

Best Education Practices (BEPs) for Water Outreach Professionals
Defining BEPs, Refining New Resources and Recommending Future Actions

POSTER PRESENTATION

Presenter(s): Mary Bianchi, University of California Cooperative Extension

Title: Water Quality Education For Irrigated Agriculture On California's Central Coast

Abstract: Abstract: The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is the largest marine protected area in the United States, covering more than 5,000 square miles along the Central Coast of California. Runoff water from agricultural lands in coastal watersheds and transported to Sanctuary waters often carries pollutants such as sediments, nutrients, and pesticides. In 1999, the agricultural industry organized to voluntarily reduce water quality threats and avoid increased regulation. The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) developed a Farm Water Quality Planning Short Course to assist farmers to develop individual water quality management plans. The course is based on the success of the Rangeland Water Quality Short Course which has been taught 50 times in 27 counties and has resulted in 400 ranch water quality plans representing 1.2 million acres. The new UCCE peer-reviewed Farm Water Quality Planning Short Course is offered to Watershed Working Groups organized and staffed by the Coalition of Central Coast County Farm Bureaus. During the course, producers receive information on water quality regulations, techniques for self-assessment of nonpoint source pollution problems, management goals for sediments, nutrients, and pesticides, methods for recognizing practices that are already in place that protect water quality, management practices that may be selected for local conditions and crop types, and practice evaluation methods. To date, 278 growers in 14 Watershed Working Groups have received training on the development and implementation of farm water quality management plans.

Target Audience(s): Agricultural commodity groups; farmers

Educational Purpose: Education

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