

SAREP Review Committee Final Report

Submitted by:

Charles Crabb, Bob Elliot, Dan Marcum, Helene Murray, Richard Smith, Jim Sullins,
and Michael Singer (chairman)

With support from Katherine Webb-Martinez *

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*Contact information is in appendix 1 of this report.

Recommendations

The following 22 committee recommendations are derived from a review of background materials, discussion of the findings obtained from in-person and phone interviews and the on-line survey described in the methods section of this report. The recommendations are organized into four areas. Each area is introduced with a brief statement of strengths and needs for improvement. These recommendations are not ranked. The findings section that follows the introduction provides information that led to these recommendations.

A. Program Structure

SAREP has name recognition among some parts of the sustainable agriculture and organic agriculture community. The following recommendations address how to expand this name recognition so that the program is truly statewide. It addresses how to increase the effectiveness of SAREP.

- A1. ASI and SAREP need to have separate missions.
- A2. SAREP would benefit from its own strategic plan, including information on how they identify and address their priorities. The plan could be informed by current planning activities of ASI, but it must be unique from ASI.
- A3. SAREP should have its own statewide advisory committee or committees (including a technical advisory committee) to help set priorities and facilitate communication with their stakeholders.
- A4. SAREP advisory committee or committees must be a diverse group of people working in sustainable agriculture. For example, including growers, commodity board representatives, non governmental agency representatives and CE representatives.

B. Program Scope

SAREP has done some things very well for parts of the sustainable agriculture community but it has had limited geographical and stakeholder reach. The following recommendations address how to expand the scope to address more issues, expand geographically and help more stakeholders.

- B1. ANR needs to address sustainable agriculture in the broadest sense.
- B2. SAREP needs to continue to address key topics in sustainability.
- B3. SAREP needs to align its priorities with major stakeholder groups. This is already happening with combined ASI/SAREP strategic planning process.
- B4. When funding is adequate, SAREP staff needs to be catalyzing partnerships rather than conducting its own research.
- B5. SAREP needs to maintain its statewide focus.
- B6. SAREP needs to expand its geographic range beyond the close proximity to UC Davis and northern California.
- B7. SAREP must focus on cross disciplinary efforts necessary to solve problems facing agriculture, the food system and food distribution.
- B8. SAREP needs to find more opportunities to work with students; this is likely to be improved through the affiliation with ASI.
- B9. SAREP role in ANR needs to be clearer, including how it fits in the ANR mission and priority for sustainable agriculture.

C. Grant Program

The SAREP grant program was one of its major strengths. Grants were important to stakeholders when initiating sustainable agriculture programs. The following recommendations address how to make the most of the grants program.

- C1. SAREP needs to keep its grants program.
- C2. SAREP needs to fund systems-based research.
- C3. SAREP should use its grant making ability to stimulate needed statewide research and cross-disciplinary activities.
- C4. SAREP must provide follow up reports on information that was generated by grants. They need to post these reports to their web site.

D. Communication and Collaboration

Fundamental to SAREP is outreach to the sustainable agriculture community. Some parts of the SAREP outreach have been very strong and successful, others less so. The following recommendations address how to expand and improve communications and collaboration.

- D1. SAREP needs to be able to express its unique role in ANR, which is its systems approach.
- D2. SAREP needs to expand its partnering with researchers and stakeholders to extend limited resources.
- D3. SAREP needs to expand its audience when it communicates with internal and external groups.
- D4. SAREP needs to refocus on bringing CE and AES together.
- D5. SAREP needs to be a more powerful knowledge source [improve web site as a high priority.] Needs to be the statewide dissemination focus for sustainable agriculture for ANR.

Introduction

This committee was appointed in July 2008 with M.J. Singer as Chairman. The committee met in Davis on August 12, 2008 and December 4, 2008. Other communications were by three web conferences and electronic mail. The committee charge from Dan Putnam, Program Leader follows. SAREP was last reviewed in 1995, but the present review focused on the past five years and what can be done to make SAREP more effective in the future. In the executive summary of the 1995 committee report, the committee noted “A large measure of its (SAREP) success should be determined by how effectively it is helping to focus the collective energies and resources of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) to bring about the integration of sustainable practices throughout the food production system.” This continues to be true. A careful reading of this report and the older one will reveal that some of the recommendations are the same. Although progress has been made in some areas, issues of mission, responsibilities to its clientele, management structure and scope remain.

“The Charge: The committee is charged to conduct a programmatic review of California SAREP, inclusive of the performance between 2003 through 2007, but with emphasis on current productivity, and future vision and trends. The broad questions asked of all UC ANR state-wide programs, plus specific questions that may be used in the SAREP review are attached to this letter to guide the committee’s activities. These are formulated as 12 basic questions, with several corollary or elaborative questions, which relate to those, which may assist in stimulating discussion. Other questions may arise during the committee’s process.”

“General Purpose: The overall purpose is to review and assess the productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency of this program’s activities, the impacts of the program during the past five years, and to determine the appropriateness of the program’s strategic plan for the next five years and its continuation as an ANR statewide program. The reviews by your committee are taken very seriously by the State-wide Program Leader, Program Council, and the Vice President’s office. This is a standard review process for all ANR programs.”

The “12 basic questions” mentioned in the charge are reproduced in this report in the “findings” section. The findings of the committee are interspersed among the questions as direct responses to the questions.

Process

The process began with Ms. Webb-Martinez (Principal Analyst, Office of Program Planning and Evaluation) assembling a large number of background documents for the committee. After review and discussion of the documents and the charge to the committee, the committee consensus was that we could address the charge most effectively by creating sets of interview questions for a broad spectrum of stakeholders including those within the UC system, those outside the UC system, and the SAREP staff (appendix 2). The in-person surveys were created by the committee through several iterations until we reached a consensus that the surveys were a suitable length and that answers would provide the information we needed.

Interviews were followed by an on-line survey that asked many of the same questions as asked during the interviews (appendix 3). The committee appreciates the assistance of Milton Fujii from the Office of Program Planning and Evaluation who helped with the construction of the survey. The on-line survey was distributed through the Associate Deans and Regional Directors to all AES faculty, CE specialists, and CE advisors.

During the creation of the survey the committee created a list of potential interviewees. The list included representatives from stakeholder groups identified in the SAREP/ASI MOU (See Table 1). The committee also made a concerted effort to contact stakeholders who have not historically interacted with SAREP, but who could discuss their shared interest in sustainable agriculture and food systems. Once a consensus had been reached, committee members volunteered and were assigned to do interviews. The face-to-face and phone interviews took place in November and early December 2008. Attempts were made to contact over 40 individuals. The names of the interviewees are not a part of this report, as each individual contacted was assured that his/her responses would be confidential.

Ms. Webb-Martinez and Chairman Singer summarized the responses to the on-line and in-person interviews (appendix 4 and 5). Response to the on-line survey was very good. Over 150 (152 to be precise) usable responses were received. This is approximately a 15% response rate. The balance among AES faculty and CE employees was good (appendix 4). It should be noted that approximately 87% of the respondents had not received a grant from SAREP. Responses were shared electronically and were discussed at the final meeting of the committee on December 4. At this committee meeting, the committee created a list of findings and recommendations. Chairman Singer wrote a draft report, which was circulated to the committee (including Ms. Webb-Martinez) for editorial and substantive changes until everyone was satisfied with the report. The final report was then sent to Dan Putnam.

Table 1. Stakeholder groups represented in the in-person interviews.

Internal Stakeholders (including SAREP staff)

- Program staff
- ANR senior leadership
- Cooperative extension
 - Advisors: Farm Advisors, IPM Advisors, Nutrition and Family Consumer Science Advisors, 4-H and Youth Development Advisors
 - Statewide programs: Small Farms Program and the IPM Program, IRHMP, Marine Program, etc
- AES Faculty and Specialists

External Stakeholders

- Policy makers
- Regulators
- Industry professionals
- Community organizations
- Educators
- Farmers
- Ranchers
- Donors

Findings

The review questions sent to the committee by Dan Putnam are reproduced here with the committee's response. As noted by Dr. Putnam, these are "important questions which are generally standard across all ANR Statewide Programs. In parentheses are questions elaborating on the basic question, with more specificity to the SAREP program." The recommendations that are listed on the first page of this report following the cover page are derived from these findings.

