

Farm: University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Secretary of Agricultural Development in Baja, Mexico, sign MOU

By Shanna M Abatti and Oli Bachie, Special to this Newspaper | Posted: Thursday, February 2, 2017 12:10 am

On Jan. 20 University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Vice President Glenda Humiston and secretary of the Mexican government's agricultural development program in Baja California Manuel Valladolid Seamanduras finalized and signed a memorandum of understanding at the Secretaria de Fomento Agropecuario de Baja California (Secretary of Agriculture Development) in Ejido Sinaloa of Mexicali. The document lays out a plan for UC Cooperative Extension, the parent organization of 4-H Youth Development, to share resources and expertise to start a program like 4-H in Mexico.



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Courtesy Photo

University of California Cooperative Extension — Imperial County Director Oli Bachie, UCCE-Imperial County 4-H Community Education Specialist Shanna Abatti, UC Desert Research and Extension Director Jairo Diaz-Ramirez, UCANR Diversity in Youth Development Committee member Carlos Orozco, along with various other UCANR staff representatives joined Humiston in Mexicali. The day provided not only a formal understanding between the university and Baja but also a much-needed opportunity to enrich the lives of youths in this community. UCANR will support the efforts in Mexicali to further grow and implement a sustainable 4-H program by working closely with staff. UCANR will provide guidance and invite Mexicali staff to learn from the successful 4-H programs in Imperial County.

The UCANR 4-H Youth Development Program over the last 100 years has provided youth members a supportive learning environment to help them reach their fullest potential as capable, caring and competent individuals. 4-H offers many opportunities for youths between the ages of 6 and 19, including membership in a community 4-H club, special interest group, school enrichment, summer camp and much more. Through the program areas of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), healthy living and citizenship, 4-H provides hands-on projects where youths learn by doing in fun, safe environments. This hands-on learning and

positive youth-adult partnerships help youths develop skills they need to succeed in life. As of Jan. 20, these same opportunities will now be available to youths in Mexicali through the Secretaria de Fomento Agropecuario de Baja California. This program will be a model for the rest of Baja California to implement.

The new club in the Mexicali community of Sinaloa will have access to two greenhouses that belong to the Secretary of Agricultural Development in Baja, Mexico, where they will grow cucumbers and tomatoes while they learn about soil science, irrigation, nutrition education and other components of agricultural science.

The children will also learn leadership skills by taking up new roles in their communities, running in club elections, speaking in public and reporting on their work. The children's parents will also be encouraged to serve as volunteer leaders, mentors and educators.

The UCCE-Imperial County Office is very excited to help support and guide Mexicali as it continues to build its 4-H program. If you have questions, or would like more information on the 4-H program in Mexicali or programs offered in Imperial County, please contact its office at 760-352-9474.