

What Is the University's Agricultural Experiment Station?



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EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST YEAR has demonstrated to me that what some of us have thought was widely understood has in fact been widely misinterpreted. With apologies to those readers who will regard it as elementary or obvious, I hope to explain what the University of California's Agricultural Experiment Station is. The troublesome term is "station." Webster defines station as "the place where a person or thing stands or is located." It is logical, therefore, to those who are not intimately associated with our organization, to regard the Agricultural Experiment Station as a "location" where experimental work is conducted. However, descriptive names, particularly those in long-time use, have a way of becoming misleading.

The University of California's Agricultural Experiment Station has been in existence for nearly a century. It is the oldest college-created, and continuously operated Experiment Station in the nation and, indeed, when it was established, the program was confined to a single location—Berkeley. Without recounting the history of its development from the beginning to the present, let me just say that the University of California's Agricultural Experiment Station today is a complex organization which conducts its research program at numerous locations within the State of California and in some instances in other states and countries.

About 50% of the Experiment Station's research program is carried out by members of the University of California's Davis faculty and staff, and the remaining portion of the program is divided about equally between Berkeley and Riverside campus faculty and staff members. A few of these Davis, Berkeley, and Riverside members of the Experiment Station are located permanently at the Kearney Horticultural Field Station at Parlier (Fresno County) where they are members also of the group of research and extension personnel which collectively is known as the San Joaquin Valley Research and Extension center.

To add further to the confusion, the Agricultural Experiment Station organization is responsible for, and administers nine field stations which are in reality field laboratories for use by any of the faculty and staff of the Experiment Station and Agricultural Extension Service. These field stations are located in Im-

perial, Orange, Tulare, Fresno (two stations), Santa Clara, Mendocino, Yuba, and Siskiyou Counties. The research program conducted by faculty in the School of Forestry and Conservation at Berkeley is also a responsibility of the Agricultural Experiment Station organization. The School is administratively responsible for several off-campus research forest stations, namely, Whitaker Forest, near Sequoia National Park in Tulare County, Blodgett Forest in El Dorado County, Howard Forest in Mendocino County, The Russell Tree Farm in Contra Costa County, the Sagehen Creek Research Station in Nevada County, and the Forest Products Laboratory in Richmond.

Thus, the fixed locations where the University's Agricultural Experiment Station's research is conducted comprise three campuses, nine agricultural field stations, and six forestry field stations. There are some additional locations where field research is conducted that are managed by some of the departments of the Experiment Station. Now, to add a bit more to this complicated picture, the U. S. Department of Agriculture has several research field stations located in California, where University Experiment Station and Extension personnel work cooperatively with USDA personnel. These USDA field and laboratory locations include facilities at or near Brawley (Imperial County), Indio (Riverside County), city of Riverside, Pasadena, Shafter (Kern County), Fresno, Salinas, Albany, and Davis.

My purpose in this listing of locations where we are involved, either directly or indirectly, is to illustrate the complexity of the University's Agricultural Experiment Station. The Director is responsible for the entire program and budget of the research personnel of the Experiment Station and the total administration of the nine Agricultural Field Stations identified in the early part of this editorial.

There is no question that our name is obsolete, but a meaningful and concise alternative has not been found. Suggestions would be welcome. When comparing the complex organization described above with the definition of the word "station" it is easy to understand why there is confusion regarding the nature of our Agricultural Experiment Station. In future editorials, I will attempt to describe how this complex organization achieves its goals.