Does the UC SAREP Program:

1. *Address a critical need?* (Is SAREP responsive to ANR critical issues as identified by previous long-term planning efforts, e.g. the strategic ANR critical issues? Do those ANR issues remain critical? Are these issues still in line with the critical needs of the stakeholders today?)

Yes. Information and research in the area of sustainable agriculture, regardless of one's definition, is a critical area. The 2005 UC-ANR Core Issues and Target Opportunities Report of September 2005 indicated that "sustainability and viability of agriculture" within the agricultural productivity program area was a high priority area. In addition, "sustainable use of natural resources" was a medium priority issue within the natural resources and animal agriculture program area. Sustainability and sustainable agriculture and sustainable resource use were mentioned numerous times in the report. In addition, as noted in the report, "organic production ... is a rapidly growing sector of agriculture."

The conditions that resulted in these being highlighted in the 2005 Core Issues report have not improved, although ANR has several successful efforts to address sustainability issues. Given the current state of the economy and given the current concerns with water and air in California, these issues certainly remain critical for the health of California agriculture and Californians in general.

Among external stakeholders, economic viability was the most often mentioned issue important to sustainable agriculture, but this is not a historically strong area for SAREP.

2. *Have a clear and appropriate mission statement and strategic plan?* (Should the programmatic focus and major emphasis of SAREP be narrowed or broadened? If yes, what could be the new focus or emphasis? Is it sufficiently focused in its goals? In light of the MOU between the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the UC-Davis, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, how feasible has it been to create a shared vision for SAREP and ASI? Is the current arrangement (since 2006) going the right direction with regards to vision and management?)

A recurring theme in the interviews and numerical data was that SAREP has narrowed its focus over the years and that it is now too narrow. About 25% of survey respondents were "very familiar" with SAREP (appendix 4). The perception is that it serves mostly small, Northern California organic growers. If it is to be successful, it needs to broaden its audience. Within its narrow scope, it has produced some very useful materials and information such as the cover crops bulletin. To a large degree, this has been a function of individuals within the SAREP organization and the grants that it once provided (when budgets were better).

SAREP's most recent independent plan is from 2001. However, after the committee's last Dec. 4 meeting, ASI completed its new strategic plan that includes SAREP as a program/unit of ASI. Without having seen this new ASI/SAREP strategic plan, the committee concluded that if SAREP is to be viable it requires a separate mission statement and strategic plan. As noted elsewhere, SAREP plays an important role in fostering research in sustainable agriculture and in disseminating information. To continue in this role and to improve its performance SAREP needs to have a strong mission statement and strategic plan separate from ASI.

3. *Provide a role, function, and educational and research products that are unique and not duplicative of other ANR programs?* (In what ways are the goals similar to or distinct from other statewide programs? What are the pros and cons of maintaining a stand-alone

program focusing on sustainable agriculture? Should SAREP be merged with another program? Has SAREP defined its unique contribution within the University Community, as distinct from other units (statewide ANR programs, workgroups, or departmental on campuses), especially those units (such as IPM, Small Farms) which may have some obvious overlap.)

Yes to some degree educational and research products are unique but the committee understands that SAREP is not the only UC program that has a sustainability focus. It should not be thought of as the only sustainability program. The on-line survey indicated that respondents were about equally split on the question of SAREP as a stand alone statewide program. The interviewed internal stakeholders however felt strongly that ANR needs SAREP as a stand-alone program. Among internal stakeholders, the feeling was that the sustainable agriculture community knows about SAREP and that continuing SAREP in a separate role from ASI is important. Some felt that there was some overlap with the UC IPM program but that SAREP's focus was broader than pest control. One of the unique features of SAREP is that it is a state-wide program and it has a broader focus than other statewide programs. Following the last meeting of the committee, the ASI strategic plan was shared with the committee and it indicates that ASI will have a state-wide focus. Exactly how this will affect SAREP is not clear at this time.

It was clear from the on-line survey and external stakeholder interviews that SAREP is not well known in the state. The exception is that certain individuals and their programs are well known. It is also clear that the statewide reach has not been as broad as it should be. For example, approximately 45% of the respondents had little knowledge of SAREP and 60% had no opinion on SAREP's reach (appendix 4). Another 47% have no opinion on SAREP's unique contribution, although more agree or strongly agree than disagree that SAREP makes a unique contribution. It was clear from the internal stakeholder interviews that respondents had a concern that if the line between SAREP and ASI blur, that SAREP's statewide focus may be lost.

4. *Interact successfully with other ANR programs, across campuses, departments, workgroups, programs, regions, and outside entities to further its goals? (Does SAREP have ways of including other UC units and non-UC units in their programs? How well have sustainable agriculture issues been incorporated into all of ANR's programs? What role has SAREP taken to promote its goals for other ANR programs? Has SAREP engaged effectively with key bridging partners and other users of its work? Has SAREP successfully engaged with UCCE, and how should it do so in the future? With other entities?*

Respondents and the committee concluded that SAREP has not been as successful as it might be in interacting with other programs. The committee is not able to answer the question about SAREP's role in incorporating sustainable agriculture into all of ANR's programs. It is clear that some sectors of the sustainable agriculture clientele pool have been well served by SAREP but others have not. For example, the work on community food systems (farm-to-school, local food systems work, etc) is well regarded. Organic agriculture and small-scale agriculture appear to have been well served, but the committee was concerned that other aspects of sustainability have not. SAREP has not played a role in issues of sustainability as they pertain to air and water resources, for example.

The committee feels that SAREP needs to provide better outreach mechanisms and that they need to partner with more organizations such as CE Farm Advisors, ANR work groups, industry and professional groups, and individual growers. An analysis of the on-line survey data indicates some of the problems faced by SAREP (appendix 4). If the interaction was successful, one might

expect familiarity with SAREP by the various groups. Some groups expressed a desire to have better communication with SAREP. Communication may be improved through better use of an external advisory committee. Table 2 indicates that SAREP is not equally well known by the various UC stakeholders (e.g. commodity boards). One committee member commented that he interviewed two commodity board representatives who had little contact with SAREP, but would greatly welcome such contact. AES faculty members (55 respondents) were least likely to be familiar with SAREP. Somewhat surprising was that 38% of the 21 CE Specialists responding were only a little or not at all familiar and 26% of the 61 advisors responding were only a little or not familiar with SAREP.

Table 2. Level of familiarity with SAREP by different UC stakeholders (% responding).

Level of Familiarity	AES Faculty	AES/CE appointment	CE Specialist	CE Advisor	County CE Director
Very	11	0	33	39	17
Somewhat	18	67	29	34	33
A little	33	33	24	18	33
Not at all	36	0	14	8	17
Not sure	2	0	0	0	0

5. *Successfully integrate the functions of Research, Teaching, and Extension? (Have SAREP’s programs had the mechanisms in place to encourage the link between research, outreach, and students? Has this occurred in practice?)*

Survey respondents had mixed responses to this question. Many said yes but others felt that SAREP was more effective in the past. Among the interviewed internal stakeholders, only three said no or that there was limited effectiveness in integrating.

It is not clear to the committee what is the full answer to this question. In some areas, SAREP has been successful in integrating the efforts but in other areas, much less so. Much has to do with individual SAREP staff members who have generally been successful in integrating these three functions. Two committee members commented that individual staff members have been driving the priorities with their personal programs and publications rather than catalyzing sustainability in other programs within UC. This tends to reduce overall program effectiveness.

SAREP appears to have missed an opportunity to integrate more students into its programs. However, the committee views the recent affiliation with ASI, given its faculty and direct campus connections, as an opportunity for improvement in this area.

