



# Maricopa County Cooperative Extension

IMPROVING LIVES, COMMUNITIES,  
AND THE ECONOMY

March/April 2021  
35

Issue #



Project CENTRL Class 29 met with Treasurer Kimberly Yee on 1/22/21 during their Seminar about Public Policy in Arizona.

## Project CENTRL

By Scott Koeing

Class 29 of Project CENTRL, the flagship program of the [Arizona Center for Rural Leadership](#) continues to prioritize their personal and professional development despite all the challenges in the COVID world. They remain flexible and nimble as they continue to learn about the issues facing rural Arizona and how to get involved and make a difference. In January, they met with our state's elected officials online include a representative from the Governor's office, Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, State Treasurer, Kimberly Yee, Corporation Commissioner Chair, Lea Marquez Peterson, and several of the seven Project CENTRL Alumni elected to the State Legislature.

In March they are taking a 'deep dive' into Arizona's water hearing from people involved in all angles: Arizona Department of Water Resources, local water Districts, on-river users in Yuma, CAP, SRP and more!

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## Ask A Master Gardener

By Michael Chamberland

The [Master Gardener Program](#) has launched a new opportunity for public engagement. A Zoom-based Ask a Master Gardener (AAMG) online chat has been launched. Once a week, the public is invited to bring their home horticulture questions to a Live Q&A session with a panel of Master Gardeners. The AAMG sessions are offered as hour or longer sessions four times per month, including evening and weekend opportunities.



Attendees register through Eventbrite prior to the event. During registration, attendees are given instructions to submit photos and submit questions, to be reviewed by Master Gardeners beforehand. Zoom links and resource documents are sent out through email to participants, allowing attendees to refer to them. The day prior to the event, all the photos and questions are uploaded, and volunteer assignments are sent to the participating Master Gardener volunteers.

Using Zoom breakout rooms, a team of volunteers with different roles are assigned to several public attendees. Room Monitor volunteers keep track of the chat, call on attendees, help with muting and turning off video, and typing in resources. One or two Master Gardeners are assigned to answer the questions in the breakout room. Pictures, questions, publications, and advice are then shared with the attendees.

During the last few months of 2020, AAMG online has assisted 138 attendees with their home horticulture questions. Now that we have Master Gardener trainings and a system for delivery, we plan to advertise more widely to expand our outreach, create useful digital handouts, and develop a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database to facilitate and tabulate our transactions.

We look forward to continuing with the online Ask a Master Gardener as another tool for the future.

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## March is National Nutrition Month®

**Compiled by** Traci Armstrong Florian, MS, RDN

March is National Nutrition Month® across America, and it is an annual campaign established by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. It is an open invitation to everyone to learn more about nutrition and educating themselves to making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits to last a lifetime. There are four different themes—one for each week:

The first week's theme is Eat a Variety of Nutritious Foods Every Day. This includes learning about reading Nutrition Facts Panels (the Food Label), how to include foods from all food groups daily, healthy hydration, and taking time to eat snacks and meals being mindful and without distraction.

The second week has a theme of Planning Meals Weekly. This is helpful in stretching the food dollar and eating more healthy. Ideas include choosing healthful recipes, using a grocery list to shop for ingredients, and being menu-savvy when dining out and traveling.

Week three's topic is Learning Skills to Create Tasty Meals. The fun subtopics include keeping healthy staple foods on hand, practicing food safety, reducing food waste and trying new flavors and foods with family.

