

FARM: New irrigation and water management advisor

By Trish Burich-McNeece, Special to this Newspaper | Posted: Thursday, June 22, 2017 12:10 am

The University of California Cooperative Extension recently hired a new irrigation and water management advisor to serve Imperial and Riverside counties. Dr. Ali Montazar grew up on a family farm in a semi-arid region and received his college degrees in irrigation and drainage.



Prior to joining UC Cooperative Extension, he worked as a scientist with the Department of Plant Sciences and the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources (LAWR) at UC Davis for about six years. Montazar was formerly an associate

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Dr. Ali Montazar. Courtesy Photo

professor at the Department of Irrigation and Drainage Engineering at the University of Tehran in Iran. He has more than 15 years of research, extension, teaching and technical consulting experience, and has served in several leadership positions in irrigation and water management while contributing to the progress and completion of several projects in California and abroad.

At UC Davis, Montazar maintained connections with multiple research and outreach projects with specific areas of irrigation scheduling, crop water use measurements of several field and specialty crops, deficit irrigation strategies, and subsurface drip irrigation system (SDI). He actively participated in the educational activities to provide science-based and practical information including field days, growers' meetings, field tours, online learning and web content systems and extension publications.

He is working on documenting the experience of California and Arizona alfalfa growers utilizing sub-drip irrigation and had a chance to work closely with growers in California through farm visits, interviews, questionnaire surveys and field studies. He collaborated cooperatively with UC academics, specialists at the California Department of Water Resources and several irrigation and water companies.

Montazar says he's been very fortunate to be involved with research and training programs in the Imperial Valley since May 2014, continuously working on two field experimental trials at the Desert Research & Extension Center (DREC), surveying alfalfa commercial fields and as an invited speaker at field days and workshops. These collaborations provided him an initial

understanding of soil and water related issues in the low desert region. He is hoping to learn more from growers and stakeholders about the local issues and how effectively he can provide his services as an irrigation and water management advisor. He says his priority is to develop educational programs and utilize technology transfer methods to disseminate useful and knowledge-based information on irrigation technology and water management practices to growers and farm managers, irrigation districts and the irrigation industry as well as to assist in establishing an innovative, multi-disciplinary program in the field of expertise in the Imperial, Palo Verde and Coachella valleys.

To address the core challenges related to limited water supplies and water quality in the region, he would like to develop his research and training programs on resilient, productive and profitable crop production; addressing the needs of growers and stakeholders to sustain agricultural productivity. He looks forward to working cooperatively with growers, farm managers and farm workers, irrigation districts, pest control advisers, commodity groups, conservation/environmental groups, public agencies and agricultural related businesses on innovative water conservation practices and techniques to gain more crop per drop, optimal irrigation-fertilizer strategies to enhance resource use efficiency and irrigation and soil management practices for more effective on-farm salinity control and water quality improvement. His goal is to provide essential leadership and to develop collaborative teams with UC academics, public and private agencies, growers' boards and associations and other interested parties to prioritize issues and implement effective programs to address critical issues related to irrigation and water management in Imperial and Riverside counties.

He says he looks forward to working with the great people of the low desert region. Feel free to contact Montazar any time so that he can get the opportunity to visit your farm, discuss possible soil and water issues with you and seek answers to the questions you may have. He says will always be around to help.

“Thank you so much for welcoming me to the low desert region,” said Montazar.

Ali Montazar

Irrigation and Water Management Advisor

(Serving in Imperial and Riverside counties)

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