6. *Generate an appropriate output of useful and scientifically valid products (including scientific, professional, and educational publications)? (Are these products of genuine use to our clientele? Please consider refereed peer-reviewed publications, educational products such as field days newsletters, ANR publications, and websites. Does the output of SAREP match expectations in terms of resources? Are these products of short-term value or long-term value? Do our clientele use this material extensively?)*

Yes, SAREP has had some very successful products that have filled an important need. These include their website, newsletters, meetings and meeting proceedings, and peer reviewed publications. Web access to information appears to be high, with between 175,000 to 235,000

requests for SAREP web pages per month (see Figure 1). Clientele who are aware of the resources use them extensively. One problem identified by the committee is that the clientele base that uses the resources is too narrow geographically and in terms of production practices and commodities (See next question). In addition, there is a need for publications and web-content in languages other than English that will meet the needs of the diverse ethnicity represented by California farmers. Examples include Chinese and other South Asian languages in addition to Spanish.

Some respondents felt that SAREP staff should get information to county CE staff that could move the information more effectively onto farms. One member of the committee felt that SAREP makes educational materials readily available but that they are of more interest to some than others. More individuals and groups would access the information if SAREP had a broader reach.

7. *Encompass an appropriate reach? Has SAREP been important to many sectors or only to a few? (Consider commodity, region, landscape, or by issue, e.g. pest, soil, water, nutrition, or by group, e.g. organic vegetable, range-fed beef, conventional farmer, to by regions e.g. intermountain, coastal, desert, valley. Community & producer? Is the clientele base too narrow or too broad? The scope too wide or too narrow?)*

No, the reach has been too narrow but this might be a result of the small budget. Some respondents felt that the SAREP reach is too narrow and that it has equated organic agriculture with sustainable agriculture. This has limited SAREP's effectiveness. Commodity groups have not been as well served as they could be according to some respondents. The responses were mixed and it was clear that where staff have been involved, reach and impact have been good. Some niches are well served and others are not. As mentioned previously, northern California, in particular, areas close to Davis have been better served than the San Joaquin valley or southern California. One measure of the reach (or lack of reach) was the on-line response to the question about SAREP contributing in an important way. Individuals could answer in more than one category, but 80 (over half) respondents indicated that they were not sure if SAREP has worked with a group in an important way. This either shows a lack of knowledge of SAREP or that SAREP's reach is too narrow (appendix 4).

A group that has been well served by SAREP is food systems. An example is the conference held in December in Davis that was well attended and had significant impact among those attending.

One measure of the reach is a measure of how familiar a person answering the on-line survey was with SAREP as a function of the individual's subject area. As shown in Table 3, the results show an uneven familiarity with SAREP among respondents. Those who work in the youth and community development area are most familiar with SAREP and those in natural resources and nutrition and consumer sciences seem to be least familiar with SAREP.

Table 3. Familiarity with SAREP as a function of subject area (percent responding followed by the number responding).

Familiarity/Subject area	Agriculture	Pest Management	Nutrition, Consumer Science	Youth, Community Dev.	Natural Resources	Food Sciences Tech.
Very	32 (26)	31 (15)	15 (2)	56 (5)	27 (8)	0 (0)
Somewhat	33 (27)	38 (18)	31 (4)	22 (2)	13 (4)	57 (4)
A little	23 (19)	21 (10)	23 (3)	0 (0)	40 (12)	14 (1)
Not at all	11 (9)	10 (5)	31 (4)	22 (2)	20 (6)	29 (2)
Not sure	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total responding	82	48	13	9	30	7

8. *Have an effective mechanism for transfer of knowledge and information to SAREP clientele? (Does SAREP successfully communicate? Does it have effective communication processes – both within SAREP, within the University, and outside the University? Has it been innovative in its communications?)*

Communication is a major issue that needs to be addressed by SAREP and ASI. It is clear from the responses of both internal and external stakeholders and those who answered the on-line survey that SAREP is not well known in a broad segment of the agricultural community and that information they have is not getting out as effectively as it should.

Having said that, it is interesting that over the past three years, over six million hits have been recorded on the SAREP web site (Figure 1). In addition, the newsletter appears to be an important tool for getting information out to people and for people to learn who/what SAREP is and does.

The committee concludes that SAREP staff needs to do more to get the word out -- both within the UC system and to external groups -- about what SAREP does. The web site needs to be improved by making it more user-friendly and up-to-date. For example, the cover crop data base was established 15-years ago and is now not up to date. This may be partially responsible for the decrease in hits on the website. The amount of information that can be accessed through the web site needs to be increased by posting more information. For example, SAREP could make many electronic publications from other programs and access to results from the grants program accessible through the web site. One committee member noted that the SAREP web site should be the “one stop shopping” equivalent of a sustainable agriculture library.

9. *Have a mechanism for discovering impacts of their activities, and have been able to demonstrate impacts of their activities? (Does SAREP have a way to determine whether the programs or grants have broad impacts or narrow impacts? What has this impact been? Can it be demonstrated? Which is the most effective strategy for SAREP, aiming to influence outcomes and impacts directly (through its own activities) or indirectly (through partnerships)?*

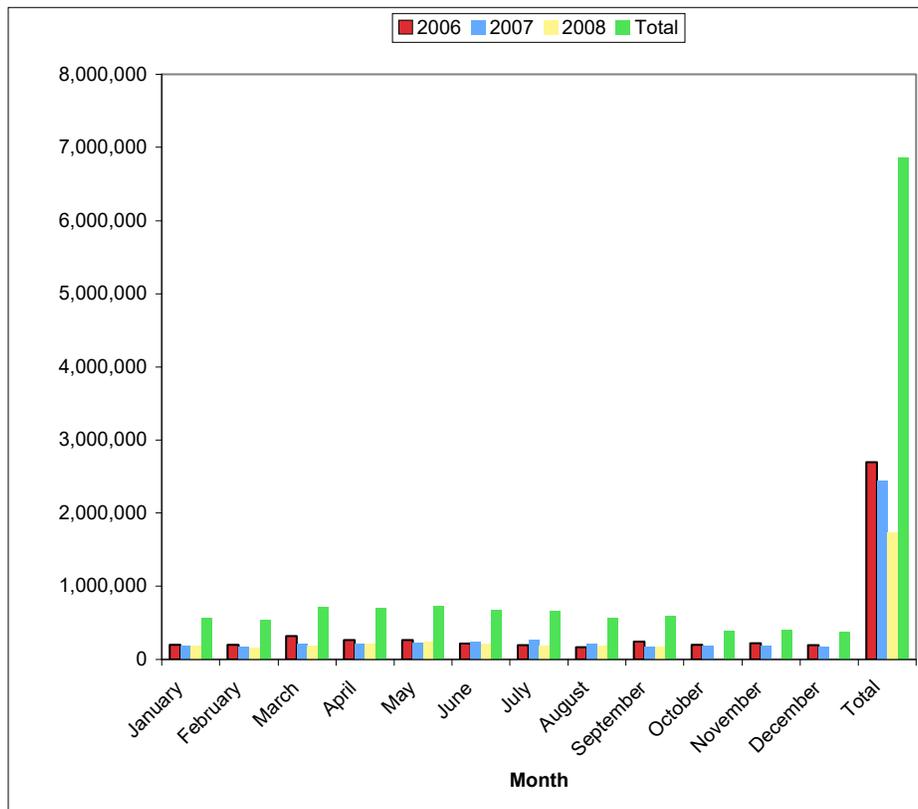
Yes, SAREP staff keep track of the number of individuals who attend meetings, of numbers of publications delivered and hits on their web site as one measure of the numbers of people who use their information. Outcomes of SAREP hosted meetings are assessed through questionnaires. Stakeholders commented that individual staff members have had an impact on how they do business and in particular on improving sustainability of their operations. For example, half of the

external stakeholders responded yes, SAREP information changed their operation and half answered no. Among those who responded to the question about UC impacting sustainable agriculture, the majority answered that UC has impacted sustainable agriculture in many ways and SAREP has been a part of that impact. Much of this is anecdotal information to the committee.

10. *Effectively compete for extramural funding to leverage the ANR contribution? (What is the record of grant matching? Of additional funding secured by SAREP efforts? What are the future prospects for extramural funding?)*

External and internal stakeholders had no opinion or few opinions on this. The committee is unable to clearly answer this question with the information that was gathered. According to background documents, during the period when Sean Sweezy was director, extramural funding peaked.

Figure 1. Number of successful hits on the SAREP website for three years. Note that the data for 2008 are incomplete and that changes in counting procedure are partly responsible for the decline in hits in 2008.



