

Oregon State University-Jackson County
Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center
Strategic Plan
2009-2014
(updated June 2010)

OUR MISSION

Contribute significantly to the sustainability and profitability of agriculture and the quality of life in southwest Oregon.

We accomplish this through applied research and by delivering objective, research-based information to help local citizens solve problems, develop leadership skills, maintain economic vitality, promote community health and well-being, and manage resources wisely.

WHO WE ARE

The Oregon State University Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center (SOREC) is comprised of two units: the Southern Oregon Experiment Station and the Jackson County Extension Service. Under one administrator, each unit has its own staff and funding sources.

The Experiment Station unit conducts applied research in the areas of tree fruit pathology, horticulture, and pest management (see Appendix 1, Organizational Chart).

Our programs directly benefit the local agriculture industry, the citizens of southern Oregon, and the Pacific Northwest. Knowledge developed in our programs is shared with producers and colleagues worldwide.

- 1) **The pathology-horticulture program** works on (1) problem-solving research and Extension outreach education to develop and implement strategies for dealing with diseases and disorders in fruit production with minimal use of pesticides, and (2) opportunity-creating research to introduce new methods that can increase fruit quality, expand marketing, or increase production efficiency.
- 2) **The pest management program** focuses on the development of ecologically sound methods to manage insect and mite pests and conducts Extension outreach education to growers to aid/speed the implementation of those new methods. Developing alternatives to conventional broad-spectrum pesticides is our emphasis. This is done by field-testing new technologies and products, by developing appropriate pest monitoring techniques and by conducting outreach education to area growers so that they can make need-based pest control decisions.

The Extension unit of SOREC offers research-based information and conducts outreach education in areas of relevant and practical interest to citizens in the rural and mixed urban/rural environments of southern Oregon.

Programs and staff are valued and trusted by the community because of their responsiveness to the issues that most strongly resonate within the community and because of the relevance of the information provided. Our programs cover the lifespan and meet the demand for easy-access, research-based education for an increasingly diverse, growing and changing population.

Extension's information is disseminated into the community via classes, workshops and seminars, tours, and demonstrations together with the provision of well-researched educational materials and training of volunteers for community service.

Extension's resources and programs center on building sustainable communities. The focus is on three areas:

- strengthening communities and economies,
- sustaining natural resources and agriculture, and
- enhancing the health of youth, families and the aging adult.

Programs include:

- 1) **Youth Development and 4-H** activities incorporate in-school and out-of-school enrichment, Hispanic outreach, natural resources education, and the development of technology for the over 32,000 school-age youth in Jackson County.
- 2) **Family and Community Health** across the lifespan, with emphasis on nutrition, health, disease management, and food safety for the 47,000 adults in the county that are fifty-five and older.
- 3) **Forest and Natural Resources** promotes healthy, sustainable forest management and reduced fire risks while increasing the utilization of small diameter timber on our more than 100,000 acres of small woodlands in the county.
- 4) **Horticultural Education** provides proactive educational and problem-solving support for our more than 1,900 rural farms that generate over \$78 million toward the local economy. In addition, we provide volunteer development and training for many of our 140,000 county residents living within our incorporated cities on plant production, food preservation, soils, water management and recycling.

TIES TO JACKSON COUNTY AND THE COMMUNITY

Since 1911, Oregon State University has maintained a partnership with Jackson County and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to staff, house and operate the Southern Oregon Research & Extension Center (SOREC) in Jackson County.

