



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES
**Yuma Center of Excellence
for Desert Agriculture**

YUMA CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR DESERT AGRICULTURE

“Solutions to Desert Agriculture’s Pressing Problems”

GENERAL INFORMATION

Experience: Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture

Country: United States of America

Coordinating Institution: University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Other institutions involved: UA Yuma Agricultural Center

Duration of the experience: October 2014 - Present

Webpage: <http://yceda.cals.arizona.edu>

Social networks: YCEDA on Facebook and @YCEDA_DesertAg on Twitter

Area of the successful experience: involvement of the private sector

DETAILED INFORMATION

1) Description

The University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) has partnered with the desert agriculture industry to establish the Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture (YCEDA) at the UA Yuma Agricultural Center. YCEDA is a public-private partnership that will

improve all aspects of desert crop production systems and economics

by providing rapid, direct value-adding responses to issues important for desert crop production systems. A university entity using private funding and guidance from an advisory council made up of donors from the agriculture industry, YCEDA brings new resources to bear on high-priority issues identified by industry, allowing the University to be more responsive to industry needs.



2) Beneficiaries

The global desert agriculture industry benefits from university efforts that are more focused on solving their pressing issues. The university benefits from new resources made available by private funding of their efforts. The environment and world populations benefit from more efficient, sustainable and productive agricultural production in the 40% of the world where food is produced in arid lands.

3) Implementation

YCEDA was established with a three-year initial funding commitment from 27 agriculture businesses and organizations in Arizona and California. Donations are tax deductible, and fund an Executive Director, operating expenses and underwriting of research and other



initiatives recommended by the advisory council. The UA Yuma Agricultural Center provides an office for the Executive Director and Center of Excellence needs.

An advisory council of eight agriculturalists plus the CALS dean advises the YCEDA Executive Director on future trends and issues which will affect the industry. The council also works to grow collaborative networks with business and industry.

The advisory council first met in October, 2013 and the inaugural Executive Director (ED) was hired in October, 2014. The ED is a UA employee hired by and reporting to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The ED consults with the advisory council and the CALS Dean on the focus of the research and programs for the center. The ED provides updates and status reports on activities, accomplishments, and how funds were used at a minimum of two advisory council meetings per year.

4) Accomplishments and Results

This partnership between industry donors and YCEDA has led to progress on multiple fronts:

- YCEDA has worked with UA Cooperative Extension (UA-CE) Researchers to publish and distribute short papers for industry with practical advice on the initial focuses of plant pests and diseases such as Bagraida Bug and Fusarium Wilt of Lettuce. Additional researchers have been assigned to UA-CE to help with YCEDA projects.



- YCEDA hosts annual issue-specific conferences to bring researchers and industry together to solve issues. In Nov., 2015, the

first-ever International Symposium on Fusarium Wilt of Lettuce will be held in Yuma, along with a commercial field trial to evaluate new resistant varieties and treatments. Drone overflights are being analyzed for early detection capabilities. Over 100 attendees are expected, with speakers from Japan, Italy, Brazil and the U.S. Attendees will brainstorm on the most promising efforts and YCEDA will shepherd the resources to assure that they happen.

- YCEDA is working with military contractors and other high-tech companies as well as UA and USDA researchers to apply new and existing high technology to precision agriculture applications such as underground imaging, real-time pathogen detection and Ag automation.

- YCEDA is securing innovative private and public investment for new and enhanced diagnostic laboratory facilities to enable commerce and trade as well as research and education.

- YCEDA is matching industry needs and desires for information and decision making tools with funding opportunities available from federal agencies and others. With our direct ties to industry and university and other resources, we find much interest from the granting agencies to fund our

projects – especially those pertaining to climate change and arid lands productivity.

- Working with local Economic Development organizations has put us in the middle of several projects looking to increase innovation and business startup around agriculture and food processing.



5) Offers of cooperation with the region to exchange good practices

At any time:

Sharing of information via e-mail

Teleconferences

Videoconferences

Workshops

Mentoring

Technical tours and visits of experts

6) Main contact information:

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7) Additional contact information:

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The collection of experiences showcasing successful projects implemented by stakeholders in countries of the Americas is one of the most important tasks of the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC). There are more than 200 experiences available in the Signs of Competitiveness in the Americas Reports 2012 -2015: www.riacreport.org.

The Organization of American States (OAS) serves as the RIAC Technical Secretariat to facilitate the knowledge sharing between countries, multilateral and academic institutions. The experiences and intellectual contributions presented by RIAC members for the 2015 Signs of Competitiveness in the Americas Report will provide valuable input for the RIAC Annual Meetings and the panel discussions during the IX Americas Competitiveness Forum (ACF) to be held in Guatemala City, on November 16-18, 2015.

For the latest information about the RIAC and the 2015 Signs Report follow us on Twitter @riacnet.org #RIACreport