11. *Manage its competitive grant process effectively and fairly, and with appropriate accountability for deliverables? (Have grants been targeted to important issues? Have the recipients been fairly allocated across a wide swath of expertise, regions, and subject areas to address issues of importance? Have the grants been used to span the continuum campus-counties-communities and across disciplines? Have the SAREP grants program*

generally been effective? What have been the impacts on farmer practice, ideas, and science, on practical issues vs. broader ideas)?

Yes, the competitive grant program was managed fairly and effectively. Yes, it was accountable and it did try to maintain accountability for deliverables. Among those interviewed who had received grants, there was praise for individuals within SAREP who helped them get the most from the grants. Clearly, as the SAREP budget has gone down, fewer and fewer dollars have been available for grants. The general consensus among this committee is that many of the small grants have had major impact in helping individuals to initiate new programs. Often, a small amount of money was enough stimulus to get a program off the ground. The grant program is considered one of the strengths of the SAREP program.

Most grants recently have been going to UCCE individuals. The small amount of money that has been allocated to grants has been fairly allocated in the committee's opinion. The committee was concerned that the cross-disciplinary function of the grants was not being fulfilled. Impacts have been derived from specific programs. The BIFS program and the farms to schools program have had impacts state-wide and nationally.

A stronger effort needs to be made to insure that all grant reports are completed on time and that results generated by grants are widely disseminated.

12. *Have an effective leadership and management structure?* (In light of the MOU between the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the UC- Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, how feasible is it to preserve the integrity of SAREP as a program in the future? Does this new arrangement hold good prospects to strengthen SAREP's programmatic work and enhance SAREP's unique role as a statewide program (or not)? Should SAREP remain a distinct program within ASI? How effective is the unified leadership of SAREP and ASI and what improvements might be made? Is it appropriate for the ASI board serve for both programs? Does SAREP have administrative procedures that satisfy ANR standards for accountability with respect to resources and funds?

In the recent past, before SAREP merged with ASI, SAREP's leadership was weak or lacking clear direction. Now SAREP's "management structure" is in the hands of the ASI. ASI has strong leadership and is developing a new management structure for its "affiliate centers," like SAREP. However, this new management structure is a little unclear: review of the SAREP/ASI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the new strategic plan illuminated that SAREP is both identified as an "affiliate center" with ASI, as well as a program and unit of ASI.

The survey respondents and the committee agree that it is important for SAREP to be preserved and for it to have specific statewide missions within ASI. SAREP is the statewide facilitator of sustainable agriculture research and outreach. It is worth noting that in the new ASI/SAREP strategic plan SAREP's only activity listed under "Integrated Activities" is to manage the grants program within the larger ASI management structure. It appears that SAREP will lose effectiveness as a statewide program, and that the SAREP role within ANR will be less clear with the merger.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Committee contact information

Charles Crabb, Director of Education, California Ag leadership Foundation, 1300 National Drive, Suite 180; Sacramento CA. 916-928-2202; ccrabb@agleaders.org.

Bob Elliot, Environmental Scientist, Department of Pesticide Regulation, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95812; 916-324-4156; belliot@cdpr.ca.gov.

Dan Marcum, Farm Advisor, Shasta-Lassen County Cooperative Extension, 44218 A street, McArthur, CA 96056; 530-336-5784; dbmarcum@ucdavis.edu.

Helene Murray, Executive Director, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, 411 Borlaug Hall, 1991 Buford Circle, St. Paul, MN 5108; 612-625-0220; hmurray@umn.edu.

Richard Smith, Vegetable Crops Farm Advisor, Monterey County Cooperative Extension, UCCE, 1432 Abbot Street, Salinas, CA 93901; 831-759-7357; rifsmith@ucdavis.edu.

Jim Sullins, County Director, Tulare County Cooperative Extension, 4437 S. Laspina Street, Tulare, CA 93274; 559-685-3309 x209; jlsullins@ucdavis.edu.

Michael Singer, Professor and Soil Scientist in the AES, Department of Land, Air and Water Resources, One Shields Ave. University of California, Davis, CA 95616; 530-752-7499; mjsinger@ucdavis.edu.

Katherine Webb-Martinez, Principal Analyst, Office of Program Planning and Evaluation, ANR, UC Office of the President, 1111 Franklin St., 6th Floor, Oakland, CA, 94607; 510-987-0029; katherine.webb-martinez@ucop.edu

Appendix 2. Interview questions.

Appendix 2a. Internal Stakeholder Interview Questions Template.

SAREP Review Internal Stakeholders Interview Questions Form

Your Name:

Date:

Type of Interview: Phone or Face to Face

Interviewee name:

Interviewee employer:

Interviewee category:

- Administrator
- CE Advisor (Farm, Nutrition, and 4-H)
- UC Faculty
- CE Specialist
- Other CE

Relationship to program:

- Grant applicant
- Grant recipient
- Collaborator on SAREP project/activity
- Advisory Board member (past or present)
- Funder

Other ??

Background/Purpose:

The goal of each interview is to gather information that will help us to assess if SAREP has been successful in its mission and to determine what changes (if any) need to be made to the operation of SAREP to meet the SAREP goals. We want to answer the question: What are the areas that SAREP does well and what are the areas that SAREP does less well where improvement is needed?

To quote from our charge, “The overall purpose is to review and assess the productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency of this program’s activities, the impacts of the program during the past five years, and to determine the appropriateness of the program’s strategic plan for the next five years and its continuation as an ANR statewide program.”

Interview Questions

1a. How do you interact with SAREP?

1b. [If the answer to 1a is NO, continue with this question.](#) Can you name three activities that SAREP has been involved with in an important way?

2a. Do you use SAREP resources and publications? If so, which types? For what purpose? Is there information or other resources that you wish SAREP would provide? [A person who answers NO to 1a may still use SAREP resources but if the answer to this is NO, then skip 2b and 3a.]

2b. How do you find out about SAREP's work (publications, research, grant opportunities)? Is their communication effective? Is there a way it can be improved in the future?

3a. Do your clientele use SAREP resources and publications? If so, which types? For what purpose? Is there information that your clientele wish SAREP would provide?

3b. How do your clientele find out about SAREP's work (publications, research, grant opportunities)? Is their communication effective? Is there a way it can be improved in the future? Are there other models of effective extension/communication?

4a. Is there value added to your program from your interaction with SAREP? If so, what? If not, how can SAREP do things differently?

4b To be asked ONLY of individuals with grants:

- What has been the impact of your SAREP funded research?
- What has been the impact of your SAREP funded outreach activities?
- Do you have any recommendations on how SAREP can have more impact?

5a. From your perspective, to what sectors has SAREP been important, if any?
Probes: type of producers, community organizations, commodity, issue areas (pest, soil, water, nutrition), or geographical area

5b. Does SAREP encompass an appropriate reach? (For committee members: Is the clientele base too narrow or too broad?)

6. Has SAREP been effective in interacting with programs that have similar missions, both inside and outside ANR and the UC system? How could these interactions be enhanced?

7a. How well do you think SAREP integrates the efforts of faculty, specialists and advisors?

7b. Has SAREP brought Cooperative Extension and AES faculty together to collaborate and create useful information dissemination (books, web based, etc) on sustainability issues?

7c. Do you think SAREP can support greater impact indirectly through grants (and other services) to various partners or directly through projects implemented through the program? Why?

8a. Does SAREP provide a unique contribution to the University community?

8b. Do you think ANR needs SAREP as a stand alone statewide program focusing on sustainable agriculture and food systems?

Probes: Why or why not? What are the benefits? The challenges?

8c. If so, how is it different from that of other units (statewide programs, workgroups, or departments, especially those units such as IPM and Small Farms) which may have some obvious overlap?

9a. Do you know SAREP has been merged with ASI? (yes/no)

9b. If yes, what do you think of SAREP being merged with ASI? How do you think the new management structure will affect SAREP's unique role as a statewide program? Should SAREP remain a distinct program within ASI? Do you think it is appropriate for the ASI board to serve for both programs?

