

UC SANTA CRUZ: UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SPECIALIST IN ORGANIC PRODUCTION CANDIDATES



Environmental
Studies, UCSC

Join us for these candidate presentations taking place at the Cowell Ranch Hay Barn

March 11, 2019, 10 am: Dr. Gerardo (Gerry) Spinelli

Research and extension tools for irrigation water and nutrient conservation in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties

Gerry Spinelli grew up on an olive and vegetable farm in Florence, Italy. Later, he worked in irrigation for corn and watermelon growers in Honduras, then focused on pest management and surface irrigation in Lebanon. Gerry obtained his PhD in Horticulture and Agronomy at UC Davis, studying plant physiology and water stress in almond orchards. He currently works with strawberry and vegetable growers in irrigation and nitrogen management at the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County.

March 12, 2019, 10 am: Dr. Joji Muramoto

Towards soil health management and sustainable organic farming: Integrating fertility and soil-borne disease management in organic strawberries and vegetables in coastal California

Joji Muramoto is an Associate Researcher (soil science and agroecology) at the Department of Environmental Studies, the University of California, Santa Cruz and an Affiliated Professor at the Department of Agricultural Chemistry, the Tokyo University of Agriculture, Japan. He received his B.S. (Ag.), M.S. (Ag.), and Ph.D. (Agricultural Chemistry, Soil Science) from the Tokyo University of Agriculture. He has extensive experience in research and extension on soil fertility and soil-borne disease management in organic and conventional production in Japan (1986–1996) and coastal California (1996–present).

His current research focuses on improving sustainability in organic strawberry and vegetable production in coastal California. He has been involved in research and extension projects on optimizing anaerobic soil disinfestation, a biological alternative to soil fumigation, for California strawberries (2003–present), building a participatory network for sustainable organic production systems in coastal California (CalCORE) (2011–2016), developing non-fumigant based integrated soil-borne disease management strategies in strawberries in CA, FL, NC, TN, and WA (2017–present), and reducing cole crop residue-derived nitrate leaching during rainy winters using high C:N organic amendments (2016–present).

March 15, 2019, 10 am: Dr. Barbara Baraibar

Systems thinking to address organic production challenges with Californian growers

Dr. Barbara Baraibar studied agronomy at the University of Lleida in Spain with a focus on weed management and entomology. After graduation, she specialized in organic agriculture through a master's course at the University of Barcelona and got a fellowship to do a short internship at a research institute in organic agriculture in Switzerland (FiBL). That experience made her want to go back to graduate school, and pursue a career in science. Her PhD focused on understanding weed seed predation, an ecological process that can hugely impact weed populations and can help manage weeds more sustainably.

After her PhD and a short post-doc in Spain, she moved with her family to the US and for the last few years she has been working as a post-doc at Penn State University on two multidisciplinary projects, one on cover crop mixtures and another on reducing tillage, both in organic grain-feed rotations. Besides her research, she loves to talk to and learn from growers and share her research with them. Her extension activities have included extension publications and videos, organizing multiple field days and participating in farmer's "study circles," a novel extension approach that brings farmers together and encourages farmer-to-farmer sharing and learning. You can learn more about her research and extension activities at www.barbarabaraibar.weebly.com