

A Message From the County Director



Placer and Nevada Counties' UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) staff provides research-based educational services to meet the needs of local residents. Our programs in 4-H and youth development, Master Gardeners, Specialty Crops Eat Local Program, nutrition, horticulture and livestock provide education with an emphasis on hands-on learning to "help people help themselves." A key component of UCCE is the ability to respond in a fairly rapid fashion as new community needs emerge.

The best example of that over this past year was the drought. There was only 7-8 inches of precipitation in the two counties from January 2013 to January 2014. In response to the drought, UCCE presented at the Sierra

Research and Extension Center Drought Conference; worked collaboratively with Placer County Farm Bureau to host a drought meeting and a water agency update meeting for producers; held eight drought management meetings for farmers and ranchers; provided farm calls to discuss drought management for crops and livestock; developed drought information and resource pages for farmers, ranchers, and the general public. The Placer County Master Gardener program has developed their 2015 calendar with the title, *California Dreaming: Beautiful Gardens with Less Water*. The Nevada County Master Gardeners are working to develop a drought tolerant landscape at the NID Demonstration Garden.

Over 25% of children and adults are obese in Placer and Nevada Counties. UCCE has developed an integrated approach to educate county residents to eat healthier and to buy from local farmers or start a garden. The UC CalFresh program works with low-income schools and pre-schools to provide nutrition education and community events. The Nutrition BEST program provides nutrition education to families with children 0-5 years of age. Nutrition BEST works with four Early Head Start sites to provide a weekly box of produce to 96 families for 22 weeks. The Master Gardener program works collaboratively with Nutrition Best in helping Early Head Start families learn how to grow their own food. The 4-H Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork project in Nevada County works with afterschool children at two low-income schools to provide nutrition education, learning how to grow vegetables in the school gardens, and toured a local farm. The Eat Local Placer and Nevada Counties Project works to get residents to eat more fruits and vegetables and buy from local farmers. The project has reached over 70,000 residents, distributed \$8,600 in redeemed produce vouchers, injected more that \$16,000 into the local farming economy, and provided more than \$3,200 of local produce for distribution at local food banks.

A summary of these and many other contributions are contained in this document. Their diverse and extensive efforts were supported by over \$700,000 in grant funding. I hope you will find our efforts relevant and meaningful in their ability to maintain and improve the quality of life enjoyed here in Placer and Nevada Counties.

Roger Ingram,
County Director

