



UC Cooperative Extension Placer and Nevada Counties
2019 Annual Report



 **University of California**
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension is a nationwide system for non-formal education which was established by Congress in 1914 to improve America's agriculture and strengthen families and communities. Cooperative Extension is a partnership of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the State land grant universities, and county governments, cooperating to serve local citizens.

The mission of the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) is to serve California through the creation, development, and application of knowledge in agricultural, natural, and human resources. Cooperative Extension was established in Placer and Nevada Counties in 1917. In the original agreements, each county provides support staff and services in exchange for university-paid programs and professionals. Today, funding for research and education programs comes from county, state, and federal governments; and from competitive grants awarded to county-based academics.

UCCE, also known as the 4-H and Farm Advisor, serves as a local problem-solving center. UC Cooperative Extension works to strengthen and ensure the sustainability of our land, environment, and local communities. We are catalysts, collaborators, educators, and stewards of the land, living in the communities we serve.

In Placer and Nevada Counties, county-based Advisors provide unbiased, research-based information and training through programs focused on Horticulture and Small Farms, Livestock and Natural Resources, and Nutrition Education. Delivery of our 4-H Youth Development and Master Gardener programs is facilitated by hundreds of community volunteers.



From the County Director

Placer and Nevada Counties' UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) advisors and staff provide research-based information and education to meet the needs of local residents. Our 4-H, Master Gardener, nutrition, horticulture and livestock programs provide hands-on learning with an emphasis on "helping people help themselves." In 2017–18, UC Cooperative Extension helped local residents through providing information, education and training opportunities as well as technical assistance in these areas:

4-H Youth Development

- 20 4-H clubs served 1,039 youth members in Placer and Nevada counties
- 4,035 youth enrolled in group and short-term activities
- 281 dedicated adult 4-H volunteers facilitated program delivery

Master Gardener

- 275 Master Gardener volunteers donated 17,000 service hours, valued at \$425,000.
- Volunteers delivered more than 55 workshops and reached over 17,500 people with gardening and composting information.

Horticulture and Small Farms programs

- 443 producers improved business, soil, water, and pest management skills through 24 UCCE workshops.
- Assisted 78 farmers to improve farm sustainability by adopting new practices.
- Reached 83,189 people with on-line research-based information

Livestock and Natural Resources

- More than 290 ranchers gained hands-on skills through grazing schools and workshops
- 921 subscribers received practical and timely information from the New Foothill Rancher
- The Ranching in the Sierra Foothills blog posted 33 times, with over 12,000 page views.

Nutrition Education

- 3,200 low income Placer and Nevada County schoolchildren received nutrition education
- Over 10,000 adults learned about nutrition through workshops, newsletters, and online
- 484 students participated in school garden activities. Two schools used school garden produce in their cafeterias.

Nevada County Fire and Forestry

- 375 Nevada County residents increased their knowledge of fire-resilient communities through 4 workshops, including 2 on prescribed fire; and 20 small-group meetings.
- The Living with Fire Facebook page reached 8,200 area residents.

Collaboration with county government, community partners, and volunteers allows us to provide these education and learning opportunities. We are grateful for their support and assistance.

Cindy Fake

UCCE Placer and Nevada County Director

A group of about eight people, including men and women of various ages, are gathered in a lush garden. They are standing on a dirt path, looking at plants. In the foreground, there are large, vibrant green leaves that frame the scene. The background shows more garden beds, trees, and a clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

Horticulture and Small Farms

In 2018–19, UCCE Placer/Nevada Horticulture & Small Farms Programs:

- Delivered 137 hours of training to 443 producers through short courses, hands-on workshops, and classes.
- Directly assisted 78 farmers improve farm sustainability by adopting new pruning, mulching, and/or integrated pest management practices that reduce water use, conserve soil, and manage pests without pesticides.
- Provided tools and assisted 39 new and beginning farmers to plan their new farm business, increasing the probability of success.
- Reached 83,189 people with research-based information through our Foothill Farming website, blog, and Facebook.

Placer and Nevada County farmers produce a wide range of horticultural crops; including fruits, vegetables, nuts, and nursery crops. These crops are produced on small family farms, which feed a growing demand for high quality local produce.