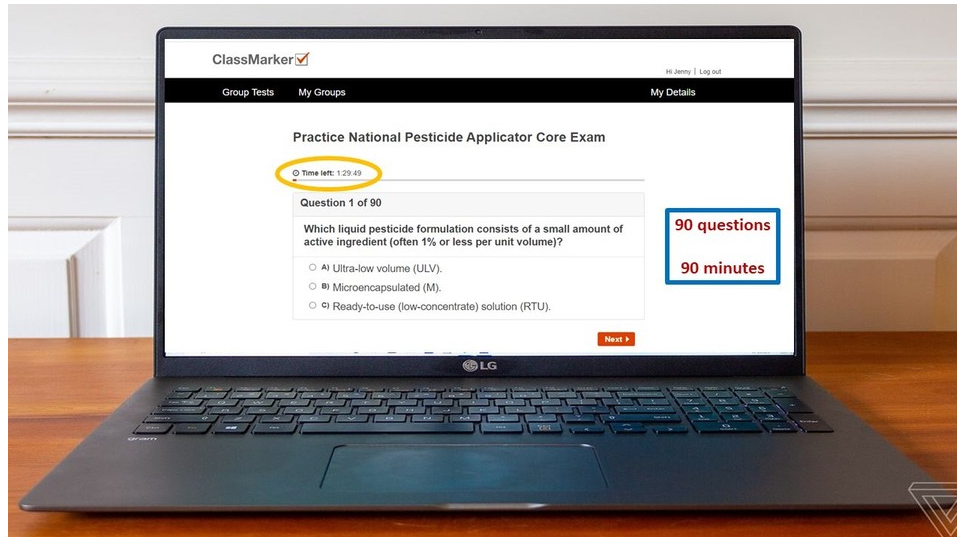
The final week's theme is Consult a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). This topic focuses on tips on how to find a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist for personal dietary needs, becoming more familiar with different areas of dietetics in our communities, and what RDNs do in our communities, along with thriving through good health that food and nutrition can do for individuals.

In our Cooperative Extension office, our SNAP-Ed program reaches schools and food



service staff to support their efforts during this month to promote National Nutrition Month® through banners, flyers and other promotional materials.

For more in-depth information on the above overview on National Nutrition Month®, please go to: <https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month>



## PSEP Creates an On-line Practice Testing Tool for Pesticide Applicators

By Jennifer Weber

The Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) Coordinator created a new online practice testing tool to assist people preparing for the National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Exam.

The National Core Exam is the main exam for agricultural and structural pest control certifications in Arizona. It is a 90-minute timed test, consisting of 90 multiple-choice questions on topics such as pest management, pesticide formulations, labels, personal protective equipment, and safe pesticide handling practices.

To develop the testing tool, the PSEP Coordinator purchased an annual subscription to an online exam creation program called ClassMarker. She used 90 sample questions found in National Pesticide Applicator Core Study Manual, which were written by the same team that wrote the National Core Exam and embedded a 90-minute timer along top of the test so users can practice pacing themselves as they progress through the test.

Shortly after completing the practice test, users will receive an email containing details about their score, the questions they missed, and the correct answers. The email also categorizes results by study manual chapter, helping people to identify topics they

should review again prior to taking the actual certification exam.

The new tool was made available in December 2020. PSEP promoted it again in February in recognition of National Pesticide Safety Education Month.

For more information, please contact [Jennifer Weber](#)



## Arizona Youth Compete in the First Arizona Fall Dairy Classic

By Kris Johnson of Odyssey [4-H](#)

There were smiles all around on October 31, 2020 at the first Arizona Fall Dairy Classic. Thirteen youth from across the state came to Buckeye to exhibit their dairy cattle. With the cancellation of the 2020 Maricopa County Fair and 2020 Arizona State Fair, there have been no opportunities in our state for these kids to show off their projects. Dairy industry professionals took it upon themselves to plan, fund raise and promote an in-person dairy show opportunity for Arizona youth. Even with the severe impacts to the Arizona dairy industry this spring and late into 2020, local and national dairy pharmaceutical, reproduction specialists, ag chemical companies, equipment dealers, feed manufacturers, and local business and family sponsors were eager to help with this opportunity. Although this may seem to be a small-scale show, it was a needed boost to the exhibitors, their families, and the sponsors.

Youth were able to compete in showmanship, breed, and costume contests. Show organizers were pleased with turn out and 'good vibes' had by all in attendance.

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The poster features a background image of a vineyard. At the top, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Maricopa County logo is displayed. The main title 'SUMMER AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE' is in large blue letters, with 'EST 1991' above it. A red diagonal banner reads 'Save the Date - June 14-17, 2021'. Below this, it says 'A PROGRAM BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION' and shows the 'Arizona Agricultural Literacy Program' logo (an apple with a leaf). A dark blue bar at the bottom of the text area says 'Supported by the Arizona Foundation for Agricultural Literacy'. A red banner at the bottom of the poster contains the URL 'Visit: [cals.arizona.edu/agliteracy/SAI](https://cals.arizona.edu/agliteracy/SAI)'. At the very bottom, there are three small photographs: a group of people in a field, a person using a net in a field, and a person using a microscope.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
Cooperative Extension  
Maricopa County

EST 1991

# SUMMER AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE

**Save the Date - June 14-17, 2021**

A PROGRAM BY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

 *Arizona*  
Agricultural Literacy Program

Supported by the Arizona Foundation for Agricultural Literacy

[Visit: cals.arizona.edu/agliteracy/SAI](https://cals.arizona.edu/agliteracy/SAI)



## Summer Agricultural Institute

By Gigette Aja Webb



HYBRID format - two days in-person and two days virtual.

