

UC Davis to Host Coffee Conference

DAVIS, Calif. (AP) — University of California students who drink [coffee](#) [1] to get through the day will soon be able to study the science behind the beverage.

This week the [University of California, Davis](#) [2] will host a research conference run by its recently founded Coffee Center.

The center is currently without a dedicated home, but the university hopes to formalize the research in coming years and eventually offer a major in coffee science, [The Sacramento Bee](#) [3] reported Friday.

J. Bruce German, director of the university's Foods for Health Institute, says the conference is the first step toward establishing a dedicated coffee research study center — similar to the school's Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science.

"We think there is sufficient interest given the fact that so many people have consumed coffee so regularly across the world, for so long," German said. "Coffee is not an insignificant contributor to the agricultural footprint."

The March 11 conference will cover topics such as the genetics of coffee, sustainability in coffee growing and the sensory perception of coffee drinkers.

Coffee production and consumption have been growing in recent years, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture forecasts global production will reach 150.5 million bags this year. The International Coffee Association reports coffee is the most widely traded tropical agricultural commodity and the largest food import in the United States.

One of the center's first steps will be to build and operate a greenhouse to grow coffee plants for research, German said. Researchers expect to focus on sustainability in every step along the coffee production chain, from land use to waste concerns.

"What we're looking to do is start a relationship with coffee and move knowledge of all aspects of coffee forward," German said. "That knowledge will be driven by scientists and industry."

Currently the center is being funded by the university's Foods for Health Institute, but German said he hopes the funding model will change through teaming up with the coffee industry. Ultimately, he expects the school will develop a coffee science major once there is funding for early stage research.

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[1] <http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2013/12/consumer-trends-consumers-down-23-gallons-coffee-year>

[2] <https://twitter.com/ucdavis>

[3] <http://bit.ly/1jZj7Uj>

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