

## Faculty Profile: Ellen M. Bruno



Ellen M. Bruno  
Assistant UC Extension Specialist  
Agricultural and Resource Economics  
UC Berkeley

Ellen Bruno recently joined the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, as an assistant Cooperative Extension specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Her research interests are at the intersection of agricultural and environmental economics, with particular emphasis on water resource issues.

Through applied economic research and public outreach, Ellen's goal is to improve the management of our water resources in a way that maximizes the well-being of those that depend on them. Her current research evaluates the effectiveness of incentive-based instruments, e.g., water pricing or water trading, for improving the management of agricultural groundwater. She works to understand how farmers respond to water prices and policies, considering changes in irrigation intensity, crop choice, and technology. Additionally, she is examining the role that water markets, including trade

between the agricultural and urban sectors, can play in adaptation to climate change.

Ellen grew up in Los Angeles, CA, where her exposure to food production was nonexistent. However, as the daughter of the general manager of a water utility, water management issues were part of everyday conversation. Ellen attended the University of California, San Diego, for her undergraduate degree in Management Science. In spite of her big-city upbringing, she managed to write an undergraduate thesis on corn prices and agricultural policy, graduated summa cum laude, and was chosen for the Joel Dean Award, which is awarded to the most outstanding student in the major.

A Californian through-and-through, Ellen jumped to the next UC campus, pursuing a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Davis. Inspired by interdisciplinary collaboration with hydrologists and climate scientists, her dissertation research compared policy instruments for managing groundwater for agriculture in light of California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Ellen estimated demand curves for groundwater pumpers and used them to quantify the potential economic benefits from groundwater trade. A landmark groundwater law mandating local groundwater management, SGMA was, and will continue to be, ripe for research and extension opportunities.

As a Cooperative Extension specialist in quantitative policy analysis at UC Berkeley, Ellen is currently developing a research and outreach program focused on policy issues relevant to California's agriculture and natural resources. In this position, she hopes

to work with state and local government agencies on program evaluation and policy analysis to improve management of California's limited water supplies. She also plans to collaborate with nonprofits and other practitioners, continuing the effort to connect the university's research with stakeholders.

In addition to research and extension, Ellen loves playing music, primarily jazz and classical flute. She is an avid soccer player and runner, and also enjoys cycling, hiking, and cooking. Her partner, Derek, a lake scientist and water resources engineer, is very supportive of her academic, musical, and culinary pursuits.

Ellen is excited to start new research projects with her colleagues at Berkeley as well as UC Extension advisors throughout the state. She is thankful to be *ARE Update's* newest co-editor.

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