



The Glen G. Curtis Research Building

Yuma Agricultural Center's newest facility

By Ann Stevens

These days, the sound of drills and clouds of dust fill the air at the Yuma Agricultural Center (YAC). There's also a lot of excitement as the new Glen G. Curtis Research Building nears completion.

After decades of operating in 1950s-era buildings and trailers, CALS' world-class researchers and staff have a new home. The Curtis Building's 20,000 square feet will offer state-of-the-art laboratories, a multi-media conference room and office space in a single location for all Yuma faculty. This much-anticipated building will be ready for occupancy in fall 2008.

Given the challenges facing agriculture today, this new facility is more important than ever. Newspaper headlines report the latest food safety recall, farm labor shortages, ever-rising fuel and fertilizer costs, water shortages and pesticide pollution. Nationally recognized Curtis Building researchers tackle these crises every day, working hard to provide science-based solutions for the agricultural industry.

"The new building means we can serve agriculture even better" according to YAC Director Charles Sanchez. "We've always seen ourselves as partners with growers, shippers, and even consumers.

This modern facility will allow us to do even more to keep food safe, to protect our natural environment and to insure sustainability and competitiveness of agriculture in Arizona."

Regional agriculture is working together to help make the Glen G. Curtis Research Building possible. The Curtis family made the lead gift to honor patriarch Glen Curtis, Yuma's well-known and respected grower, businessman and philanthropist. His son Rocky Curtis and industry leader Robby Barkley continue to volunteer their time to help raise the balance of the funds needed for building completion. They are joined in their fundraising efforts by other notable local agribusiness owners.

Fund board member Gary Pasquinelli notes, "If you're part of the industry, you really have to support the Curtis Building. It's a sound investment in our economic prosperity."

More than half of the group's goal of \$2 million has already been raised.

"These are challenging economic times, but we need the Curtis Building, research to survive, and even thrive in decades to come," says Barkley. "With the help of CALS alumni and the agriculture industry, we're confident that we can raise the money."



The Yuma Agricultural Center

The Yuma Agricultural Center (YAC) has two sites: a Valley farm four miles west of Yuma and a Mesa Farm four miles south of the city. The 274-acre Valley Farm has a diversified range of crops, including cotton, small grains, and such vegetables as lettuce and broccoli. The 240-acre Mesa Farm is focused on citrus production. Both farms have office, laboratory, and greenhouse facilities.

Many YAC programs support the high value vegetable and citrus industries in the lower Colorado River region. Research and outreach programs cover plant physiology, plant biochemistry, crop production, insect biology and control, disease biology and control, weed ecology, soil and water management, fate and transport of environmental contaminants, food safety, and agricultural mechanization.

The center's staff includes faculty from four academic departments in the UA College of Agriculture and Life Sciences—Plant Sciences, Entomology, Soil, Water, and Environmental Sciences, and Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering—along with research specialists and post-doctoral research associates, farm support and clerical support.

Faculty members contribute to a local teaching program offered through the University of Arizona-Yuma in cooperation with Arizona Western College and Northern Arizona University. Degree programs in Agricultural Systems Management and Crop Production can be initiated locally.

Contact

Ann Stevens
 CALS Development and Alumni Office
 (520) 621-7883
 astevens@cals.arizona.edu