The small scale of most Placer/Nevada farms creates challenges to economic viability and the overall stability of local agriculture. The romantic vision of a one- or two-acre farm growing food rarely provides a living wage to the farmer. Specific issues include: training a new generation of farmers and helping working farmers build to scale; building business management and economic analysis skills; planning for operational continuity; and implementing sustainable production practices to manage soil, water, and pests effectively with the least environmental impact.

UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) helps growers meet those challenges through education and technical assistance. We conduct applied research with local growers to develop appropriate practices for the foothills. UCCE develops and delivers training to area farmers on crop production, pest management, farm business, small farm economics, and beginning farming. We provide individual assistance to commercial producers through farm calls, phone, and e-mail consultations. We also provide on-demand information through our Foothill Farming website, Facebook page and blog. We also foster communication among local farmers and ranchers by hosting networking events.



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Livestock and Natural Resources



In 2018–19...

- More than 250 people attended UCCE workshops and field days, gaining hands-on experience in livestock husbandry and health care, pasture and rangeland management, ranch business planning, and drought/climate adaptation.
- More than 40 ranchers, agency personnel and nonprofit staff attended UCCE grazing schools. Students learned to estimate pasture and rangeland carrying capacity; install electric fence and livestock watering systems; and estimate soil moisture, soil health, and forage production.
- The New Foothill Rancher newsletter reached 921 subscribers quarterly.
- The Ranching in the Sierra Foothills blog (ucanr.edu/blogs/RanchingintheFoothills) featured 33 posts and more than 12,000 page views.

The Livestock and Natural Resources program for Placer and Nevada Counties serves approximately 1,800 commercial livestock producers who raise beef cattle, sheep, goats, hogs and poultry. Our 2018-2019 programs reflected the intersection between natural resource management, livestock production systems, and agricultural business viability.

Our Irrigated Pastureland Enhancement Research Project and field days provide ranchers with information to improve water use efficiency and forage productivity while protecting water quality. Our predator-impacts study and livestock-wildlife coexistence project provide ranchers, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations with valuable information about livestock protection tools and the economic impacts of depredation.

Many of our outreach efforts focused on helping ranchers plan for increasing climate variability. We collaborate with advisors and specialists throughout California in developing real-time rangeland drought management strategies. Similarly, we work with specialists and advisors to help ranchers better plan for and respond to wildfire and other emergencies.

Our programs help ranchers navigate an increasingly challenging regulatory environment. We developed and presented educational materials on new legal requirements for antibiotic use in livestock. Working with specialists at UC Davis, we have helped develop water quality planning tools that help producers understand nutrient management and erosion control.

Our educational programs are focused on hands-on learning and producer-to-producer networking. Our Shepherd Skills Workshops provide training for new and aspiring producers on sheep production systems, business management, and product marketing. Our grazing schools, grazing technology workshops, and business planning workshops provide ranchers, agency personnel, and nonprofit staff an opportunity to practice management-intensive grazing techniques while learning about sustainable business management practices.



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UC CalFresh Nutrition Education



2018–2019 Program Highlights

- Over 3,200 low-income Placer and Nevada County school children received nutrition education in their classrooms.
- Over 10,000 adults learned about nutrition through workshops, newsletters, website content, and Facebook posts.
- 484 students participated in school garden activities including planting, tending, harvesting, and tasting. Two schools used the school garden produce in their salad bar and in scratch-made menu items.
- \$556,035 in USDA grant funds supported the UC CalFresh programs for low-income Placer and Nevada County youth and adults.

Let's Eat Healthy! is the name for the UC CalFresh Nutrition Program in Placer and Nevada Counties. The vision of Let's Eat Healthy! is to help CalFresh participants and CalFresh eligible children and families in Placer and Nevada Counties to maintain healthy lifestyles through wise food choices and physical activity.

This is done through direct education in qualifying schools where at least 50% of the students receive free or reduced-price meals. These schools receive nutrition lessons, USDA-approved nutrition curricula, resources, and teacher trainings. We reach parents through adult workshops as well as family events at participating schools.

Changing individual behavior is difficult. While nutrition education can teach children what it means to be healthy and what foods they should eat, a comprehensive, coordinated strategy is needed to achieve the greatest benefits.

