

Joji Muramoto to receive the 2025 Bradford–Rominger Agricultural Sustainability Leadership Award

The Agricultural Sustainability Institute (ASI) at UC Davis has announced that the 2025 Eric Bradford and Charlie Rominger Agricultural Sustainability Leadership Award will be given to Dr. Joji Muramoto, Associate Professor of Cooperative Extension at UC Santa Cruz and Associate Cooperative Extension Organic Agriculture Specialist at UC ANR.

This prestigious annual award will be presented to Muramoto on Monday, May 5, at a ceremony featuring distinguished speaker Dr. Meredith Niles, the Robert L. Bickford Endowed Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences and the Food Systems Program at the University of Vermont.

The Bradford-Rominger Award recognizes and honors individuals who exhibit the leadership, work ethic and integrity epitomized by the late Eric Bradford, a livestock geneticist who gave 50 years of service to UC Davis, and the late Charlie Rominger, a fifth-generation Yolo County farmer and land preservationist.

Dr. Joji Muramoto was hired as the first Cooperative Extension Specialist fully dedicated to organic agriculture at UCANR in 2019. Since then, Muramoto has served the organic agriculture community across the state by working collaboratively with local Farm Advisors, Specialists, UCANR's Organic Agriculture Institute, and state and non-profit organizations related to organic agriculture. Muramoto's research focuses on enhancing soil health and promoting the sustainability of organic agriculture in California through transdisciplinary agroecological approaches. Prior to his current position, Muramoto served as a researcher at UC Santa Cruz. Since 1996, he has conducted research and extension on fertility and soil-borne disease management in organic strawberry and vegetable production and fumigant alternatives in conventional strawberry production in coastal California.

Throughout his 29-year career as a soil scientist and agroecologist in California, Muramoto has conducted numerous field-based research projects with local growers and collaborators, published over 50 peer-reviewed papers and invited book chapters, supervised more than 150 undergraduate students, and delivered over 150 extension presentations.

Muramoto received a Ph.D. and an M.S. in agricultural chemistry (soil science) and a B.S. in agricultural chemistry from the Tokyo University of Agriculture in Japan, where he also serves as an Affiliate Professor.

From an early age in suburban Tokyo, Muramoto was interested in the organic movement. "Organic farmers there told me repeatedly, 'Soil is the foundation of farming.' That's when I got interested in soil science," he says. As he advanced in his career, he found that helping growers was especially rewarding. "My passion is to help organic and conventional farmers make their farms more sustainable: ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially just."

Muramoto was nominated by Dr. Oleg Daugovish of UCANR and Dr. Carol Shennan of UC Santa Cruz, supported by several colleagues, former students and industry representatives. Daugovish and Shennan wrote, "Joji has a true gift for building working relationships with people of all kinds and has a passionate commitment to doing research that serves the farming community. He works with everyone amazingly well: faculty, private industry folks, students, UCCE advisors and specialists, ranch managers and pest control advisors. We cannot think of a group he has not reached. We call it 'the Joji effect.' He finds ways to bring everyone to the table and, more importantly, contribute to the success of collaborative projects.... This award recognizes 'selflessness of the recipient, who focused on achieving a good outcome, not personal credit.' That is exactly what Joji does."

After the Bradford-Rominger award is presented to Muramoto at the May 5th ceremony, distinguished speaker Dr. Meredith Niles, Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences and the Food Systems Program at the University of Vermont, will present a talk titled "Advancing a Comprehensive Understanding of Farmer's Adoption of Conservation Practices".

Past winners of the Bradford-Rominger award include: Sonoma County Director/Livestock & Range Management Advisor and UC Cooperative Extension Director and Farm Advisor, Stephanie Larson; pioneering farmer at Good Humus in Yolo County, Annie Main; UC Cooperative Extension livestock waste management specialist, Deanne Meyer; UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) advisors Rachael Long, Rachel Surls, and David Lewis; Sustainable Conservation Director of Resources (and UC Davis alumnus) Daniel Mountjoy; UC ANR advisor Rose Hayden Smith, specialist Ken Tate, and advisor Mary Bianchi; UC Davis alumna Kelly Garbach; and lecturer emeritus Isao Fujimoto.

**Eric Bradford and Charlie Rominger Agricultural Sustainability Leadership Award Ceremony
4:00 - 7:00p.m., Monday, May 5
UC Davis Student Community Center, Multipurpose Room**

This event is free and open to the public. Students are encouraged to attend.

Register to attend the Bradford-Rominger award ceremony at
<https://registration.ucdavis.edu/Item/Details/1271>