

Program Overview

The UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences' (CAES) Agricultural Sustainability Institute (ASI) provides leadership for research, teaching and extension efforts in sustainable agricultural and food systems at the Davis Campus and throughout the UC system.

ASI provides a hub that links initiatives and education in sustainable agriculture and food systems across all divisions of CAES and the University of California, and with other partners across the state. ASI units include:

- UC ANR Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program (SAREP)
- UC Davis Russell Ranch Sustainable Agriculture Facility (RRSAF)
- UC Davis Student Farm

ASI Mission & Vision

The mission of ASI is to ensure access to good food and to promote the vitality of agriculture today and for future generations. We do this through integrative research, education, communication and early action on emerging issues.

ASI is engaged with a broad range of partners to shape a vision for a food and agricultural system that:

- is innovative, adaptive and profitable
- provides healthy food for everyone
- promotes prosperity and equity for people working in agriculture and the food system and their communities
- improves the environment and human health
- builds awareness and understanding of the food system
- engages public participation in policy decisions affecting food and agriculture

ASI Team

ASI Director: Tom Tomich

ASI Deputy Director: Kate Scow

24 full and part-time staff members from various programs and projects

8 new ASI-affiliated professorships in agroecology, sustainability science, sustainability and society, economics of sustainability, plant disease management/soil microbiology, soil science, pollination, biology and sustainable animal systems

- 150 other UC Davis faculty self-identified as strongly interested in sustainable agriculture
- 150 members of UC Davis Students for Sustainable Agriculture
- UC Cooperative Extension
- Expanding network of other partners

ASI & Affiliated Units Contact Information

Agricultural Sustainability Institute

University of California
One Shields Avenue, 143 Robbins Hall
Davis, California 95616
(530) 752-3915 asi@ucdavis.edu

UC Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program

University of California
One Shields Ave, DANR Building Hopkins Road
Davis, CA 95616
(530) 752-7556 sarep@ucdavis.edu

UC Davis Student Farm

University of California
One Shields Ave
Davis, CA 95616
(530) 752-7645 mxvanhorn@ucdavis.edu

UC Davis Russell Ranch Sustainable Agriculture Facility

University of California
One Shields Ave.
Davis, CA 95616
(530) 757-3162 dcbryant@ucdavis.edu

UC DAVIS

AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE

*Science for stewardship
and human well-being*



UC DAVIS
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Agriculture, Resources & the Environment

Integrating agricultural systems at the farm/ranch and landscape level

ASI is committed to helping farmers, ranchers, land managers and communities reach their goals of managing resources and production systems in ways that are profitable and enhance environmental quality. Development of science-based information for these audiences and for policy makers is a key role for ASI. Current initiatives include:

Responding to Climate Change

An interdisciplinary research team is evaluating potential mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the Central Valley. Yolo County, with its cross section of agricultural landscapes, will be used as a case study over the next 50 years. The project will consider the responses of specific commodities to environmental change, economic outcomes, repercussions of climate change for land use, and effects on biodiversity.

Russell Ranch Sustainable Ag Facility (RRSAF)

The 300-acre RRSAF provides ASI affiliates and cooperators the unique opportunity to conduct basic and applied research as well as develop innovative agricultural production technologies on a full farm landscape. Home of the Long Term Research on Agricultural Systems (LTRAS) and Sustainable Agriculture Farming Systems (SAFS) programs, RRSAF is a "living laboratory" where researchers can study the interface of intensively managed agriculture with native California riparian habitat.



Dennis Bryant photo

Food & Society

Linking production, distribution and consumption

ASI is working to enhance our understanding of the system of growing, distributing, processing and marketing food. Projects are addressing key needs in the areas of nutrition, accessibility, improved profitability for all working in food systems enterprises, and energy use. Current initiatives include:

Linking Regional Agriculture with Schools and Institutions

A growing demand for local, sustainable and/or organic food products among consumers and food service directors has opened up new institutional markets for small- and mid-scale farmers. We work in interdisciplinary research teams and with community organizations to evaluate the behavioral, economic and health outcomes of farm-to-school and farm-to-institution programs.

Carbon Footprint of the Food System

One of the primary goals of this initiative is to study energy intensity and greenhouse gas emissions throughout the food system, from "farm to fork," in order to identify the technologies, methods, and consumer food choices that can reduce energy and carbon emissions in our food system. Quantifying various trade-offs by analyzing strategically chosen commodities is one of the first steps in the research plan.

Education & Leadership

Integrated programs for sustainability education – kindergarten through post-graduate

ASI is working on several fronts to improve sustainable agriculture education for graduate and undergraduate students, K-12 students and teachers, agricultural and food system professionals, and the general public. Current initiatives include:

Garden-based Learning Program

This program at the Student Farm increases children's understanding of agriculture and the food system. Through direct, hands-on education programs, development of resource materials, training for K-12 educators and strategic partnership building, the program enhances the agricultural literacy of children and the adults who teach them. Its aim is to improve nutrition and health and promote stewardship of our natural resources.

New UC Davis Undergraduate Major



Damian Parr photo

There is a growing interest in graduates who will become a new generation of leaders in sustainable agriculture and food systems. UC Davis faculty, students and staff are developing a new major designed to provide students with the knowledge, skills and experiences needed to help create and manage sustainable food and agriculture systems and solve complex agricultural and societal problems. The major may be available as early as fall 2009.