Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas

Located on 200+ irrigated acres, just 20 miles south of Albuquerque, researchers at the Los Lunas Agricultural Science Center (ASC) evaluate crop adaptation, performance and related cultural practices such as irrigation, pest management, plant growth and persistence, and propagation techniques. Having a research center centrally located within the state, near the largest metropolitan area, allows for broad rural and urban stakeholder service. Research and demonstration crops include alfalfa and other forage crops, beans, chile, cover crops, fruit trees, wine and table grapes, jujube, tomatoes, ornamental landscape plants and others.

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loslunassc.nmsu.edu

Research Focus

Researchers at the ASC are studying strategies to alleviate heat and water stress and reduce tomato fatality rates in an effort to increase production and improve the gardening experience. Cover crop studies are conducted to investigate pest suppression in chile pepper, provide cropping alternatives, and evaluate the potential to improve soil health. Recently developed projects are exploring traditional and newly innovative cropping practices in urban settings, saffron as a high-value alternative crop, improving accuracy of Degree Day (DD) Phenology Models for New Mexico pests, and soil amendment effects on perennial warm- and cool-season grasses grown for forage.

MISSION

The mission of the Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas is to enhance the sustainability of natural resources and improve crop profitability in the Middle Rio Grande Valley through research and Extension programming on crops and other plant-based systems important to the region. The center cooperates with the USDA-NRCS Los Lunas Plant Materials Center (PMC) to solve critical water and soil conservation issues.

VISION

Improving the lives and livelihoods of the diverse agronomic and horticultural stakeholders situated at the urban-rural interface through relevant and innovative research and Extension programs

VALUE ADDED TO NEW MEXICO

- High yielding, drought resilient forages
- Soil health improvements
- High value alternative crops
- Urban agriculture, horticulture and landscapes
- Improved chile harvest efficiency
- Host plant resistance and integrated pest management





The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) is an engine for economic and community development in New Mexico, improving the lives of New Mexicans through research, teaching and Extension.

Recent Impacts

- More than 70 new fruit trees have been planted as part of the Urban Agriculture Center of Excellence. Varieties include cold-hardy citrus, fig, persimmon and pomegranate. The performance and productivity of these fruit trees will be evaluated for small and urban farms in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.
- Research determined that barley cover crops that are terminated and incorporated into the soil can suppress early-season weeds in chile pepper, potentially reducing or enhancing herbicides applied at chile pepper seeding.
- Results from shaded tomato studies suggest there are multiple benefits of shade cloth, such as possible improved fruit quality, reduced water requirements and potential exclusion of the beet leafhopper (disease vector).
- Forage programs improve regional production by increasing awareness of hay and pasture species, variety selection, water management, and alternative crop and high-value forage marketing opportunities.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Los Lunas ASC engaged the surrounding communities through workshops, field days, farm tours, webinars, volunteer workdays, and youth outreach programs. Each year, faculty and staff connect with hundreds of stakeholders, while the Learning Garden provides hands-on education to learn about sustainable gardening and landscaping practices, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and pollinator ecosystem services. The garden is truly a place for 'cultivating' educational experiences.

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity employer and educator.
NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.