

Fact sheet: University of California, Berkeley

UC Berkeley offers a wide array of programs and initiatives related to food and agriculture systems, encompassing many disciplines, departments, academic program areas, institutes, centers, student initiatives, and services spanning the campus and the community. UC Berkeley has a long history of innovative research, education and extension in this field, dating back to 1868 when it was established as the first land grant university in California. Currently, UC Berkeley continues to be deeply engaged and active in food and agriculture — from research on food security, nutrition, crop production and the myriad issues that connect to them, to an abundance of courses and educational opportunities, to public events, student clubs, sustainability and food justice programs, and nutrition/health in food service.

EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND OTHER ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Both undergraduate and graduate students can pursue many paths for education and professional development through numerous academic courses and degrees related to food and agriculture, based in various departments. Currently, more than [90 courses](#) are offered each year at the undergraduate and graduate levels at UC Berkeley, as compiled and listed by the [Berkeley Food Institute](#). Just a few examples include numerous degree programs from rangeland science to agricultural economics to public health and nutrition, and the registered dietitian program in the Department of Nutritional Sciences and Toxicology. There also are many interdisciplinary courses, such as the Edible Education course, based in the College of Arts & Sciences, which has been taught by journalist and author Michael Pollan. In addition, a new Minor in Food Systems soon will be launched by the College of Natural Resources.

UC Berkeley is home to more than 150 faculty and staff who teach and conduct research on food and agriculture topics. Faculty and students in departments across campus teach and research on topics ranging for nutrition science and toxicology, policy, law, labor, public health, nutrition, soil science, biodiversity, ecological systems, entomology, and agricultural and natural resource economics. Seventeen of these faculty members are UC ANR Cooperative Extension (UCCE) specialists who, in addition to conducting research, contribute to outreach and extension programs to farmers, consumers, and other stakeholders. These UCCE specialists cover topics such as urban agriculture, community and economic development, social justice and labor, nutrition and public health, plant pathology, and crop genetics.

UC Berkeley houses two garden/farm assets: the Oxford Tract and the [Gill Tract](#) Agricultural Experiment Station. The Oxford Tract consists of land and greenhouses that are used for agricultural research and education, and also includes a small farm managed by the [Student Organic Garden Association](#) as a place for hands-on education and training on sustainable urban farming, gardening and agroecology. A small section of the Oxford Tract is also used for demonstration, research and education on pollinators and insects. The Gill Tract Agricultural Experiment Station consists of approximately 12 acres of farmland used for agricultural experiments, as well as 1.5 acres of garden used for participatory community research on agroecology and urban agriculture.

INSTITUTES AND CENTERS RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS

The [Berkeley Food Institute](#) (BFI) is an interdisciplinary institute launched in 2013 dedicated to research, education, policy initiatives and practices to support sustainable food and agriculture systems. BFI is catalyzing and fostering transformative changes in food systems, to promote resilience, justice, diversity and health, from local to global scales. More than 80 faculty members from numerous disciplines are affiliated with the Institute. BFI consists of a partnership between the College of Natural Resources, Goldman School of Public Policy, Law

School, Journalism School and School of Public Health. BFI serves as a hub to connect many people working on campus in this field, and also interacts with NGOs, policy-makers, farmers and business innovators. BFI is implementing research and educational programs that are linked to policy initiatives and to community engagement in food systems. BFI is facilitating a process to develop a minor in Sustainable Food Systems, which builds on many existing courses on campus. BFI is also developing internship opportunities with local organizations, and public events and collaboration to advance learning, exchange, and effective changes to address food system challenges.

The [Center for Diversified Farming Systems](#) is a center affiliated with BFI that is focused on the study of a set of methods and tools to produce food sustainably by leveraging ecological diversity at several scales. The Center supports research on the costs and benefits of multi-functional agriculture, and to identify and help implement scientific solutions to the many challenges facing broad adoption of diversified farming systems. The group sponsors presentations and speakers related to sustainable agriculture issues.

The [Urban Bee Lab](#) has been documenting bee diversity and bee frequencies on wild California plants in several Northern California sites since 1987. Annual surveys include the Urban California Native Bee Survey, the Sonoma Bee Count and the Costa Rica Bee Project.

CENTERS AND PROGRAMS ON HEALTH/NUTRITION AND LABOR

The Atkins [Center for Weight and Health](#) (CWH) works with community groups to develop and evaluate programs to support healthy eating and active living, with a focus on children and families in diverse communities. CWH produces reports and engages in projects that can assist community partners in dealing with nutrition standards, diverse dimensions of obesity, and other related issues. CWH is collaborating with the [Berkeley Food Institute](#) to host some public events and support research projects related to nutrition and healthy food policy.

The faculty and staff program [Health Matters](#) provides a number of nutrition-based initiatives, including [Eat Well Berkeley](#), which identifies health food options on campus and in the surrounding community. Other initiatives include Ask the Dietician, a Q&A service, and Healthy Meeting and Events, a portal linking to various catering and shopping options for the campus community.

The [Food Labor Research Center](#) seeks to conduct research and education on the wages and working conditions of workers along the food chain, and the impact these conditions have not only on workers but also on employers and consumers. The [Labor and Health Occupational Center](#) facilitates safety and health training projects for food and agriculture workers, and other laborers.

SUSTAINABILITY IN FOOD SERVICE AND PROCUREMENT

Food service is an important area at Berkeley, in part due to strong student interest in purchasing, waste and engagement components. The [UC Berkeley Sustainable Foodservice Working Group](#) was formed in 2009, and it works with campus foodservice operations and the campus at large to increase sustainability of food purchases and operations. Campus vendors continue to show progress in their purchasing patterns, reporting that 28% of the food purchases are considered sustainably produced as of 2012.

STUDENT GROUPS AND ACTIVISM

Student-led organizations related to food at UC Berkeley include the [Berkeley Student Food Collective](#) and the [Student Organic Agriculture Association](#), as well as [Grad Food](#), [City Food](#), and the [Haas Culinary Club](#). These groups enable student engagement in many different types of activities, including education, participation in working groups, outreach to community organizations, and exploration of career opportunities. Students facing food insecurity have access to [The Bear Pantry](#), a student-managed program that provides emergency food supply to low-income UCB families with dependent children.



Global Food Initiative

UC Berkeley's institutes, departments, faculty, staff and students are continually exploring and innovating in this field, to develop new research, education, outreach and other programs related to sustainable food and agriculture systems, and collaborating with other UC campuses and stakeholders in this field.