

Riverside County AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.
A private, nonprofit organization serving farmers throughout Riverside County since 1917

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Welcome New Members

We would like to "Thank You" for becoming part of the Farm Bureau Family.



The Riverside County Farm Bureau has secured additional stock of disposable masks, please contact our office for availability and to arrange pick-up.

Call our Office (951) 684-6732

The Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office has a limited supply of N-95 masks solely for the protection of agricultural applicators and handlers that use pesticides labeled with N-95 requirements. Please contact their office at (951) 955-3045.

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\$6.3 million will help UC Riverside save America's avocado orchards

Incurable fungus, root rot and salinity threaten fruit production

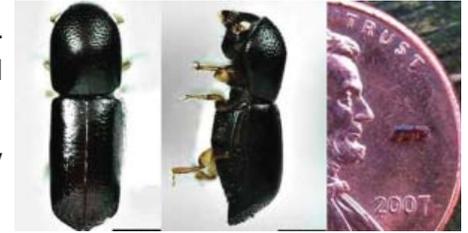
By Jules Bernstein, Author - UC Riverside Senior Public Information Officer

New grants totaling \$6.3 million will help UC Riverside solve problems facing American avocado orchards, including a lethal fungal disease called Laurel Wilt.

Laurel Wilt can destroy an entire avocado orchard in a couple of weeks once symptoms develop. It is already present in Florida. Without effective treatments, it will inevitably spread to California, which is the nation's leading producer of avocados.

Laurel Wilt is caused by a fungus, *Raffaelea lauricola*, that the non-native redbay ambrosia beetle introduces in trees of the Laurel family, which includes avocado.

"When the beetle attacks, the fungus enters and colonizes the tree's vascular system, and within weeks, the tree wilts and dies if not managed properly," said Patricia Manosalva, director of this project as well as UCR's Avocado Rootstock Breeding Program.



The non-native redbay ambrosia beetle, which carries the fungus causing deadly Laurel Wilt. (UCR)

In addition to Laurel Wilt, avocado growers face numerous production challenges including devastating diseases such as Phytophthora root rot, or, PRR, and soil salinity, which in combination cause severe reduction in fruit yield and quality. This combination can also completely destroy avocado orchards.

Avocado is also highly sensitive to salinity. Increasing levels of salinity in water and soil due to drought and the use of reclaimed water for crop irrigation purposes threatens avocado production worldwide.

To combat the threats, the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Research Initiative has awarded UC Riverside \$4.4 million. The grant will enable the development of next-generation technological solutions to these problems over the next four years in partnership with scientists at the universities of Hawaii, Florida, Texas, and Milan.

The same grant will enable research on both short- and long-term solutions for managing avocado PRR, the major hindrance for avocado production worldwide, Manosalva said.

"Under this grant we will select rootstocks harboring resistance to the current pathogen population and we will register new fungicides with different modes of actions to reduce avocado losses to this destructive oomycete pathogen," Manosalva said.



Avocado roots darkened and killed by Phytophthora root rot. (David Rosen/UCR)

The UCR rootstock breeding program has already identified advanced rootstock lines that are tolerant to salinity and *P. cinnamomi*, the pathogen that causes PRR. These rootstocks may also confer resistance or tolerance to Laurel Wilt when grafted with different varieties. Field trials of these rootstocks will be conducted in California, Florida, Texas, Hawaii and Puerto Rico and will be screened for resistance at University of Florida.

Another approach to mitigating avocado threats will be the further development of remote field sensors that can detect and differentiate drought from high salinity and Phytophthora root rot. UCR initially developed prototypes of these sensors and tested them in greenhouses. This grant will enable researchers to improve the sensors and test them in fields.

In a related grant, the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative awarded \$1.9 million to a team of 15 scientists from five universities and the USDA Agricultural Research Service, or USDA-ARS. The grant will allow the researchers to study whether essential oils can help suppress certain pathogens and pests.

Producers of essential oils claim their products may be able to treat plant pathogens such as gray mold, powdery mildew, algal stem blotch and brown rot as well as insects including mites, thrips and scales. This grant will enable the team to evaluate those claims.

Manosalva said both grants underscore the importance of funding basic research in agricultural science. "California's produce feeds the nation, and the world," she said. "Our science will help feed people and empower growers everywhere."

U.S. EPA to Support Farmworker Safety Training in the Pacific Southwest Through Funding National Farmworker Programs Association

\$2.5 million to be awarded nation-wide

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Pacific Southwest Regional Office is excited to promote farmworker safety through new support for the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP), which will receive up to \$500,000 annually to conduct pesticide safety training over the next five years. With EPA funding, AFOP will administer this grant to provide occupational health and safety trainings to migrant and seasonal farmworkers in more than 25 states including Arizona, California, Hawaii and Nevada.

