

**Farm Advisor  
FY 2009-10 Performance Plan**

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**I. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Farm Advisor-University of California (UC) Cooperative Extension program is to sustain a vital agriculture, environment, and community in Marin County by providing UC research-based information in agriculture, natural resource management, nutrition, and youth development.

**II. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

The Farm Advisor's programs operate through a unique partnership between the County, the University of California (UC) system, support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other private funds. Backed by the resources of the UC campuses, the department's educational programs use practically applied research information to solve community problems. The Farm Advisor, with its supporting partners, consults with individuals and organizations, publishes newsletters, produces information for mass media, and conducts seminars and workshops.

The UC Cooperative Extension program provides countywide services through an agreement between the County and the University of California that has existed since 1921. The University provides research and education services through three university professionals who are funded by the State. In addition, four Sonoma-based UC advisors work cross-county between Marin and Sonoma counties. The County provides support staff and basic operational costs.

The Farm Advisor provides the following services:

- Sustainable Agriculture
- Integrated Landscape Management
- Water Quality & Watershed
- 4-H Youth Development

**III. FY 2008-09 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Produced "Hidden Bounty of Marin," a 27-minute film about Marin farm families that won a best documentary profile at the 2008 Community Access Media Awards in Denver
- Showed "Hidden Bounty of Marin" in various community and public broadcast venues
- Completed \$33,981 contract with Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) to provide 170 water walk audits with MMWD customers using Marin Master Gardener volunteers
- Offered collaborative 4-H youth projects with Boys & Girls Club of Sausalito and the Spaulding Boat Center, Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) and the Teachers Ag Institute training, the Marin Peer Summit at College of Marin (COM), the Children's Wellness Day at the County Fair with HHS nutrition wellness program, and the Conservation Corps North Bay naturalist leader project
- Partnered with Marin Carbon Project to seek funds for carbon sequestration research in West Marin
- Partnered with COM and Conservation Corps North Bay and broke ground on 5.8 acre Indian Valley Farm at the COM Indian Valley campus including fencing, installation of portable greenhouses, garden tillage and cover cropping, and curriculum development for first course
- Secured \$397,250 in grants and donations to support the programs offered to Marin residents and partner agencies in natural resources

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**IV. GOALS AND KEY INITIATIVES FOR FY 2009-10**

**Goal 1: Strengthen the viability and long-term success of agriculture in Marin County by educating producers and next generation farmers on issues such as business diversification and environmental stewardship**

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Sustainable Agriculture is a key County priority due to its important role in the county's economic health, historical heritage and open space values. Producers need on-going assistance with diversification tools that enhance their ability to remain or become more profitable. Retaining Marin County's agricultural heritage is a key component of the Countywide Goal of Environmental Preservation and equally important in maintaining a diverse economy as par tof county goals fr healthy communities.

**FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives**

1. Initiate first college course on "Establishing an Organic Farm & Garden" in collaboration with College of Marin, Indian Valley Campus and Conservation Corps North Bay
2. Complete and publish *The Value of Agriculture in Point Reyes National Seashore* for use by public in upcoming park general management plan development
3. Participate in Marin Carbon Project as sponsoring partner with Marin Agriculture Land Trust (MALT), UC Berkeley, Marin Resource Conservation District, Marin Organic, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**Goal 2: Provide integrated landscape management to Increase bay-friendly water conservation and landscape practices, increase reuse of green and animal waste with on-farm composting, and reduce landscape threats related to sudden oak death**

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Bay water quality will be improved by expanding educational outreach on water conservation and other bay friendly practices to Marin residents. Access to and education about how to grow local organic foods in a home or community setting, helps create healthy communities, and continued research and educaiton about Sudden Oak Death in collaboraiton with other county and state agenices maintains Marin's position as being responsive to environmnteal preservation and safe communities.

**FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives**

1. Continue contract with Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), and collaborate with Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPPP) to conserve water and reduce pesticide load by promoting bay-friendly irrigation & landscaping practices including launch of plant selector website for residents

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**FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives**

2. Organize “victory gardens” displays and classes by Marin Master Gardeners at 2009 County *Green Fair* to promote healthy, locally grown food in collaboration with Marin Center staff
3. Coordinate access to local organic foods via community and school gardens using staff position and Marin Master Gardener volunteers
4. Provide technical outreach staff for Sudden Oak Death education & training efforts through grant from the U.S. Forest Services

**Goal 3: Improve water quality in Tomales Bay and its environs with science-based research and information**

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department’s highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Providing clean water that supports a vibrant biotic community in the Bay, and surrounding watersheds, restores fisheries, allows recreational activities, and maintains viable aquaculture and agricultural industries are all long term-desired outcomes of sustainable communities.

**FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives**

1. Coordinate Regional Water Quality Control Board waiver programs for 300 affected landowners using 50% field assistant staff with grant funds from the Marin Resource Conservation District (MRCD) [regional board, EPA and foundation]
2. Initiate year one of creek carbon sequestration research (\$20,000 in 2009) with MRCD and UC Davis researchers that should reflect improved carbon sequestering in MRCD riparian project areas
3. Continue year two of comprehensive monitoring program for the MRCD which includes maintenance, implementation, effectiveness, and validation monitoring for MRCD restoration and conservation projects (Project funded by Prop 50)

**Goal 4: Provide direction on Countywide funding for habitat restoration**

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department’s highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

BOS support for community grants to groups active in fish and wildlife habitat restoration targets environmental preservation goals as well as county internal goals of managing resources for results using volunteer commission to support work of county.

**FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives**

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**FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives**

1. Administer county funds for fish and wildlife projects through oversight of county fish & wildlife commission and funding partnership with MCSTOPPP

**Goal 5: Develop leadership, community service, and life skills among Marin County youth using experiential, inquiry-based learning in science literacy and environmental education**

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

Working in countywide to provide youth leadership and development skills to youth through experiential community projects using volunteer community members fits the community participation and healthy communities goals.

**FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives**

1. Collaborate with Conservation Corps, MALT, Boys & Girls Club and other youth serving organizations to expand science literacy to educators and youth countywide
2. Complete Pilot Naturalist Leader training and certification for 22 Conservation Corps North Bay members, and initiate second year

**V. KEY CHALLENGES AND ISSUES**

- Continuing some level of funding for Ag Ombudsman contract, given current funding shortages as Local Coastal Plan update gets underway and agriculture related code development and standards review begin in 2009.
- Maintaining current baseline level of County funding as County begins long-term restructuring of services and resources

**VI. CURRENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

**SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

**Objective: Increase the planned number of on-farm diversification projects to help producers sustain profitable agriculture enterprise**

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
<b>Workload Measures</b>				
Number of information workshops conducted	8	10	10	7
Number of attendees at workshops	266	250	275	299

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Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>				
Percent of workshop attendees indicating they are planning to develop on-farm diversification projects	92%	80%	83%	83%
Number of operators initiating or completing diversification projects	5	8	7	6

**Department Comments:** The number of workshops and participants attending varies each year depending on the topic.

**Objective:** Increase the number of pasture conversions to help producers improve their profitability margins

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
<b>Workload Measures</b>				
Number of staff hours spent on visits, consultations, and other assistance	435	675	575	686
<b>Efficiency Measures</b>				
Number of staff hours per acre conversion	5.3	4.4	5.2	4.3
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>				
Net increase in acres of pasture conversion	2,318	3,000	3,000	3,000

**Department Comments:** The organic acreage has leveled out this year to 20,597 acres; 360 in row crops and 20,222 in silage and pasture. The department anticipates a few more acres transitioning based on new operators we are currently working with. The above effectiveness figures represent the net increase for the fiscal year.

**WATER QUALITY AND WATERSHED**

**Objective:** Improve management practices on agricultural operations resulting in lowered pollutant loading in the watershed and to the bay

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
<b>Workload Measures</b>				
Number of participating ranch or dairy landowners	10	10	14	14

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<b>Measures</b>	<b>FY 06-07 Actual</b>	<b>FY 07-08 Actual</b>	<b>FY 08-09 Estimate</b>	<b>FY 09-10 Estimate</b>
Number of water and soil samples collected	300	400	300	300
Number of conservation management practices implemented on-farm	5	25	5	5

**Objective: Increased bay-friendly water conservation and landscape practices resulting in lowered water and pesticide use in the watershed**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>FY 06-07 Actual</b>	<b>FY 07-08 Actual</b>	<b>FY 08-09 Estimate</b>	<b>FY 08-09 Estimate</b>
<b>Workload Measures</b>				
Number of participating residents and homeowners in education outreach	n/a	n/a	180	190
Number of resident surveys completed	n/a	n/a	180	200
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>				
Number of residents who changed conservation practices	n/a	n/a	90	100
Amount of water usage reduced after education (millions of gallons)	n/a	n/a	2.25	2.25