Schools look to Let's Eat Healthy! for support in their efforts to create a healthy school environment. This year we provided assistance with Harvest Festivals, Jog-A-Thons, and other school events.

All schools receive direct education, tastings, and other program components such as:

- * Cooking Academy
- * Garden Education
- * Zumba/CATCH
- * Parent nutrition lessons
- * Smarter Lunchrooms
- * Student Nutrition Action Council

For families with limited resources, stretching food budgets can be difficult. Trying to make nutritious meals adds to the challenge. Through nutrition workshops, adults learn to plan and cook nutritious meals for their families, while saving money and time.



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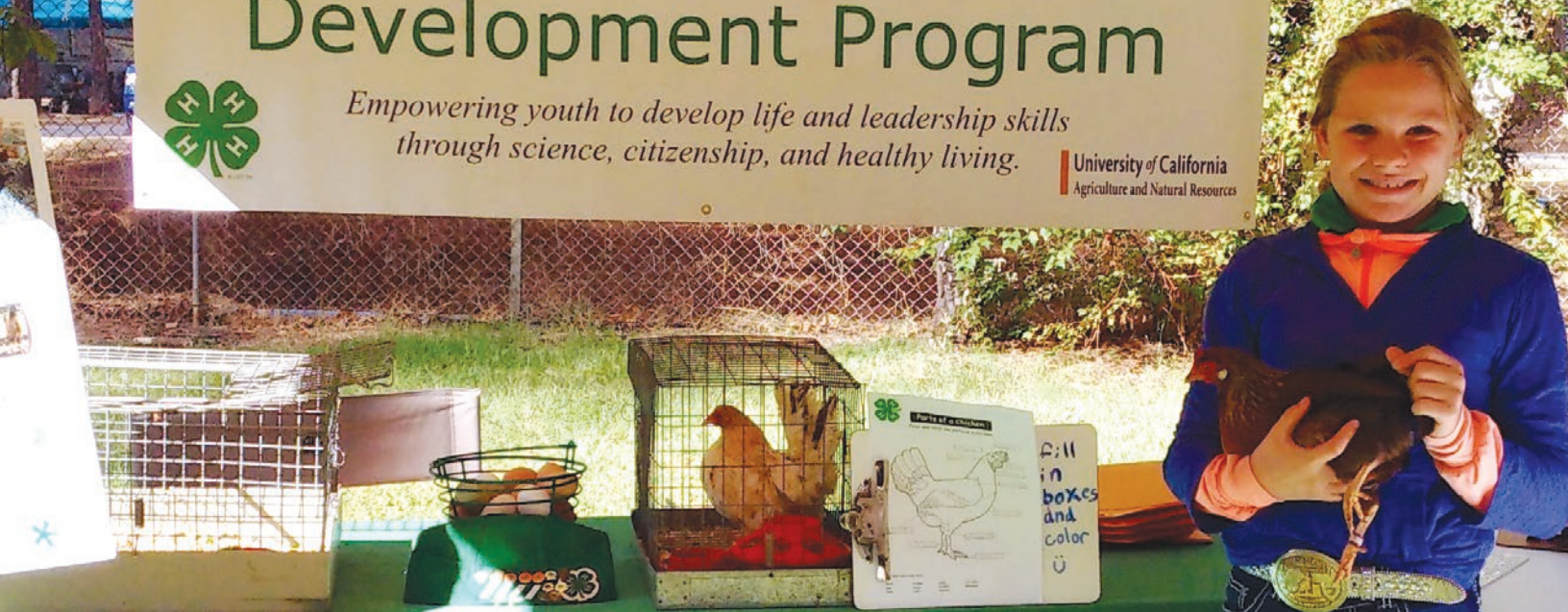
4-H Youth Development

Nevada County 4-H Youth Development Program



*Empowering youth to develop life and leadership skills
through science, citizenship, and healthy living.*

University of California
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In 2018–19, 4-H programs offered experiential learning activities and leadership opportunities to youth in Placer and Nevada Counties.

4-H Youth Members

Placer: 641
Nevada: 398

4-H Community Clubs

Placer: 13
Nevada: 7

4-H Adult Volunteers

Placer: 160
Nevada: 121

Youth Enrolled in Group and Short-Term Activities

Placer: 3,819
Nevada: 216

The University of California 4-H Youth Development Program provides a variety of enrichment activities that support the development of life and leadership skills for young people. The focus of 4-H programs is positive youth development through science, healthy living, civic engagement, and leadership. 4-H programs are accessible and open to all youth.