Join us in person Monday, June 14 in Yavapai County and then Wednesday, June 16 in Maricopa County.

We're planning some incredible stops and social distancing precautions will be in place.

Tuesday and Thursday will have virtual presentations from a variety of Arizona agricultural experts.

Registration will open on April 5, [more details to come](#)

These are just some of the topics: viticulture, hydroponics, dairy, insects/IPM, bees, nuts, dates, watermelons, onions, roses, beef, eggs, water, wheat, and cotton.



**Alfalfa Weevil**

## A COVID19 year of Field Crops IPM

By Ayman Mostafa

It is almost a year since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the [Field Crops IPM Program](#) with the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, that was an unprecedented year, with the challenges of the

pandemic, switching Program deliveries to virtual format, the near-close-down of Maricopa County Cooperative Extension office, and all the precautionary measures to conduct our research and Extension activities in a safe and effective way. The other side of the situation showed how resilient our ag communities, the Programs, and personnel are. The changes were very significant and happened in a short time. However, adaptation and success in continue delivering our educational activities and conducting our research were phenomenal. The Program delivered even more educational training to our clientele than any other year. Attendees of the Program increased significantly in terms of the number and area of the state and the nation that we reached. Immediately after the University guidelines halted in-person activities, the Program switched major Extension events to Zoom online format starting March 2020. Over 1500 persons attended these events via Zoom. We provided 35 Continuing Education Units for the attendees. Presenters of the two workshops came from different universities and UArizona, plus representatives from the USDA-ARS and industry. The Program continued to communicate with clientele through the weekly newsletter, phone calls, individual visits, and Zoom. Many clienteles sent photos or videos of the issues they had, and that was helpful to solve the problem. Over 12 timely presentations to disseminate

the results of the Program's applied research were delivered during 2020. We provided 4 educational activities of the program during the first quarter of 2021, and planning for more.

We conducted a record number of field and lab trials. Our collaborators from the community, growers, and agriculture professionals showed tremendous support to the Program, which reflect the value they see in this Program. Many of the changes that happened in 2020 are here to stay. I look forward to tackling these changes and adapt them for the benefit of delivering science-based, further reaching, more resourceful programming.

Field trial demonstrations for alfalfa weevil, alfalfa caterpillars and leafhoppers, sugarcane aphid, and root rot were videotaped using drone technologies. These drone videos were an effective alternative in distributing the results of these trials to stakeholders.



## Directors Cut

**By** Ed Martin

Maricopa County Cooperative Extension has started the year running with program offerings in every segment. Our 4-H program had its virtual Achievement Night, recognizing outstanding youth and adults in our 4-H Youth Development program. Many thanks to all the staff, volunteers, and families that worked so hard in bringing programs to our youth. Our Pesticide Safety Education program continued to offer online Continuing Education Credits for professional applicators. The Fields Crops/IPM program continued reaching out to the agricultural community. There was a 2021 Cotton production meeting, and Dr. Ayman Mostafa presented at the SouthWest Summit. Another workshop on Food Safety and the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) will be held in late March. Our Family Resource Center staff continue to deliver



programs online – check out their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MaricopaFRC/>. The Master Gardener program has begun a new class. Registration has continued to be high for these classes, even though they are 100% online at this time. Many people appreciate not having to drive to the Extension office. Those of you who live in the Phoenix area can appreciate not having to navigate the city traffic. Our Agricultural Literacy and STEM Education program partnered with our Yuma Colleagues and held a Healthy & Delicious Veggies Virtual Tour, highlighting the agriculture in the Yuma area. I attended and even won a “Desert Premium Farms” hat for knowing the origins of the name “Iceberg” lettuce. Hint - it had to do with how they transported lettuce in days long gone by! Thanks to everyone in Yuma for your support!

Don't forget to visit our website at <https://extension.arizona.edu/maricopa> to get the latest on what's happening at your County Extension Office.

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