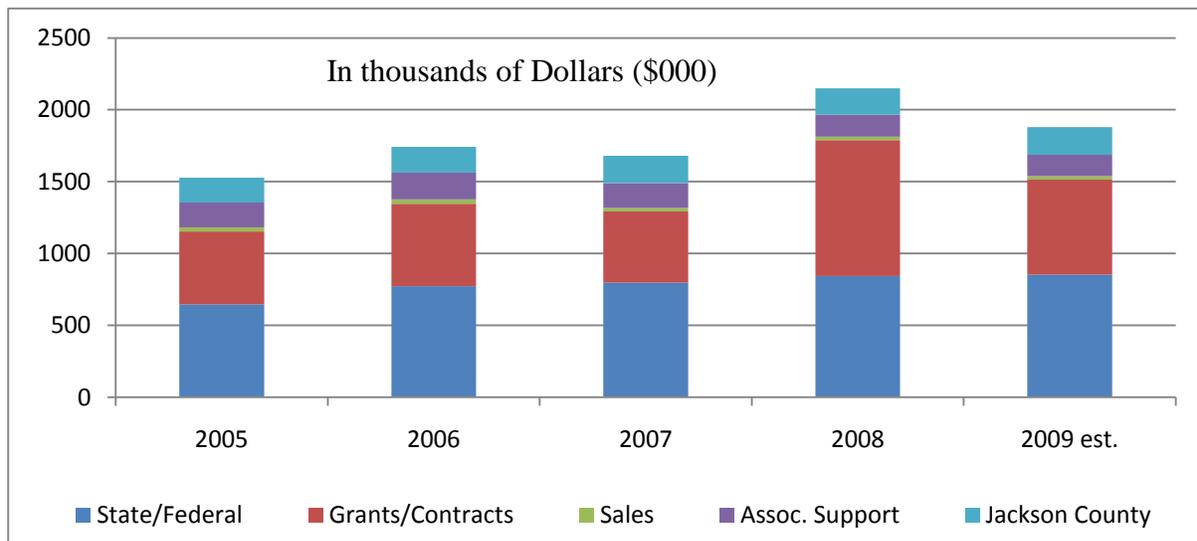
Jackson County provided land and buildings in support of the Southern Oregon Experiment Station, and in 1914 began providing housing and operational support to the Jackson County Extension Service.

This partnership between the three government agencies stipulates that should any one of the partners cease to provide support, Oregon State University would have no recourse but to close SOREC.

For nearly 100 years Jackson County has recognized the value of having Oregon State University's presence in the community and its impact on the local economy. In 2006, when budget problems threatened SOREC's county budget, the Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator unanimously acted to move SOREC's budget from the county service partners section to the economic development section of the county budget, to reduce vulnerability to budget cuts.

SOREC activities impact the lives of thousands of county citizens each year, and make the diverse and authoritative programs of Oregon State University available on a local level. A broad range of community organizations interact with SOREC to take advantage of the unique educational resources and thereby maximize their effectiveness.

SOURCE OF REVENUE



Note: Jackson County Revenue does not include value for buildings and land which are leased to OSU-CAS at no cost.

FINANCIAL CONDITION

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,527,000	\$1,742,000	\$1,680,000	\$2,144,000	\$1,879,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,452,000	\$1,673,000	\$1,595,000	\$2,058,000	\$1,786,000
WORKSHOPS/CLASS CARRYOVER	*	*	*	\$3,000	\$15,000
OPERATIONAL CARRYOVER	\$74,000	\$68,000	\$ 85,000	\$83,407	\$78,000
EMPLOYEE FULL TIME EQUIVALENT	20.5	18.9	20.6	19.7	20.6

* Workshop/Class carryover previous to 2008 was placed in Agricultural Research Foundation

SOREC'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Jackson County has a population of over 198,000. Medford is the most populous of eleven incorporated cities in the region and the center of the largest metropolitan area in the state outside of the Willamette Valley. The region's population is increasing at a very fast rate. Presently there are 140,000 people living in our eleven incorporated cities, over 30,000 school aged youth in Jackson County, an increasing aging population (17% over 65), and the presence of a sizable (about 8.3%) Hispanic/Latino population.

Jackson County is currently home to over 7,000 acres of orchards and vineyards, producing high quality fruit and premium wines. During the last three years agricultural sales have averaged \$79 million per year (return to grower value). Pears provide 84% of those sales. However, sales figures do not include the value-added gift pack industry led by Harry and David, Inc. in Jackson County, for whom specialty pears anchor the gift product line.

Some pear producers have reduced acreage in recent years, while others have expanded, including Harry and David and Associated Fruit Company. Although acreage of orchards has been reduced, the overall production and value of the crop remains around \$28.1 million. Winegrape production in Jackson County has also expanded significantly in the last decade to a value of over \$9.9 million. Forty-two wineries now operate in the Rogue Valley with more anticipated. Livestock production in the area was valued at over \$21.5 million in 2008. Small woodlands, forages, nursery crops, peaches, and other crops all contribute substantially to the agricultural mix for an additional \$22.7 million.

Rural/urban issues arise frequently, and color the political and social landscape. The need for a reliable supply of water for both agriculture and our expanding population, the desire for sufficient open space, and balancing the economic value of land for development versus the value of commercial agriculture and timberland are all critical topics on the minds of community leaders and many citizens.

THE FUTURE OF OSU IN SOUTHERN OREGON

SOREC is the "front door" of Oregon State University in Southern Oregon.

