

# Farm Advisor

## FY 2012-13 Performance Plan

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### **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 Management
- 4-H Youth Development

### **III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY 2011-12**

- Completed the development and publication of the Marin Agricultural Support Action Plan, including partnership responsibilities and timeline for action implementation
- Led Marin's agricultural community participation in the five-county North Coast Food Network Program
- Expanded youth science literacy through delivery of our Embryology Program to more than ten schools and after school programs reaching 730 students
- Expanded youth gardening and environmental education to over 21 school gardens with 5,800+ participating students
- Convened local and area resource managers, agency staff, and agricultural producers to learn about Ecosystem Services and form programs and initiatives to realize their benefits and recognize and value those that provide them

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- Organized and hosted the Fifth Sudden Oak Death Science Symposium with 200+ local, state, national, and international participants
- Completed the fourth season of Bay Friendly Garden Walks in partnership with the Marin Municipal Water District, providing a combined service for garden water conservation to 685 home owners
- Program won the 2011 Statewide Master Gardener Program Search for Excellence Award
- Formed the Cheese Maker Certificate Program and Organic Farming Apprenticeship and Work Experience courses in partnership with the College of Marin
- Initiated and supported the 2012 County Fair theme in celebration of Marin’s agricultural legacy and future in collaboration with Department of Cultural and Visitor Services
- Contributed to the successful development and implementation of the San Geronimo Valley Landowner Assistance Program including delivery of two homeowner stewardship conferences and field days as well as identification of ten salmon habitat restoration projects for future implementation

## IV. GOALS AND KEY INITIATIVES FOR FY 2012-13

### GOAL I

**Strengthen the viability and long-term success of agriculture of Marin County by educating producers and next generation farmers**

<b>Countywide Goal</b>	III. Sustainable Communities
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FY 2012-13 Key Initiatives
1. Continue implementation of the Marin Agriculture Support Action Plan: A) Staffing and facilitating the action plan team; B) Staffing agricultural infrastructure planning and strategy efforts; and C) Implementing successional planning programs and support for Marin’s farm families
2. Increase pasture productivity through the generation of solutions for managing invasive weeds
3. Continue to provide technical analysis and input for use in development of the Local Coastal Program update
4. Expand cropping options through introduction and trial of alternative crops
5. Provide growers support to enhance and expand food-safety best practices for harvesting, packaging, and distribution

### GOAL II

**Provide integrated landscape management to increase bay-friendly water conservation and landscape practice, increase reuse of green and animal waste with on-farm composting, and reduce landscape threats to sudden oak death.**

<b>Countywide Goal</b>	IV. Environmental Preservation
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## **FY 2012-13 Key Initiatives**

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| 1. Complete the fifth season of Bay Friendly Garden Walks adding an additional 150 homes and home gardeners to the 685 already served |
| 2. Continue implementation of pilot demonstration for the Marin Carbon Project on working ranches                                     |
| 3. Expand firewood use education campaign to reduce the risk of forest disease spread   |
| 4. Initiate climate change program delivery through all department components   |

### **GOAL III**

**Improve water quality in Tomales Bay and its environs with science-based research and information**

#### **Countywide Goal**

IV. Environmental Preservation

## **FY 2012-13 Key Initiatives**

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| 1. Initiate on-farm investigation of practices for manure use on-farm that reduce bacteria and nutrient contamination in area streams               |
| 2. Secure funding and initiate stream restoration project implementation through the San Geronimo Valley Landowner Assistance Program collaboration |

### **GOAL IV**

**Provide direction on countywide funding for habitat restoration**

#### **Countywide Goal**

IV. Environmental Preservation

## **FY 2012-13 Key Initiatives**

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| 1. Administer county funds for fish and wildlife projects through oversight of Marin County Fish and Wildlife Commission |
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### **GOAL V**

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

#### **Countywide Goal**

III. Sustainable Communities

## **FY 2012-13 Key Initiatives**

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| 1. Deliver vegetable gardening and environmental education to 20 schools and at three demonstrate gardens throughout the County         |
| 2. Continue expansion of our Embryology program, and its science literacy focus, that is currently serving over 700 students countywide |

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## V. KEY CHALLENGES AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- Implementation of the Marin Agricultural Support Action Plan will rely upon strong collaboration with the agricultural agencies and community based organizations. It will also require critical foundational staffing that is partially provided by the Marin Agricultural Ombudsman and the Organic and Sustainable Agricultural Coordinator. Additional core staffing support will be needed to provide facilitation and coordination of the initiatives and programs identified in the Plan.
- The completion and approval of the Local Coastal Program is still pending. There are many policy issues of critical relevance and potential impact to the viability of Marin agriculture and its contribution to Marin's sustainability.
- Ability to be flexible and responsive to new and emerging issues is of longstanding and increasing importance. Examples from the last year include technical analysis and input to the Local Coastal Program update and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Drakes Bay Oyster Company, initiating management practice trials for invasive thistle removal, and developing alternatives for farm apprenticeships and internships. This capacity is contingent upon core staffing levels, and/or accessing funding support that provide release time for response as events and issues arise.