10. Does SAREP effectively compete for extramural funding to leverage the ANR contribution?

11. In what ways could SAREP better serve your program and compliment your activities?

SAREP Review External Stakeholders Interview Questions Form

Your Name:

Date:

Type of Interview: Phone or Face to Face

Interviewee name:

Interviewee employer:

Interviewee category:

- Regulator
- Policy Maker
- Industry Professional
- Community Organization
- Farm Worker Organization
- Farmer
- Rancher
- Donor

Relationship to program:

- Grant applicant
- Grant recipient
- Collaborator on SAREP project/activity
- Advisory Board member (past or present)
- Funder

Explain Background/Purpose:

The goal of each interview is to gather information that will help us to assess if SAREP has been successful in its mission and to determine what changes (if any) need to be made to the operation of SAREP to meet the SAREP goals. We want to answer the question: What are the areas that SAREP does well and what are the areas that SAREP does less well where improvement is needed?

To quote from our charge, “The overall purpose is to review and assess the productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency of this program’s activities, the impacts of the program during the past five years, and to determine the appropriateness of the program’s strategic plan for the next five years and its continuation as an ANR statewide program.”

Interview Questions

1. What are the most important issues in sustainable agriculture?

2. To whom or where do you go for sustainable agriculture or food systems information? Do you get information from UC? From SAREP? Is the information from SAREP useful? Is there other information you would like SAREP to provide?

3. In what ways has the University of California been involved in the area of sustainable agriculture? How has SAREP been involved in those activities?

Probes: in the areas of research, education, and public service?

4. From your perspective, to what sectors or audiences has SAREP been important?

Probes: different types of producers, community organizations commodities, issue areas (pest, soil, water, nutrition), or geographical areas?

5. How do you/your organization communicate with SAREP? Has it been effective? Can communication be improved in the future?

6a. Is there value added to your operation/program's work from your interaction with SAREP? If yes, what? If no, how could SAREP change/do business differently to add value?

6b. Does SAREP duplicate any of your program's efforts?

Probes: grant-making, services, information, research?

6c. Could the interaction between your operation/program and SAREP be improved? If so, how?

7a. Have you changed your operation/program to address sustainability issues? If so, please explain.

Probe: provide an example.

7b. What resources and information did you use? Was SAREP involved? If so, how?

8. **For those WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR SAREP GRANTS ONLY:** Did the grant project meet the needs of your operation/program?

Probes: Were you satisfied with the partnership? with the outcomes and impacts?

8. For those WHO HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR SAREP GRANTS ONLY: Why have you not applied for a SAREP grant? Do you/your program apply for grants often?

8. For DONORS ONLY: How effective has SAREP been in competing for extramural funding? What has been their strength in leveraging these funds? Is there anything that could make it more successful?

9. Has the University of California impacted sustainable agriculture in other ways? Looking to the future, is there any way to make it better?

SAREP Review SAREP Employee Interview Questions Form

Your Name:

Date:

Type of Interview: Phone or Face to Face

Interviewee name:

Interviewee role in SAREP:

Background/Purpose:

The goal of each interview is to gather information that will help us to assess if SAREP has been successful in its mission and to determine what changes (if any) need to be made to the operation of SAREP to meet the SAREP goals. We want to answer the question: What are the areas that SAREP does well and what are the areas that SAREP does less well where improvement is needed?

To quote from our charge, “The overall purpose is to review and assess the productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency of this program’s activities, the impacts of the program during the past five years, and to determine the appropriateness of the program’s strategic plan for the next five years and its continuation as an ANR statewide program.”

For committee members: Preface with “we’ve seen the Clancey Report...”

- How do you determine the impact of funded research?
- How do you determine the impact of outreach activities?
- How do you think SAREP can support greater impact indirectly through grants and other services to various partners or directly through projects implemented through the program?
- How do you think SAREP’s affiliation with ASI will affect its ability to influence outcomes and impact? Explain.
- Do you have any recommendations on how SAREP can have more impact?

For committee members: Only ask those involved (now or before) with the grant making process

- Please explain the grant making process. How is the review committee determined? What is the review process? What is the paper trail? What is the follow-up?
- What do you think of SAREP being merged with ASI? How do you think the new management structure will affect SAREP's unique role as a statewide program? Should SAREP remain a distinct program within ASI?

For ANR administrators only

- Does SAREP effectively compete for extramural funding to leverage the ANR contribution?



SAREP Review survey

Please provide information on your interaction with UC ANR's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP) and your personal perceptions of the program. Your name is not required. The results of the survey will be used to inform the review committee's deliberations and answer specific questions within the charge to the committee.

Please take 5-10 minutes to complete the survey by November 17, 2008. Your answers are important to us. We appreciate the time you are taking to fill out this survey!

Question	Response
----------	----------

1. What is your position?

- CE Advisor
- CE County Director
- CE Specialist
- AES Faculty
- AES/CE Appointment
- Other

If you answered "Other," please describe.



2. What is your subject area? *Check all that apply.*

- Agriculture
- Pest Management
- Nutrition/Family Consumer Sciences
- Youth and Community Development
- Natural Resources
- Food Science/Technology
- Other

If you answered "Other," please describe.

You and Your Program's Interaction with SAREP

1. How familiar are you with SAREP?

- Not at all A little Somewhat Very Not sure

2. How often do you interact with SAREP's staff and/or use its resources (publications, research, and grant opportunities)?

- Never A little Some A great deal Not sure

3. Which of the following SAREP resources/publications do you use? *Check all that apply.*

- Website
 Newsletter
 Publications
 People
 None

4. How do you find out about SAREP's resources (publications, research, and grant opportunities)? *Check all that apply.*

- From a colleague
 Online
 SAREP staff contacted me
 Other
 Not sure
 Not applicable

If you answered "Other," please describe.

5. How often do you think your clientele use SAREP's resources (publications, research, and grant opportunities)?

- Never A little Some A great deal Not sure Not applicable

6. How do your clientele find out about SAREP's resources (publications, research, and grant opportunities)? Check all that apply.

- From me
- From colleagues
- Online
- SAREP staff contact them
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

If you answered "Other" or you wish to explain your answer, please describe.

7. If you interact with SAREP, how much value added does the interaction provide to you and/or your program?

- None
- A little
- Some
- A great deal
- Not sure
- Not applicable

8. Have you received a SAREP grant since 2000?

- Yes
- No

If **Yes**, please answer questions 8a and 8b.

If **No**, please skip to the next section "Your Perspectives on SAREP."

8a. How much impact resulted from your SAREP funded research?

- None
- A little
- Some
- A great deal
- Not sure

Comments:

8b. How much impact resulted from your SAREP funded outreach activities?

- None
- A little
- Some
- A great deal
- Not sure

Comments:

Your Perspectives on SAREP

1. Here is a list of the groups that SAREP is charged to serve. From your perspective, what groups has SAREP worked with in an important way? *Check all that apply.*

- Farmers
- Farm workers
- Ranchers
- Researchers
- Educators
- Regulators
- Policy Makers
- Industry professionals
- Consumers
- Community organizations
- Other
- None
- Not sure

If you answered "Other" please describe.

2. SAREP serves the appropriate reach of relevant California stakeholders.

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

Comments:

3. SAREP provides a unique contribution to the University community.

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

4. ANR needs SAREP as a stand alone statewide program focusing on sustainable agriculture and food systems.

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

5. How effective has SAREP been in bringing Cooperative Extension academics and AES faculty together to collaborate and create useful information dissemination on sustainability issues?

- Not at all effective A little effective Somewhat effective Very effective Not sure

6. How effective has SAREP been in interacting with other programs that have similar missions, both inside and outside ANR and the UC system?

- Not at all effective A little effective Somewhat effective Very effective Not sure

7. How effective has SAREP been in integrating the efforts of faculty, specialists and advisors?

- Not at all effective A little effective Somewhat effective Very effective Not sure

8. How do you think SAREP's contributions to ANR are different from that of workgroups, other statewide programs, and/or departments?

9. Can SAREP have a greater impact *indirectly* through grants (and other services) to various partners or *directly* through projects implemented by the program? Why do you think so?

