

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION TUOLUMNE COUNTY (FARM ADVISOR)

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The Cooperative Extension Office, better known as the Farm Advisor, has not been looked at since 2003-2004. This investigation was not complaint driven.

METHODOLOGY

Grand Jury members met with Staff of the University of California Cooperative Extension on April 8, 2010 in the Extension offices, 52 N. Washington Street, Sonora. Staff included the Farm Advisor/County Director, the Director of the Nutrition, Family, and Consumer Sciences Program; the Director of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program; the Master Gardener Program Coordinator; the 4-H Program Supervisor; and the Office Manager. Each staff member, with the exception of the Office Manager, presented a summary of their activities via a slideshow and handouts.

FINDINGS

1. The function of the Cooperative Extension Office is to transfer information from the University of California to the citizens of Tuolumne County to meet problems in agriculture, natural resources, food and nutrition, food safety, and community development.
2. The Cooperative Extension Office is funded by a mix of federal, state, and county resources as well as grants and fund-raising. The fiscal year 2009-2010 budget was \$716,465, of which Tuolumne County contributed \$184,865.
3. The Farm Advisor/County Director is responsible for initiating research programs that meet the needs of Tuolumne County residents. Projects have included a trail Safflower planting which is good for poor soils; techniques for controlling Medusahead, a weed grass; as well as workshops for dealing with Yellow Star Thistle.
4. The Director of the Nutrition, Family and Consumer Services program stated the program aims at earlier intervention in the lives of school children and their parents to encourage better food choices.
5. The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program is actively reaching children whose families receive food stamps by promoting nutritional food choice. The program served three (3) schools in 2009-2010. They expect to serve as many as six (6) schools within the next two (2) years, (2010-2012).
6. The Program Coordinator of the Master Gardener Program reported the Gardeners are working specifically on water reduction this year.
7. The Tuolumne County 4-H Program Manager stated the 4-H activities focus on Youth Development. There are youth-adult partnerships, opportunities to build life skills, and year-round participation.
8. Financial support from the county is the Cooperative Extension Office's biggest problem as this is not a state-mandated program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Grand Jury has no specific recommendations for Findings 1 through 7.
2. For Finding 8, the Grand Jury has no specific recommendation. It should be noted and acknowledged that the amount of funding contributed by the County is minimal, but well-spent.
3. This recommendation does not relate to any specific finding. The Grand Jury recommends more publicizing of the material and services available to the County's citizens at little or no cost to the citizen via the Cooperative Extension Office.

COMMENDATIONS

The members of the 2009-2010 Tuolumne County Grand Jury wish to commend all of the staff of the UC Cooperative Extension Office on their job performance. It was a pleasure to meet workers, who enjoyed what they were doing and doing it well, especially in today's business climate of "do more with less and in less time".