Based on the information above, it is important that SOREC faculty, staff, and volunteers continue to work with stakeholders and partners in the area to bring all the resources of Oregon State University to address local issues and needs. We feel the best way to accomplish this is by:

- Creating local and regional partnerships that take cooperative and collaborative approaches to problem solving, outreach education, and external funding.
- Working with regional natural resource partners (NRCS, JSWCD, FCS, etc.) to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a regional Center, made up of Federal, State, and County organizations, all based at the same location, where information and training pertaining to Natural Resources can be obtained.
- Utilizing advisory groups and partnering with other organizations to ensure that SOREC is recognized for its expertise in the community and as a gateway to Oregon State University and its resources.

- Demonstrating and measuring impacts vs. investments as defined by OSU and Jackson County.

The Research Unit will realize the key areas of emphasis in our vision through partnerships between the College, Extension, industry organizations, and state/federal agencies and grants. It is important that OSU resources be leveraged to encourage and balance participation by outside entities, and that pride of accomplishment be shared broadly. Current programs in tree fruit and wine grape crop and pest management will continue to receive support from existing and expanding partnerships. We will do this by working with the local community to define new positions and develop proposals for priority staffing that lead to new research activities in winegrape production, natural resource management, and water conservation (see Appendix 2).

The Extension Unit of SOREC will work in tandem with identified communities and with the community at large to identify and more effectively use available data to understand changing demographics and natural resource use. Extension will retain its role as an objective broker of information, continually seeking solutions and providing answers in as unbiased a manner as possible.

Extension programs will be developed with an eye to maximizing innovative, outcome-oriented educational niches. The staff and volunteers will be expected to constantly leverage opportunities for community impact. Staff and volunteers within Extension will be individually and collectively vigilant in increasing OSU visibility within the community and consistently demonstrate the Extension Service contribution.

CREATION OF A FARM CENTER

Looking forward five to ten years, SOREC and our partners that address agricultural needs in the area feel that there would be a significant benefit to the community in combining resources and avoiding redundancy.

One idea under consideration is the development of a Farm Center to be created at the OSU-SOREC site that would include the following organizations: OSU-Southern Oregon Experiment Station and the Jackson County Extension Service, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the USDA Farm Service Agency. This would provide a one-stop location where citizens could receive information on any county, state, or federal programs, funding opportunities, or training available to farmers and other interested parties.

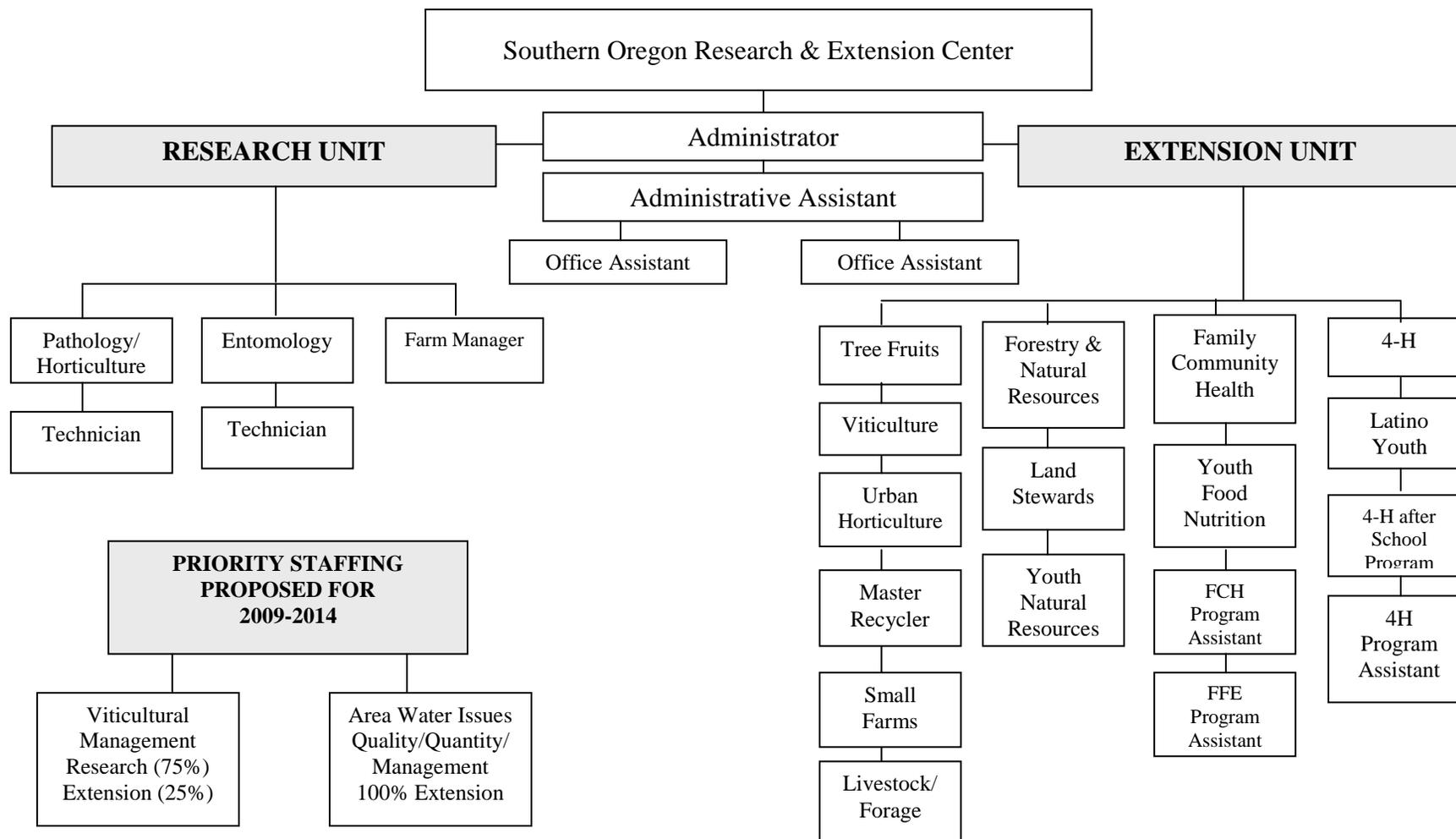
If SOREC is to play a major role in the formation and operation of the proposed Farm Center it is imperative that we have adequate stable funding as discussed below.