10. In what ways could SAREP better serve your program and complement your research and/or outreach activities?

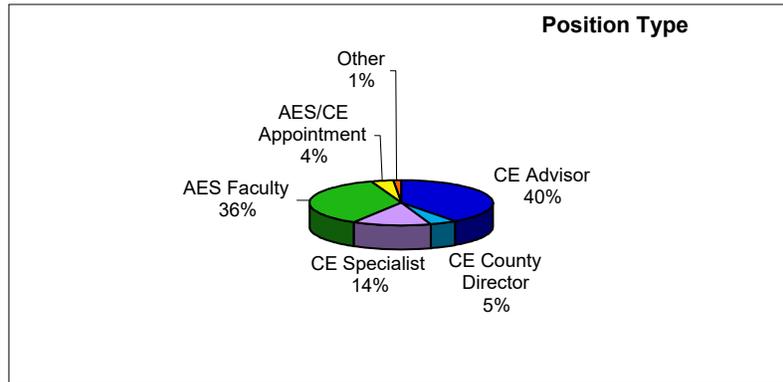
11. Please provide any recommendations on how SAREP could have more impact.

[Save Survey Information](#)

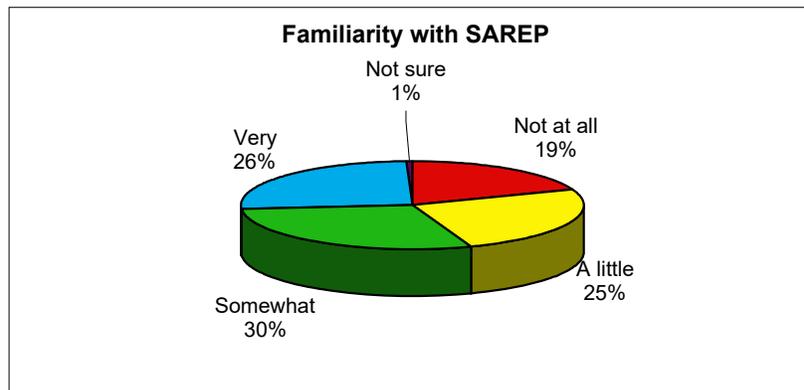
Appendix 4. Summary of on-line survey results.

The following pie charts summarize the on-line survey data that were used to generate the committee's findings and recommendations.

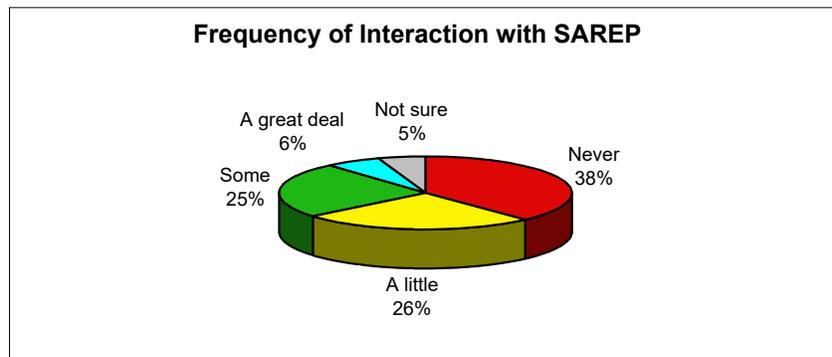
Who responded to the on-line survey?



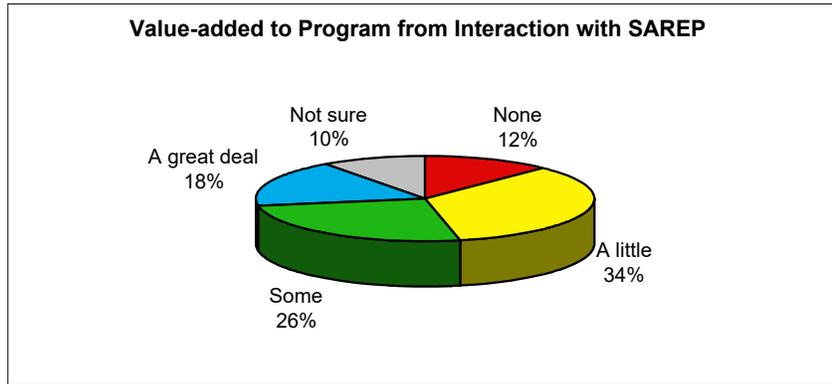
How familiar are you with SAREP?



How often do you interact with SAREP?

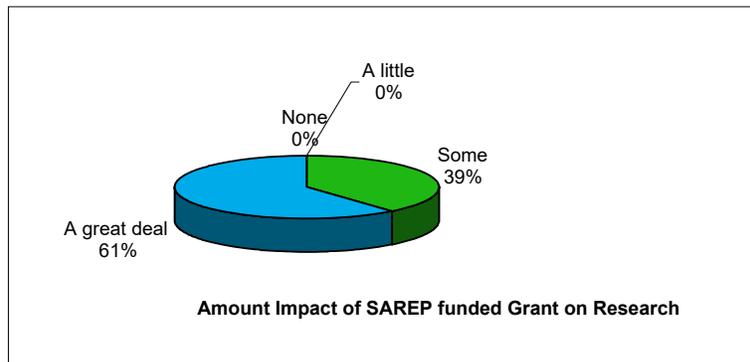


How much value was added to your program by interaction with SAREP?

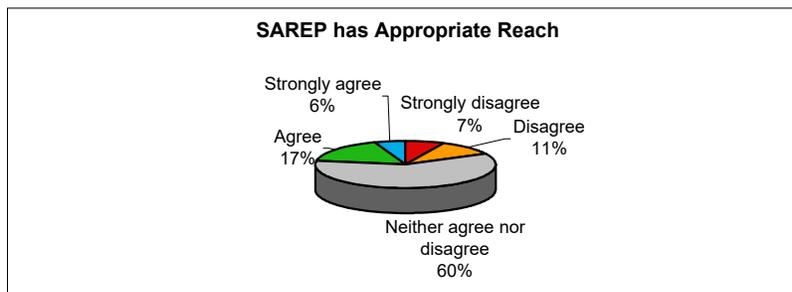


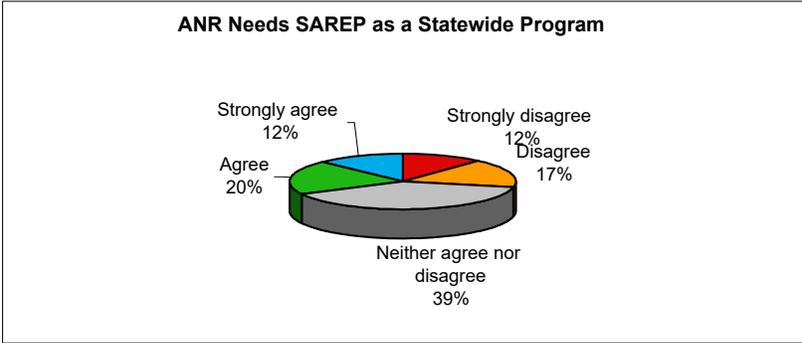
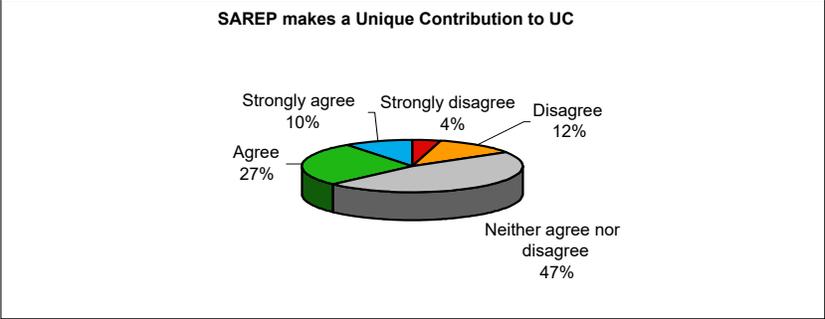
Only 13% of respondents (19 of 130 with three not responding) received a grant from SAREP since 2000. This low response rate brings into question the value of responses to the questions about the impact to individuals programs from SAREP funded research or outreach activities. In both cases the impact from those receiving grants was overwhelmingly positive as shown in the next pie chart.

What was the impact of SAREP funded grant on research?

