

UC Cooperative Extension in San Luis Obispo County

COVID-19 Response Report

FROM THE FIELD:

"When the shelter in place order happened due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, and after reading a post by the Mayor of San Luis Obispo asking for sewers to help a local group sewing masks for the community...our 4-H leader Ginger Behnke saw a great opportunity to help. As a kid that is a part of this effort, it is beautiful to see our community working together for the better of San Luis Obispo. Thanks to the skills all of us have learned from 4-H and the guidance of our leaders, we now feel we are an important part of our community's effort to keep us safe and stop the spreading of the COVID-19" ~ Aria, 4-H member in San Luis Obispo County

ENSURING FOOD SAFETY & DISTRIBUTION

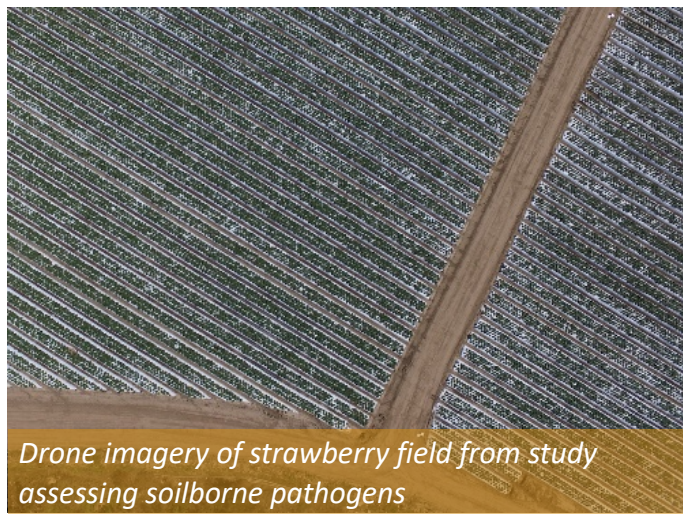


Harvesting carrots from school gardens to distribute to families and food pantries

The UC Master Food Preserver program provides pertinent food safety education during the crisis through social media and newspaper articles, including information on proper handwashing, assessing the safety of shelf stable food at home, how to safely shop for groceries, handle takeout, curbside pickup, and home delivered meals. CalFresh Healthy Living, UC responded to the immediate need to provide education about food security and food safety in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). In response to the needs of partnering farmers markets, staff mobilized resources to support social distancing measures at markets where EBT/CalFresh is accepted. Support provided by CalFresh staff include: supervision and onboarding of County Disaster Service Workers to staff high-traffic markets, signage to direct clientele in following social distancing protocols in both English and Spanish, social media posting and circulation of a media release to let the community know that the markets are safe, open, and accessible for people with CalFresh benefits. To further support the food system and food security efforts, staff maintain and conduct essential work in established school gardens to ensure food does not go to waste. Harvested produce has been delivered to school food service for school meals, distributed to families, and donated to a local food pantry.

SUPPORTING FARMERS AND FOOD PRODUCTION

UC Cooperative Extension academics have developed [1-page handouts](#) for farmers and ranchers to provide research-based best practices for sanitation and disinfection during the COVID-19 crisis. UCCE academics continue to support essential agricultural research and field visits to address critical agricultural concerns during the crisis, including strawberry & spinach field research, [forage production research](#), water management research, biometeorology research, and soil pest management in strawberry and vegetable cropping systems research.



Drone imagery of strawberry field from study assessing soilborne pathogens

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Making & donating masks

SUPPORTING STUDENT EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELLBEING

4-H volunteers and youth are participating in a local campaign to sew masks to meet needs across the county for senior centers, grocery workers, restaurant staff, and smaller medical facilities. In addition, the 4-H Positive Youth Development program is offering a free online Computer Science Coding class to support students' STEM education during school closures, and the program is open and free for all students.

The [Youth, Families & Communities Program](#) in San Luis Obispo County is supporting the socio-emotional health and wellbeing of students, families, and educators during the crisis. They developed 10 free virtual lessons on [How to Practice Mindfulness with Kids](#). Research on this peer-reviewed curriculum demonstrated that the lessons help participants increase their personal skills in mindfulness practices, ultimately leading to improved stress management and emotional regulation. Students from the Central Coast are featured in the lessons, which have been distributed to Superintendents in all San Luis Obispo County school districts.



Learning emotional regulation



Teaching cooking skills

CalFresh Healthy Living, UC community education staff in San Luis Obispo County [developed videos](#) to assist educators and students, which include reading books, cooking healthy recipes and engaging in physical activity during Shelter in Place. These videos were provided to school principal to distribute through their channels while the schools were working hard to get students the tools they needed to connect online. Community educators continue to develop resources for teachers and students during the crisis creating, posting and sharing new content daily in both English and Spanish on social media.

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