

# Award honors pest researcher

By KATHY KEATLEY GARVEY

**A** UC entomologist whose career spans 39 years in pest management of field and vegetable crops has won the Charles W. Woodworth Award from the Pacific Branch of the Entomological Society of America.

Charles "Charlie" Summers, stationed at the UC Kearney Agricultural Center in Parlier since 1970 and a member of UC Davis' entomology faculty since 1992, received the award at the branch's 93rd annual meeting in San Diego.

The award memorializes noted American entomologist Charles W. Woodworth (1865-1940), credited with founding the UC Berkeley Department of Entomology and helping to develop the Agricultural Experiment Station, which later became the UC Davis Department of Entomology.

"This is the major award of the Pacific Branch to professionals and is very prestigious," says Pacific Branch President Walt Bentley, Integrated Pest Management specialist at the Kearney Ag Center. "The award recognizes [Summers'] contributions to entomology over the last 10 years, but in reality, it is for a career of meaningful work."

Throughout his career, Summers has worked to solve the state's pest issues. He has conducted field studies in the Central Valley from Chico to Bakersfield, working with 15 different field and vegetable crops, more than 20 different insect pests and their natural enemies, and 10 insect-vectored diseases.

## Developed economic thresholds

Summers developed economic thresholds, determining at what point the cost of pest damage exceeds the cost of pest control. He pioneered economic thresholds for seven pests in four crops, and developed management strategies for a combination of 28 crops' insect and disease pests.

Summers is known for his research on interactions among insects, diseases and weeds on alfalfa hay and how they

## Key Points

- UC entomologist Charles Summers wins Woodworth Award.
- Summers has worked with 15 crops and 20 insect pests and their enemies.
- He managed pests and increased yields with reflective mulches.

influence yield and quality both individually and as a whole.

Summers is also known for his research on reflective mulches, used to delay and reduce aphid and whitefly infestations on squash, pumpkins, cucumbers, tomatoes and other crops. He teamed up with plant pathologist Jim Stapleton and vegetable crop specialist

Jeff Mitchell, both based at Kearney.

"In the mid-1990s, Dr. Stapleton and I embarked on a series of studies to determine if aphids, aphid-transmitted viruses and silverleaf whitefly could be managed using plastic reflective mulches," Summers says. "Dr. Jeff Mitchell later joined our team."

*Garvey writes for UC Davis.*



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**VEGGIE EXPERT:** Charlie Summers is known for research in pumpkins, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes and other crops.

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