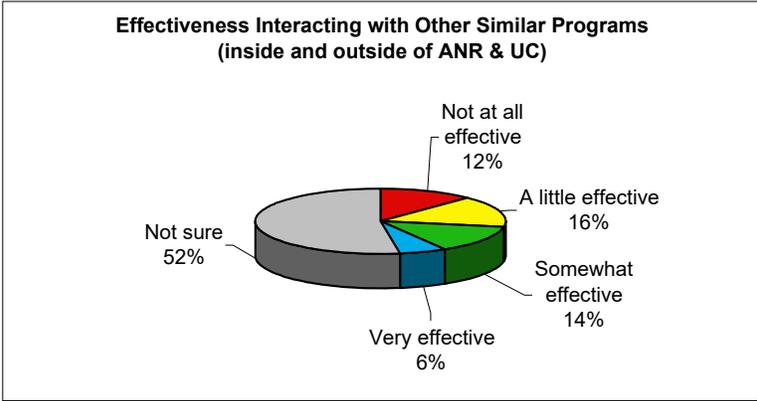
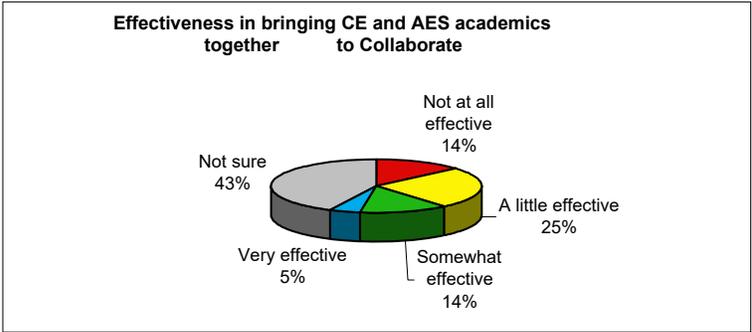


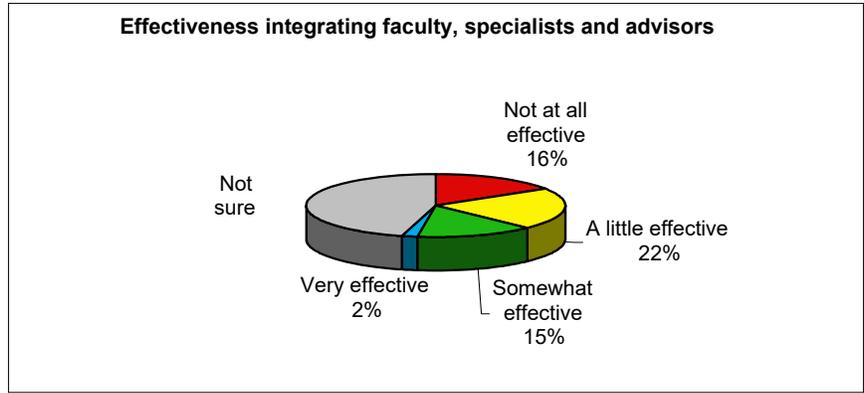
Three questions asked about appropriate reach, unique contribution and if ANR needs SAREP as a statewide program. The results from these three questions are shown in the following three pie charts.





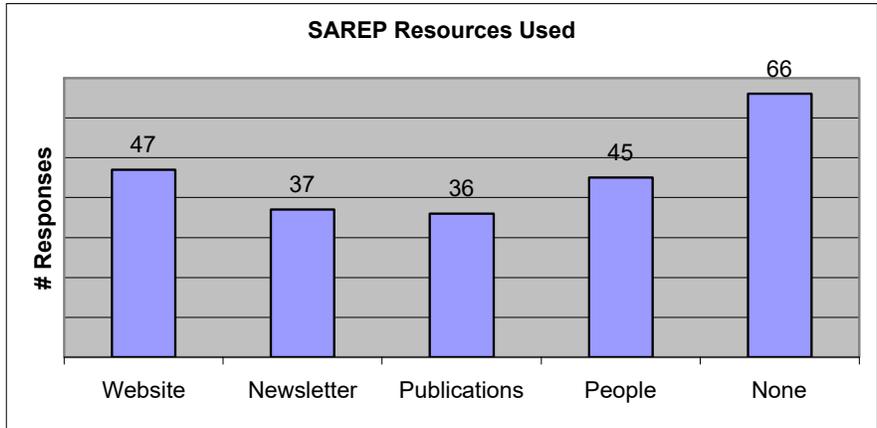
Three questions were asked about the effectiveness of SAREP programs in bringing CE and AES academics together, of integrating programs and integrating faculty, CE Specialists and CE advisors. The results are shown in the following three pie charts.



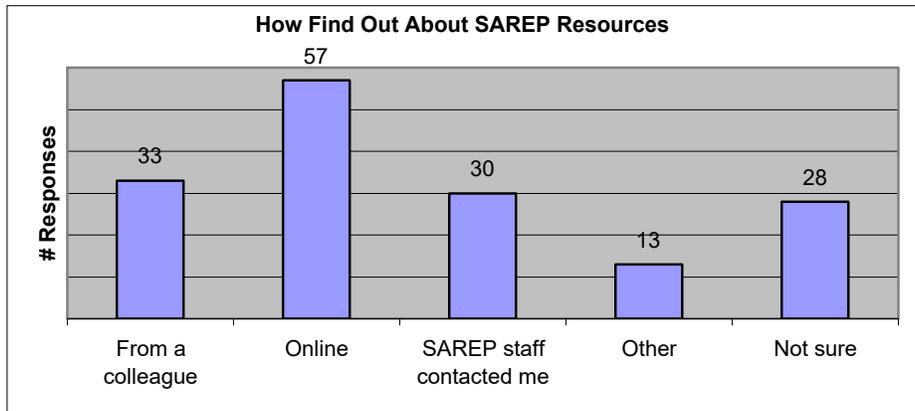


Some of the questions were open ended and allowed for multiple responses by a single respondent. The following bar charts summarize the information used by the committee to make findings and in making recommendations.

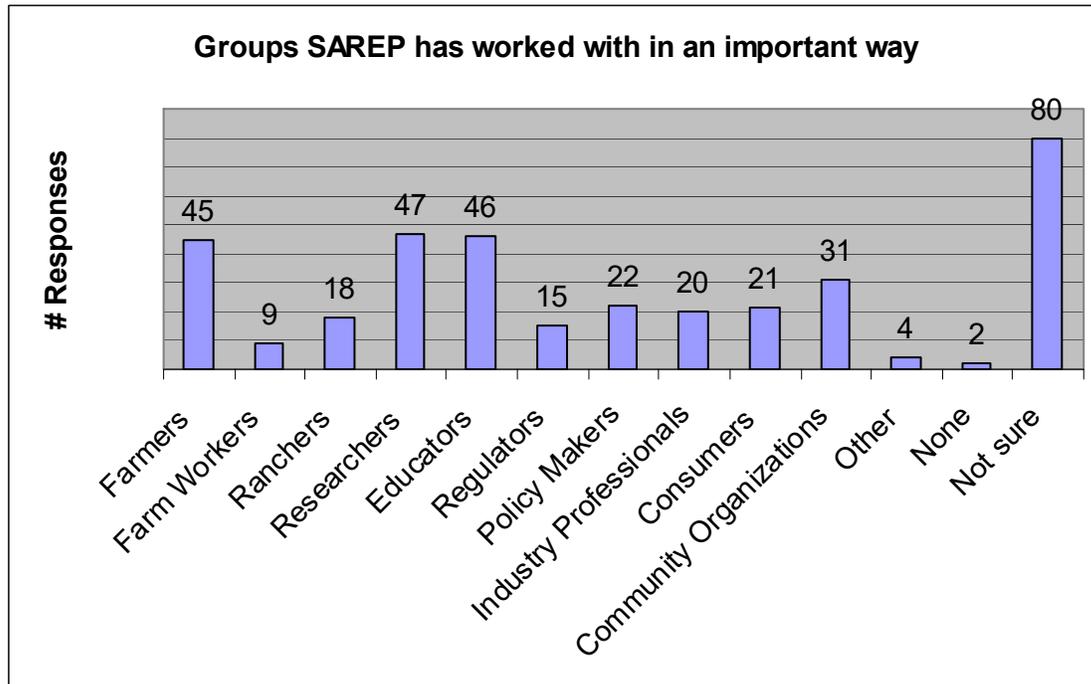
What SAREP resources do you use?