## VI. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

<b>Department Goal</b>	Goal I: Strengthen the viability and long-term success of agriculture of Marin County by educating producers and next generation farmers
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**Objective: Increase the planned number of on-farm diversification projects to help producers sustain profitable agriculture enterprise**

MEASURES	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Actual	FY 2011-12 Target	FY 2012-13 Target
<b>Workload Measures</b>					
Number of information workshops conducted	7	7	5	7	7
Number of attendees at workshops	389	300	296	350	300
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>					
Percent of workshop attendees indicating they are planning to develop on-farm diversification projects	84%	83%	82%	80%	80%
➔ Number of operators initiating or completing diversification projects	10	7	6	5	5

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➔ Indicates a Key Measure

## Department Goal

Goal I: Strengthen the viability and long-term success of agriculture of Marin County by educating producers and next generation farmers

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

MEASURES	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Actual	FY 2011-12 Target	FY 2012-13 Target
<b>Workload Measures</b>					
Number of staff hours spent on visits, consultations, and other assistance	650	700	700	650	700
<b>Efficiency Measures</b>					
Number of staff hours per acre conversion	5.5	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>					
Net increase in acres of pasture conversion	4,000	3,000	2,000	1,500	1,500

➔ Indicates a Key Measure

**Story Behind Performance:** Two factors are driving the need for increased certified organic pasture - new requirements from the National Organic Program for the amount of pasture derived forage and duration of time livestock are on pasture annual; and transition of selected dairy producers to an alternative cooperative and creamery resulting in spots opening up within the existing creamery. The result is that more and more dairy farms and grazing livestock operations are entertaining organic conversion either for their own operation or to lease to other livestock agricultural operations. With increased organic pasture production comes the need for management practices to maintain productivity including weed and thistle management.

## INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

### Department Goal

Goal II: Preserve the environment through integrated landscape management

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

MEASURES	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Actual	FY 2011-12 Target	FY 2012-13 Target
<b>Workload Measures</b>					
Number of community gardens receiving program information	n/a	n/a	10	18	20
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>					
Number of community garden gardeners using information provided through outreach and education	n/a	n/a	230	500	600
➔ Number of community and school gardens using program information to implement and improve community garden opportunities for residents	n/a	n/a	n/a	18	20

➔ Indicates a Key Measure

**Story Behind Performance:** Of note for this program is the City of San Rafael and California State Parks Community Service Award of the department's Falkirk Demonstration Garden and the Marin Master Gardeners that run it. The nexus of the volunteer enthusiasm, technical content support of Environmental Horticulture Advisor, and the receptiveness and interest of community members for community and school gardens has provided for an expansion of this program component. The result is a strengthening of local communities through gardening and all the nutritional and environmental benefits that they provide. There are still policy and community organizing obstacles to fully realizing the benefits of community gardens countywide. In collaboration with our partners, the department will continue to provide support for community organization and capacity building, as well as developing policy options.

## WATER QUALITY AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

<b>Department Goal</b>	Goal III: Improve water quality in Tomales Bay and its environs with science-based research and information
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**Objective: Improve management practices on agricultural operations resulting in lowered pollutant loading in the watershed and to the bay**

MEASURES	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Actual	FY 2011-12 Target	FY 2011-12 Target
<b>Workload Measures</b>					

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MEASURES	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Actual	FY 2011-12 Target	FY 2011-12 Target
➔ Number of participating ranch or dairy landowners	14	150	75	75	75
Number of water and soil samples collected	1,300	150	200	200	200
➔ Number of conservation management practices implemented on-farm	7	10	20	15	20

➔ Indicates a Key Measure

**Story Behind Performance:** Department is currently in contract discussions for funding from the EPA and State Water Resources Control Board to develop on-farm management practices for manure application to pastures that reduce nutrient and bacteria contamination to area streams. This project initiative is the next strategic step in providing dairy farmers the tools needed for managing their agricultural production and stewarding Marin's watersheds. The department continues to collaborate with the Marin Resource Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to leverage other funding sources and programs that cost-share on management practice implementation. This includes the completion of the *A Half Century of Stewardship* report (<http://cemarin.ucdavis.edu/files/130468.pdf>), a compilation and analysis of the stewardship accomplishments made by Marin's farmers and ranchers.

<b>Department Goal</b>	Goal II: Preserve the environment through integrated landscape management
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**Objective: Increase bay-friendly water conservation and landscape practices to lower water and pesticide use in the watershed**

MEASURES	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Actual	FY 2011-12 Target	FY 2011-12 Target
<b>Workload Measures</b>					
Number of participating residents and homeowners in education outreach	259	200	200	150	300
Number of resident surveys completed	259	200	155	150	150
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>					
Number of residents who changed conservation practices	110	115	100	100	100
➔ Amount of water usage reduced after education (millions of gallons)	2.25	2.25	2.30	2.25	2.25

➔ Indicates a Key Measure

**Story Behind Performance:** This program continues to be successful and garner recognition for its impact and service. Most recently, the program received the 2011 University of California Statewide Master Gardener Program Search for Excellence award. Individual homeowners are

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eager to implement landscape practices and measures that reduce environmental impacts from home gardening and realize savings on utility bills. This objective and resulting program activities provide homeowners with the information and motivation to make these changes. We are currently supported for the program's 5<sup>th</sup> Season through our collaboration and partnership with the Marin Municipal Water District. It is not anticipated that this support will be continued beyond the 2012 program year. The department is currently developing contingencies for continuing the program into a sixth season but at present the program faces the real risk of being closed.