

Introducing your new information source for CDEA grants at UCCE Kern County

Shulamit Shroder is the newest member of the UC Cooperative Extension Kern County office. Shulamit is based out of Kern County and serves Kern, Tulare, and Kings Counties. She specializes in the climate smart agriculture initiatives from the California Department of Food and Agriculture. They provide technical assistance for the SWEEP, AMMP, and Healthy Soils grant programs.

- The State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) encourages farmers to install more efficient irrigation systems that decrease their water consumption as well as their greenhouse gas emissions. You can apply for a SWEEP grant for up to \$100,000.
- The Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP) awards funds - up to \$750,000 - to livestock producers who decrease their methane emissions by changing the way that they manage manure.
- The Healthy Soils Program incentivizes the implementation of conservation agriculture techniques that decrease erosion and greenhouse gas emissions, like cover cropping, compost, crop rotation, and mulching. For this grant, there is \$75,000 available per project.

Keep an eye out for future announcements about grant deadlines - they have all passed but should reopen within the next year, pending further funding.

For more information about these programs and for help applying for these grants, please contact Shulamit at:

Shulamit Shroder: sashroder@ucanr.edu or 661-868-6218

Spotlight on SWEEP in Almonds

Author: Shulamit Shroder

In 2016, Sill Properties in Kern County received a grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture's State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP). They used the funds to set up a more advanced irrigation management system. They installed soil moisture monitors, flow meters, a variable frequency drive, and weather stations. This allowed them to measure water flow and movement in their orchards. They can also now calculate soil moisture at depths of 18, 24, and 36 inches. They also converted 252 acres from flood irrigation to drip irrigation.

Benefits

Efficiency: Their overall water usage decreased, thanks to the more informed irrigation decisions they could now make. They now know when to best apply water to their trees, based on soil and weather conditions. Their energy usage has also diminished.

Productivity: They are now reporting increased yields in their orchards with this technology. The decrease in water and energy usage has also allowed them to save money in the long run.

Disadvantages

Maintenance: This farm pays a monthly fee to get their equipment adjusted and serviced and to receive their data, which is expensive. However, they felt that the increase in yields and decrease in expenses outweighed the maintenance costs.

Learning curve: As might be expected, it took some time before the managers and workers completely understood the system and had worked out all the kinks. Once they had mastered it, though, they felt that it was a good tool. The new system was worth the time invested in learning how to use it because they can now measure exactly how much water they are using.

The University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any person in any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, pregnancy (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, status as a protected veteran or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 [USERRA]), as well as state military and naval service. UC ANR policy prohibits retaliation against any employee or person in any of its programs or activities for bringing a complaint of discrimination or harassment. UC ANR policy also prohibits retaliation against a person who assists someone with a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or participates in any manner in an investigation or resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment. Retaliation includes threats, intimidation, reprisals, and/or adverse actions related to any of its programs or activities. UC ANR is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment and/or participation in any of its programs or activities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age or protected veteran status. University policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws. Inquiries regarding the University's equal employment opportunity policies may be directed to John Fox, Affirmative Action Compliance Officer and Title IX Officer, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618, (530) 750-1343. Email: jsafox@ucanr.edu. Website: http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/Diversity/Affirmative_Action/.