“EPA is pleased to continue working with the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs as we work toward our common goal of protecting our farmworkers and their families,” said EPA Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Alexandra Dapolito Dunn. “This exciting partnership complements our Agricultural Worker Protection Standard perfectly and will develop national pesticide safety training, education, and outreach for farmworkers and their families in rural agricultural areas.”

“This cooperative agreement will fund training to educate pesticide applicators, handlers and farmworkers on working safely with, and around, pesticides,” said EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator John Busterud. “This long-standing partnership has allowed EPA to access AFOP’s national farmworker network and make a positive impact by enabling the farmworker population to protect themselves and their families.”

“AFOP is delighted to continue working with EPA to provide pesticide safety instruction to the nation’s farmworkers. Together with EPA, we touch real lives by empowering agricultural workers with the knowledge they need to better protect themselves, their homes, and their families from pesticide exposure,” said AFOP Executive Director Daniel Sheehan. “Agriculture is ranked consistently as one of, if not the, most dangerous of occupations. Through EPA’s support, AFOP is able to help make that job a whole lot safer.”

As the recipient of the cooperative agreement, AFOP will continue to enhance safe working conditions for agricultural workers at local, state and national levels, with targeted outreach to low-income, low-literacy, and non-English speaking farmworkers.

AFOP partners with local pesticide training providers to address the needs of farmworkers and facilitate access to pesticide safety education. In the new cooperative agreement, AFOP expects to expand their reach and partner with the following participating organizations in the region:

Arizona

- Portable Practical Educational Preparation, Inc.

California

- California Human Development
- Center for Employment Training
- Central Valley Opportunity Center
- La Cooperativa Campesina de California
- Employer’s Trainings Resource
- Proteus, Inc.

Hawaii

- Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.

Nevada

- Oregon Human Development Corporation

Through its previous 2015-2020 cooperative agreement with EPA, AFOP trained 184,000 farmworkers and 30,000 children on pesticide safety. This work was made possible through EPA’s National Farmworker Training grant program which focuses on training educators to teach agricultural workers and their families how to reduce the risks from pesticide exposure.

For more information, visit EPA’s Pesticide Worker Safety Cooperative Agreements webpage.

Learn more about EPA’s Pacific Southwest Region. Connect with us on Facebook and on Twitter.

Californians get advice to stop bed bugs

By Pamela Kan-Rice, Author - UC ANR Assistant Director, News and Information Outreach

Bed bugs can hitch rides on secondhand furniture, luggage, backpacks and other personal items to invade homes and attack people. While we rest and sleep on sofas and beds, the insects come out to feed. They want to suck our blood. A new web-based, interactive training course shows how to prevent and detect bed bug infestations.

"The training helps tenants recognize, restrict and report bed bugs and helps landlords comply with California state regulations on bed bugs," said Andrew Sutherland, University of California Cooperative Extension integrated pest management advisor for the Bay Area.

Landlords are required by Assembly Bill 551, which became law in 2016, to provide bed bug information to renters in California. Renters and other residents can learn how to spot signs of bed bugs from an online course designed by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources integrated pest management experts, web designers, pest management professionals, housing management professionals and public health officers.

The online bed-bug education is available in full-length and shorter versions in both English and Spanish. The animated, fun and self-paced course is available for free at stopbedbugs.org.

Although bed bugs have never been shown to transmit disease to humans, their bites can cause itchy, red welts on the skin.

People shouldn't be embarrassed about having bed bugs, says Sutherland. Cluttered spaces give bed bugs places to hide and breed, but the tiny insects don't require a dirty environment. Even the nicest hotels sometimes play host to bed bugs.

"This training will help destigmatize having bed bugs and, by emphasizing prompt reporting and cooperation, will help landlords and residents fight bed bugs as a team," said Heidi Palutke, senior vice president of compliance and education for the California Apartment Association.

The animated narrator, modeled after UCCE staff researcher Casey Hubble, urges renters to alert their property manager promptly if they suspect bed bugs are in their home so pest management professionals can rid the home of the biting insects and prevent them from spreading.

Bed bugs can go without feeding for many days to several months, depending on life stage, temperature and humidity, according to the UC Integrated Pest Management Program. Adult bed bugs may live one year or more and produce as many as four generations.

The bed bug course was produced with funding from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. The digital artistry was created by Sergey Litvinenko and his colleagues at Geosphere LLC.



