

CAFÉ Workshop

Saturday February 6, 2016

Orange Group

***Project Theme: Water Policy & Water Rights***

***Issue: Water Issues are becoming an increasingly formidable battleground in agriculture. Water policy, water quality, and water use with respect to sustainability will all be impacted through adaptation of emerging water technologies.***

California has an arid to semi-arid environment and has suffered from chronic water shortages. In the past, development of water resources by Federal and State entities has helped alleviate the scarcity of water for environmental, agricultural, and urban uses. However, development of water resources in recent decades has not kept pace with population growth and demand for water. In addition, recent years have seen drought of “historic proportions” that has had a large impact on water availability for all uses.

California’s drought has had a large impact on California’s agricultural industry. The manifestations and repercussions of the current drought may be a prelude to what could become a normal cycle of water scarcity in California. Water policy, water costs, water rights, and water use / application with respect to sustainability will all be influenced by the development of new water technologies. Changes in water policy and availability will impact producers and may alter crop choices, cultural practices, and profitability. UCR should play a prominent role in helping agriculture adapt to these changes.

UCR is uniquely situated close to California’s Coachella Valley desert growing conditions, the San Joaquin Valley growing conditions, and Southern California growing conditions. These are all major agricultural growing regions which are now facing cutbacks in water delivery, salinity issues, increasing water costs, and water sustainability issues.

UCR’s geographic location combined with the University’s close affiliations with the USDA Salinity Lab, as well as expertise in the Department of Environmental Science, provide UCR a unique opportunity to research water policy from an agricultural, technical, political, engineering, economic, and public policy perspective. The University is adding two additional faculty researchers with water credentials who will bolster UCR’s impressive strengths in this area. The comprehensive nature of the project will utilize faculty members from cross sections of the University in developing water technologies and water policy.