The 4-H program uses an experiential learning model focused on discovering, reflecting, and applying knowledge. Through youth-adult partnerships, youth members and adult volunteers share in learning; and members gain valuable experience. Programs and projects offered in 4-H in Placer and Nevada include robotics, summer camp, shooting sports, animal science, coding, yoga, public speaking, sewing, gardening, cooking, citizenship, and more!

Leadership in Placer and Nevada 4-H Programs

Placer County 4-H provided opportunities for youth members to expand their leadership skills through planning and delivering a variety of events. Youth camp staff members participated in six months of training for the residential Summer Camp Program. Youth developed skills and knowledge working with younger youth, peers, and adults.

Nevada County 4-H youth members served in significant and meaningful leadership roles. Leadership skill-building occurred through training and serving as club officers, committee chairs, and committee members. Junior county coordinators planned educational events and supported members in project work.



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Master Gardeners



Program Highlights 2018–19

- 275 certified Master Gardener volunteers donated over 17,000 hours of service and delivered more than 55 workshops.
- Master Gardener outreach and education reached over 17,500 people with gardening and composting information.
- 1,163 area residents attended 26 public workshops hosted by Nevada County Master Gardeners at their Demonstration Garden in Grass Valley. 86% of attendees who completed evaluations (911) said they were “Very Likely” to apply what they learned in their own gardens.
- 920 local residents attended the Placer County Master Gardeners’ “Garden Faire.” 85 people attended the “Top Ten Vegetable Gardening Tips” presentation. 44 of the 45 evaluations returned (98%) reported that they would “utilize what was learned at this presentation in their home vegetable gardens.”

The UC Placer and Nevada Master Gardener Program provides volunteer training and horticultural knowledge to enhance home landscapes and garden experiences while striving to improve and preserve the quality of our natural environment. The UC Master Gardener Programs in Placer and Nevada Counties began in 1983 to meet the demands of the growing population and mitigate one-on-one requests to Extension staff for home gardening and related information.

Interest in home gardening and urban horticulture continues to grow. Gardening is the most popular hobby in the United States, and landscape/nursery crops are now the third largest agricultural crop in California. UC Master Gardeners identify issues and needs of Placer and Nevada County residents and develop educational activities to address these concerns in the areas of home horticulture and composting.

With the goal of shifting public perceptions of yard and garden debris from “waste” to “resources,” the University of California Cooperative Extension’s volunteer Master Composters have engaged the public in recognizing the importance of organics management through composting, vermicomposting, and shredding/chipping/mulching. These activities alone can divert between 20 and 35 percent of a family’s garbage from the landfills and have helped Placer and Nevada Counties meet state mandated diversion rates.



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UCCE Nevada County Forestry and Fire



In 2018–19, the UCCE Nevada County Forestry and Fire Program

- Delivered 4 workshops, 5 presentations and 20 small-group meetings, providing information to county residents on building fire resilient communities.
- Helped 375 Nevada County residents increase their knowledge of fire resilient communities and forests. 25 Nevada County natural resource professionals incorporated this knowledge into their programs.
- Hosted two workshops about prescribed fire on private lands attended by 35 residents and 15 natural resource professionals which resulted in 8 training burns and the first use of Natural Resource Conservation Service cost-share for prescribed fire preparations in Nevada County.
- Fire prevention and recovery information reached 8,200 area residents through the Living with Fire Facebook page.

The Nevada County Forestry and Fire Program aims to connect local professionals and residents to the latest science and land management techniques with a goal of improving the fire resilience of Nevada County communities. The programs are funded by \$160,000 in competitive grant funding.

Working with a variety of community partners, including the Nevada County Office of Emergency Services, the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County, Cal Fire, USDA Rural Development, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Nevada County Resources Conservation District, Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety, Registered Professional Foresters, and PG&E; the UCCE forestry and fire program delivers workshops on forest health, fire prevention, and fire preparation. Outreach includes educational presentations at public meetings; and individual consultations with landowners and professionals.



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Programs



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4-H Youth Development

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