How do you find out about SAREP resources?



What groups has SAREP worked with in an important way?



Appendix 5. Summary of in-person interview results.

External Stakeholders

17 Interviews examined

1. Most important issues in sustainable ag. [Among those mentioned, economic viability was most often mentioned, followed by availability of inputs such as water.]

What is sustainability? Definition is unclear (3). Sustaining people, can it feed the world?

Organic vs sustainable. Emphasis on organic production.

Economic viability. Incentives for growers.

Making information available to users.

Climate change, aging farmers, economy, economic sustainability (7)

Moving production to biologically based ag.

Resource use, water (4), pesticides, fertilizers, pollution (2)

Helping small farmers.

Sustainable market.

Invasive pests. Control of pests.

Regulatory issues

Adoption of sustainable practices.

Food safety.

Availability of labor (2).

Effective labeling.

2. Who/where do you go to get information? [Many respondents used multiple sources including SAREP newsletter, web site, ANR, IPM program.]

UC faculty or CE (5)

not SAREP (2).

SAREP helps organic growers.

UC publications ANR (2)

IPM program (5)

SAREP quarterly newsletter, some SAREP individuals. SAREP provides useful information (3).

Many sources, mainly websites (2).

UC Santa Cruz.

CAFF

SAREP among others, SAREP needs more depth of information (2)

Cal Poly

SAREP publications (5)

Need more on soils (2); need more on line.

3. In what ways has UC been involved in sustainable ag. [SAREP biggest impact appears to be through grants programs and some publications.]

Individuals rather than SAREP

Pest management has been important.

UC has done a poor job teaching sustainability

SAREP is a national leader in farms to school programs. Very successful publication.

UC has been invisible. UC structure and administration a barrier to sustainable ag.

UC faculty. SAREP provides a public service through publications.

IPM (3) and cost studies

CE brings ideas better. SAREP sells a philosophy

UC provides information. SAREP grants are helpful. (7)
UC leads the US on whole system approach. SAREP packages information to be useful
SAREP has been helpful to the organic community.

4. Sectors served? [Many different groups but organic and permanent crops were mentioned most often.]

Small scale ag. (2)
Organic ag. (5)
Food systems work.
Growers of permanent crops. (5)
Farmers and extension
It was important then collapsed.
Commodity groups (3)
Little in the SJ valley
Farmers markets. It is politically correct, overstates its ideas.
University researchers, NGOs and the media, not growers who need numbers.
Everybody.
Many groups. Regulators and labor groups.

5. How do you communicate with SAREP? Effective? [More outreach is needed. Individual contacts on projects are critical.]

Little contact except with an individual. (4)
No contact. (4)
Little contact.
Contact is through local CE office. (2)
Little contact with growers, more with researchers.
Contact is through BIFS project.
SAREP sponsored meetings
Email, phone, internet and meetings. (3)
Newsletter
Employees

6a. Enhance your work? [Split opinion but most say yes, some emphatically.]

No, needs to interface with commodity boards.
No (3)
Minimal. Need more detailed information.
Yes, but not quantified.
Yes, but same information is available from UC.
Yes, they play a valuable role in pulling together research and encouraging interaction among groups.
Yes (6)

6b. Duplicate efforts?

NO (15), No idea
Programs are complimentary to ours. (3)

6c. How could interaction be improved?

Work with commodity boards to jointly fund research
Good resource for organic growers.
All about partnering.
Yes, more joint research (2)

Open lines of communication.
Provide free useful information on the web.
Organic information in one stop shopping.
Always room for improvement. (3)
Yes, in specific area.
Invite SAREP to industry meetings.
Its good now, so no.

7a. Changed your operation?

Yes (8)
No (8)
Its all about economics. Need information to know what works.
Reduction in use of chemicals.

7b. Was SAREP involved?

No (2) or not applicable (2)
UC system not getting important information out to growers.
Yes, provided information (web page, newsletter).
Lots of web sites provide information.
Lots of sources, SAREP is not the only game in town.
Rely on faculty.
Specific programs, BIFS, Farm to school.

8a. Grants helpful? Satisfied with partnership?

All who answered said yes.

8b. Why not apply for grants?

Did not meet the criteria, not eligible.
Did not know we could apply.
Our program does not fit with SAREP.

8c. SAREP effective in competing for extramural funding?

No useful answers to this question.

9. Has UC impacted sustainable ag in other ways? How to make it better? [Yes, UC has impacted sustainable ag in many ways. SAREP has been a part of that and with more funding could do better.]

Plant breeding, pest management economic viability. Disease models, degree day models, field testing of green chemistries.

Skeptical UC faculty have much to offer students.
UC Santa Cruz has done much for sustainable ag.
Provide more outreach to SJ valley.
Quadruple efforts beyond small farms.
Make the web site user friendly.
SAREP provides oversight to UC sustainability
Need to work collaboratively with commodity groups.
SAREP needs more funding (2).
Need a graduate program in sustainable ag.
UC needs to make sustainable ag more mainstream.
SAREP should have the lead in sustainable ag. research and education.
UC has been the leader in sustainable ag.

Internal Stakeholders

15 Interviews examined

1a. How do you interact with SAREP?

Little or none (4)
Long history
Worked on workshops
Source of information
Member of BIFS workgroup (3)
Meetings with staff

1b. If NO to 1a, name three SAREP activities.

Grant program, newsletter, small farm program
Grants program, direct outreach, workgroups
Grants program, publications
BIFS, newsletter, field days
Research farm to school

2a. Use SAREP resources? [Published work and staff are two key resources that have been used by internal stakeholders.]

Cover crop publication (5), other bound publications
Newsletter (4)
No (3)
Individuals, outreach resources
Food systems information noted more than once

2b. How do you find out about SAREP's work?

I don't use SAREP much.
Web site (2)
Newsletter
Staff
Direct mailings and email

3a. Do your clientele use SAREP resources?

Mostly no but 4 yes or probably.

3b. How do your clientele find out about SAREP's work?

Through the respondent.
Website but not effective.
Don't know.

4a. Value added to your program?

Eight said yes, definitely. Four said no.

4b. Impact of SAREP funded research

Only one helpful answer which was it was very important to LTRAS and SAFS programs.

4b part 2. Recommendations on how SAREP can have more impact

Few helpful answers. Involve farm advisors in a working group as part of projects. Need more resources and functional administrative structure. Local presence is a key. Increase publications and conference proceedings. Encourage more collaboration.

5a. Sectors?

Organic, NGOs, small growers most frequently mentioned.

5b. Appropriate reach?

Almost all agree it is too narrow.

6. Effective?

Very mixed response but overall not positive. For example; SAREP has not been well connected with other groups. Could be a better bridge than what it is. Outside yes. Inside they have had struggles. No, maybe the Small Farms program.

7a. SAREP integrates faculty, CE etc.

Mixed responses although many said yes, they do it well. Some felt it was better in the past. A few said not well or not at all.

7b. SAREP brought CE and AES together?

Most said yes. Only 4 said no or limited.

7c. Direct or indirect impacts?

Mixed response. Several answered both or a blend.

8a. Unique contribution?

9 say yes. Only a few negative or marginal responses. Overall, strong yes.

8b and c. ANR needs SAREP as a stand alone?

Strong yes. Many feels that there is overlap especially with IPM but provides a different focus than other statewide units. Only two say not sure.

9a and b. SAREP and ASI.

12 of 14 respondents knew that SAREP was part of ASI. Most were strongly in favor of the merger. Some had doubts about both SAREP and ASI.

10. Effectively compete for extramural?

Mixed responses. Many don't know or can't comment. A few say no and several say yes.

11. How could SAREP better serve your program?

Wide range of answers. More interactions between agriculture and environment. They pay no attention to post harvest questions. Develop new information and help Farm Advisors directly. Get information out better. Let us know what they are doing. Provide a better outreach mechanism.