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The Riverside County Farm Bureau is deeply saddened to learn the passing of Louis Arlan Knutson, an owner of Knutson Insurance Agency here in Moreno Valley as well as an office located in Fallbrook, CA. Arlan was a long time fixture here at his office in the Riverside County Farm Bureau building for many years up until he retired. We will forever miss his witty humor and laughter and most of all we wish his family our sincerest condolences.



Louis Arlan Knutson

Louis Arlan Knutson, 75, of Laughlin, NV passed away Friday, December 11, 2020 at Avera McKennan Hospital and University Health Center in Sioux Falls, SD. A private family Committal Service will take place at Dunlap Memorial Cemetery, rural Platte, SD with Pastor Gary Mulder officiating. Memorials in honor of Louis may be directed to: Dunlap Church Fund, c/o Clara Knutson, 1022 Montana Ave., Platte, SD 57369.

Louis Arlan Knutson was born on August 1, 1945 to Theodore Howard and Deva (Houser) Knutson in Sioux Falls, SD. He graduated from Robbinsdale High School, Robbinsdale, MN in 1963 and went on to earn his Bachelor's degree in History and Economics from the University of Minnesota. On August 28, 1965 Arlan was united in marriage to Jean Kjeldahl at Crystal Lutheran Church in Crystal, MN.

Arlan began his insurance career working for several companies at management level positions before starting his own agency, Arlan Knutson Insurance in 1998. This enabled him to be a mentor for many agents, including his daughter. He established more than just a working relationship with his employees and clients, getting to know them on a personal level. He made everyone his friend, always gave a lot of himself, and was a good influence to many.

He enjoyed vegetable gardening, with Jean canning what he grew; writing, especially about history and genealogy; grilling, and had tried about every kind of grill there was; liked fishing, completing puzzles, and traveling the states and abroad. Family trips to the Black Hills were taken every summer over the 4th of July. Sunday night dinners with family and spending holidays together were important to Arlan.

Grateful for having shared in Arlan's life: his wife of over 55 years, Jean Knutson of Laughlin, NV; two children: Deborah (Paul) Bottomley of Fallbrook, CA and Steve Knutson of Bocas del Toro, Panama; a granddaughter, Brianna (Darren) Settle of Fallbrook, CA; a great grandson, Jackson Settle; a sister, Bea Gifford of Rapid City, SD; an aunt, Clara Knutson of Platte, SD; along with nieces and nephews.

Arlan was preceded in death by: his parents, Theodore and Deva Knutson; a brother-in-law, Ken Gifford; and an uncle, Dwight Knutson.

Fun Christmas Tree Facts

- * Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since about 1850. Until fairly recently, all Christmas trees came from the forest.
- * Thirty-four to thirty-six million Christmas trees are produced each year and 95 percent are shipped or sold directly from Christmas tree farms.
- * California, Oregon, Michigan, Washington, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and North Carolina are the top Christmas tree producing states.
- * The best selling trees are Scotch pine, Douglas fir, Noble fir, Fraser fir, Virginia pine, Balsam fir and white pine.
- * Christmas trees take an average of 7-10 years to mature.
- * Christmas trees remove dust and pollen from the air.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 24 & 25, 2020 ~ The Riverside County Farm Bureau office will be closed in observance of Christmas.

December 31, 2020 & January 1, 2021 ~ The Riverside County Farm Bureau office will be closed in observance of the New Year.

January 13, 2021 ~ 5:30 PM, Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting will be held by a Zoom Conference. If you are interested in participating, please call our office at (951) 684-6732.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

Nurseries report strong sales of holiday plants

Poinsettias and other holiday greenery have been selling well at California nurseries. One Sacramento-area nursery chain says its poinsettia sales have doubled from a year ago. Marketers say people appear to be decorating their homes early during the pandemic, but add that poinsettia sales to churches could decline due to restrictions on indoor services. Nurseries say pre-cut Christmas trees have also been selling briskly.

Christmas tree sales increase

Choose-and-cut Christmas tree farms report surges in early attendance—a trend they attribute in part to people wanting to decorate their homes early during the pandemic. The president of the California Christmas Tree Association says the opening day of sales at her farm was one of the biggest she's ever experienced. Christmas tree farms that have opened this season have modified operations or eliminated some activities to accommodate distancing and other health protocols.

Merry Christmas

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Robots may help with irrigation tests

To help farmers optimize water use, University of California researchers will test robots to collect leaf samples in fields. The leaf samples help farmers determine when to irrigate their crops, but UC says the process can be time-consuming. Researchers received a grant to automate the sampling, which could provide farmers with more and faster information on crop water needs. The project team hopes to have its first prototypes built by next spring.

"Farm Bureau Working for You"