Imperial County Agricultural Briefs

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Features from your Advisors

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FALL DESERT CROPS WORKSHOP HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

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The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Imperial county held its 31st annual Fall Desert crops Workshop (FDCW) virtually via zoom on two separate days, December 3rd and 10th, 2020. As you all know, it is the COVID-19 pandemic that has forced us to adapt this venue for extension knowledge delivery. Virtual zoom helped us to deliver needed information without worries for social distancing and other pandemic managing security precautions. Workshop presenters were from the county Ag Commissioner, University of California, University of Arizona, and various industry groups. Twelve (12) speakers (6 speakers on each day) and 8 industry groups offered power point supported presentations and industry product updates. Presentation topics were very diverse, but generally covered covid-19 and the support provided to Imperial Valley growers, crop irrigation, insect pests, pathogens, nematodes, crop management, and productivities based on current research, understandings, discoveries, and challenges for successful crop production. The virtual workshop was very similar and offered specific subject area in the same manner as the in-person workshops we use to offer in the past. Unlike the in-person workshops however, the virtual meeting had no limit on the number of participants, therefore, we were not worried about reaching more individuals than was possible with the previous in-person format. We were also able to attract attendees from far away who may not have traveled to attend at in-person workshop.

Regardless of the immense benefits from virtual zoom conferencing, the hosts, presenters, and attendees would need to have clear understanding of how the zoom platform is managed, controlled, and utilized. Unlike in-person workshops, some adjustments are also necessary on how we may communicate through an online format. Most important adaptations and management options are as follows.

1. Even though the virtual workshop takes place without needing to travel to workshop places and can be done from the people's residences, you still need to be aware that there could be cancellations, power turn offs, internet speed and connection, and many other communication barriers.

2. You would need to spend some time before the actual workshop takes place and give guidance to the audience. Since some people may be attending virtual zoom meetings for the first time or need to be refreshed, it is important to provide very clear instructions at the beginning of the workshop, such as:
    a. Configure options for attendees, manage security concerns and how attendees may interact with the hosts, speakers, among other attendees and how they may give comments or ask questions.
    b. You would need to disclose options for speakers, configure how speakers may share their screen or give effective presentations and manage Q and A sessions of their respective presentations

3. A host and co-hosts can enable key zoom features, waiting room and manage background noise conditions. A host / co-host would need to enable or disable all necessary management features a day or few days before the actual workshop and ensure that the system is ready to engage.

4. A host or co-hosts should also disable all participant microphones and / or attendee videos upon entrance to the meeting. This will allow hosts to block unwanted, distracting, or inappropriate actions or movements and background noises (such as distractions, cat growling, barking dogs, or doorbell. When needed speakers or other audiences can unmute the microphones and revel / enable their videos.

5. Knowing that hosts are the only ones who can share their screens by default, hence you would need to obtain speaker power point slides in advance and be prepared to enable screen sharing for participants on based on speaker's schedules or change the settings to enable participant screen sharing by default for all attendees.

6. Develop a means by which you *make sure that each speaker time allocations and Q and A sessions are managed.* With virtual presentations, speakers may unexpectedly take longer time of presentation than what is allocated.

7. Presenters cannot share their screen in PowerPoint and see their speaker notes on the same monitor. Hence, you may need to either get another monitor/laptop to display your notes or memorize your presentation.

In this workshop, we assigned 2-3 co-hosts to help everyone with any technical issues such as entering the workshop, collect or address chat information and questions. Workshop participants seeking education credits (CEU) were mandated to take a pool of tests after the workshop and submit them via email within 45 minutes of receiving the tests. The tests were compiled by gathering test questions from all speakers. CEU credits were granted if a score of 70% or higher is achieved. Responses to questions or test scores may also be used as indicator of workshop outcomes and benefits.

In summary, the opportunity to use virtual tools to facilitate communications has obviously revolutionized our capacity to deliver helpful education effectively to our clientele, stakeholders, the farm industry, and other knowledge seeking individuals. Clearly the zoom software is comprehensive tool for virtual gatherings. Besides, it allows participants / attendees, and speakers participate on the workshop from anywhere without needing to travel. We thank all presenters and industry product update agents for their valuable time and providing needed information into this important event. We also thank all our staff who helped us coordinate and deliver this virtual online extension education.

If our growers, clientele, or our stakeholders are interested in having us facilitate any one-to-one meeting or looking for video conferencing with any of our UCCE advisors or Community Education Specialists (CES), we will be more than happy to help. We can set up zoom or webinar conferencing systems at your convenience. If you are interested, please call our office at 442-265-7700 or email any of our help desk, advisors, or CES. Our email addresses are available on our website, http://ceimperial.ucanr.edu/about/contact/. You may also call or email Ali Montazar at (530) 574-4140 (mobile) or amontazar@ucanr.edu or Oli Bachie at (619)203-6228 (mobile) or obachie@ucanr.edu.


Save the Date...
February 25, 2021
Vegetable Crops & IPM
Workshop
Location: ZOOM WEBINAR
Time: 9:00 AM to 11:40 AM
No Cost to Attend!
Presented by the
University of California Cooperative Extension Imperial County
More information to follow regarding the event; topics, agenda, CEU's, etc.
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IMPERIAL COUNTY
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IMPERIAL VALLEY CIMIS REPORT AND UC WATER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

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The reference evapotranspiration (ET_o) is derived from a well-watered grass field and may be obtained from the nearest CIMIS (California Irrigation Management Information System) station. CIMIS is a program unit in the Water Use and Efficiency Branch, California Department of Water Resources that manages a network of over 145 automated weather stations in California. The network was designed to assist irrigators in managing their water resources more efficiently. CIMIS ET data are a good guideline for planning irrigations as bottom line, while crop ET may be estimated by multiplying ET_o by a crop coefficient (K_c) which is specific for each crop.

There are three CIMIS stations in Imperial County include Calipatria (CIMIS #41), Seeley (CIMIS #68), and Meloland (CIMIS #87). Data from the CIMIS network are available at: http://www.cim is.water.ca.gov. Estimates of the average daily ET_o for the period of November 1 to January 31 for the Imperial Valley stations are presented in Table 1. These values were calculated using the long-term data of each station.

Table 1. Estimates of average daily potential evapotranspiration (ET_o) in inch per day

Station	December		January		February	
	1-15	16-31	1-15	16-31	1-15	16-28
Calipatria	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.12	0.13
El Centro (Seeley)	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.11	0.13	0.15
Holtville (Meloland)	0.09	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.12	0.14

For more information about ET and crop coefficients, feel free to contact the UC Imperial County Cooperative Extension office (442-265-7700). You can also find the latest research-based advice and California water & drought management information/resources through link below:
http://ciwr.ucanr.edu/.