STABLE FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

As stated previously, in 2006 Jackson County Board of Commissioners and Administrator placed the SOREC county operational budget in the economic section of the county budget so that it was less vulnerable to budget cuts. While this was a major achievement by the present board of Commissioners and Administrator of Jackson County, it was a temporary solution. Therefore, to provide budget stability for SOREC in the future it was determined that the Center should obtain a Service District to be governed by the Board of Commissioners.

Accordingly, SOREC will ask the Jackson County Board of Commissioners and Administrator to support and create a Service District that encompasses both units located at SOREC. The actions to make this happen would be: (1) to ask the Board of Commissioners to create the Extension Service Youth, Urban, & Agricultural District in the fall of 2010 or spring of 2011, and (2) to ask the voters to fund the District in May 2012.

Appendix 1: OSU-SOREC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Appendix 2: Staffing Needs within the Next Five Years and Justification

Viticulture Production/Management/Marketing:

Oregon ranks third in the nation for number of wineries and fourth in production of *Vitis vinifera* wines. The industry contributes some \$239 million to Oregon's overall economy. Viticulture and enology in southern Oregon (Jackson, Josephine, & Douglas Counties) has grown by as much as 19 percent annually over the past few years.

Due to marked differences in varieties, climate and soils between southern Oregon and the Willamette Valley, vinifera grape production in southern Oregon is distinct, growing over fifty-four warm climate varieties. The viticulture industry is the fastest growing agricultural sector in southern Oregon, and we believe that SOREC needs to be more active in winegrape production, wine business management, and marketing.

SOREC plans to work very closely with the state Oregon Wine Board, the Rogue and Umpqua Chapters of the Oregon Winegrape Growers' Association, College of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Horticulture, and Extension Administration to develop a permanent regional viticulture position split between research and Extension to address the needs of southern Oregon (Jackson, Josephine and Douglas Counties). OSU and the Oregon Wine Board have already supported this position on a temporary basis and favor the creation of a permanent position that will be located at SOREC.

Water & Related Issues:

Projections for the three counties making up Southern Oregon (Jackson, Josephine and Douglas) indicate that the population will continue to increase significantly over the next 50 years. Along with the increase in population in Southern Oregon comes an increase in demand for water. This resource is so vital to: the urban and rural landscape, agriculture, municipalities, industries, tourism, and fish and wildlife that the projected shortages will inevitably lead to conflicts. Across the southern counties, governmental organizations are coming together to address the issues described above. This effort can be significantly enhanced by OSU-SOREC's involvement.

SOREC will submit a request for a field-based watershed educator that will assist landowners, managers, and other interested citizens and groups in understanding and implementing science-based upland and riparian zone management practices. These practices could be related to optimizing the use of water for agricultural irrigation, municipal supplies, stream flows, and other beneficial uses in ways that accommodate a healthy aquatic biological system. This watershed educator will work closely with Agricultural Experiment Station faculty located on campus and at branch experiment stations as well as other federal, state and county partners in the area.