, newsletters, and farm consultations, the department will organize the 2010 Agriculture Summit which expected to have up to 150 attendees.

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This summit will be an outcome, 10 year forward planning event for all agriculturalists and partners for the viability of agriculture and stewardship of Marin's watersheds.

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

Measures	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Actual	FY 09-10 Estimate	FY 10-11 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of staff hours spent on visits, consultations, and other assistance	675	650	700	650
Efficiency Measures				
Number of staff hours per acre conversion	4.4	5.5	4.3	4.3
Effectiveness Measures				
Net increase in acres of pasture conversion	3,000	4,000	3,000	1,500

Story Behind Performance: This coming year's activities will focus on the needs of producers to comply with new National Organic Program requirements for pasture use and animal welfare. These requirements will impact the ability of producers to convert their operations to organic and to maintain organic certification. It is the department's priority to assist organic producers with these new compliance requirements. New requirements could impact the number of acres converted in future years.

INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Objective: Increase the quantity and quality of experience for Marin residents participating in community gardening

Measures	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Actual	FY 09-10 Estimate	FY 10-11 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of community gardens receiving program information	n/a	n/a	n/a	6
Effectiveness Measures				
Number of community garden gardeners using information provided through outreach and education	n/a	n/a	n/a	150

Story Behind Performance: Access to community gardens and having a positive experience in those community gardens can have long lasting benefits to the quality of life for participants and their community at large. Our Marin Garden Project is beginning to deliver information and support to organize community gardens and provide technical support gardeners for these purposes.

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WATER QUALITY AND WATERSHED

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

Measures	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Actual	FY 09-10 Estimate	FY 10-11 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of participating ranch or dairy landowners	10	14	14	50
Number of water and soil samples collected	400	1,300	150	150
Number of conservation management practices implemented on-farm	25	7	10	15

Story Behind Performance: Through delivery of support services to comply with Regional Water Quality Control Board policies and requirements, we will facilitate participation of ranchers in the implementation of water quality improving management practices. Additionally, research on the benefits of grazing management and stream restoration to California plant communities, soil carbon sequestration, and rangeland productivity will improve the ecosystem services of Marin's agricultural lands.

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

Measures	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 10-11 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of participating residents and homeowners in education outreach	n/a	259	200	200
Number of resident surveys completed	n/a	259	200	150
Effectiveness Measures				
Number of residents who changed conservation practices	n/a	110	115	100
Amount of water usage reduced after education (millions of gallons)	n/a	2.25	2.30	2.25

Story Behind Performance: Individual homeowners are eager to implement landscape practices and measures that reduce environmental impacts from home gardening and realizing savings on utility bills. This objective and activities provides homeowners with the information and motivation to make these changes.