

February 2026

UCCE Advisor Updates



Small Farms

On February 3, 2026 [UC Small Farms Network \(UC SFN\)](#), [UC Organic Agriculture Institute \(UC OAI\)](#), and [UCCE](#) Disaster Resiliency Advisor Lilian Thaoxaochay collaborated on a bilingual field day in partnership with farmer Roberto Le Fort in Creston. The event brought partners and farmers together to learn about funds available and

demonstrate the conservation practices of Le Fort Organic Crops Farm where the event was hosted.

Roberto Le Fort has farmed organically since the 1990's and has recently become an Organic Mentor through the [TOPP Mentorship Program](#), coordinated by Molly Nakahara (CCOF) and Maria Orozco. Le Fort has been an enthusiastic participant in the program and was further excited to be a part of the [California Demonstration Farm Network](#), also supported by Orozco.

Event attendees, including local agency partners and farmers, appreciated the hands-on demonstrations and gave positive feedback throughout the day. Furthermore, event collaborators were pleased to see all farmers and service providers networking at every opportunity, implying that learning through in-person events like this is invaluable! They look forward to more opportunities to bring the regional agricultural community together.



UC ANR Report: California working landscapes – farms, ranches, mines, forests, renewable energy installations and fisheries – generate \$404 billion in sales annually

Photo: UC ANR



Last year, California surpassed Japan to become the [world's fourth-largest economy](#). Contributing to that achievement are over a million farm laborers, winemakers, park rangers, agricultural truckers, renewable energy technicians and many other workers who generate value from the state's natural landscapes.

Academics from University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources have done the math on the economic scope of these working lands, compiling their findings in the publication "California's Working Landscape: Evolving Contributions to National, State, and Regional Economies." [This new report](#) includes the latest data on state employment, earnings, sales and businesses, providing an update to the first edition of this report, [released in 2019](#).

[Read the report here](#)

Organic Transition Webinar Series Continues

This free 10-week virtual series began in January 2026 and continues into March. It meets every Wednesday from 12-1:15PM. Topics range from farmer challenges to practical advice on how to build soil health. Translation is available in Spanish and Hmong. Visit the [event page](#) to learn more about each week's focus. Photo: Annemiek Schilder



Free webinars to highlight wildfire recovery resources, latest research

In the aftermath of devastating wildfires, residents often feel overwhelmed about how to begin the recovery process.

Californians looking for guidance on identifying and repairing damaged structures, testing for environmental contamination, and navigating complex regulations and building codes are invited to attend a four-part webinar series in February. [Webinars are free but pre-registration is required](#) to receive the links. Topics include backyard animals (2/17) and rebuilding after structure loss (2/23). More about the webinars: <https://ucanr.edu/blog/green-blog/article/wildfire-recovery>

Photo: UC ANR

Disaster Resilience

2026 Ag Pass Training Dates Announced for April

During a fire or other natural disasters, Ag Pass allows eligible farm and ranch employees limited access to areas that may not be open to the public.

To learn more about Ag Pass, trainings, and renewals, visit the SLO County Ag Commissioner's [Website](#) or [click on the attached flyer](#).

Santa Barbara County's 2026 Ag Pass dates have not yet been determined.

Have a disaster resiliency story you'd like to share? Contact Lilian at lilthaox@ucanr.edu or 805-441-4119 to be featured.

Subscribe to the blog by clicking [here](#).

UCCE Community Education Programs



UC Master Gardeners of San Luis Obispo County

February 21st Master Gardener Plant Sale
9:30 AM to 12:30 PM • Garden of the Seven Sisters

The plant propagation team has been busily growing some great plants. Come on out to the [Seven Sisters Demo Garden](#) on February 21st to see what we have . There will be a nice selection of California natives + more .

Please bring cash or checks. *checks must be made out to UC Regents



Lepechinia 'El Tigre'



Ribes



Salvia spathacea



Scilla peruviana

UC Master Food Preservers of San Luis Obispo & Santa Barbara Counties



This month our UC Master Food Preserver trainees are learning all about various cold storage techniques to safely preserve different foods while maintaining quality. Photo Credit: UCCE Staff



Did you know there is more than one way to freeze your mushrooms? You can learn more about the different ways to use cold storage to preserve your mushrooms for ideal taste and texture with this pre-recorded **Statewide UC Master Food Preserver Class**. Photo Credit: [Christine Siracusa](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Elementary students in Lompoc learned how to dehydrate herbs from the garden to make a flavorful spice blend. You can learn how to **make and store your own homemade spice blends**, too. Photo credit: UCCE Staff

Santa Barbara County 4-H

Playa Del Sur 4-H of Carpinteria members Lila Garay and Gwyn Hultman visited the California Women for Agriculture to share about the club's goat and lamb breeding program. The duo explained about the breeding process with the mother goats and sheep, the birthing process, and the care of the new born kids and lambs. They had 26 kids and 7 lambs born during December and January. As a bonus, they brought along a couple bottle baby lambs, Dahlia and Marie. The girls shared that some of the goats and lambs born in their program are sold to other area 4-H clubs' and FFA chapters' members to be raised and shown at various fairs. The two were joined via Facetime by members Penny Wrought and Bella Casbarro, both CWA scholarship recipients attending Oregon State University. Penny and Bella shared how their freshman year is progressing and about their leadership and guidance in the goat and lamb birthing while they were home during winter break.





Pictured: Playa Del Sur 4-H of Carpinteria members (L-R) Lila Garay and Gwyn Hultman, along with baby lambs Dahlia and Marie, attended the California Women for Agriculture's February meeting. They shared about their lamb and goat breeding program. Photo credit to Ron, Club Leader for Playa Del Sur 4-H

Children's Gardening Program

School-aged children are invited to join our special guests from UC Master Gardeners, UC Master Food Preservers, and CalFresh Healthy Living UC Cooperative Extension to learn something new about gardening at the Lompoc Library!



Attendees are expected to arrive by 2:00pm and stay for the duration of the event.

Registration is required and opens 1 week before the event.

You can register with staff in person or by phone or at the link here: <https://forms.gle/vBuYmsGTuYYBc1h98>



CHILDREN'S GARDENING PROGRAM

SOIL EXPLORERS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH
2:00 - 3:30PM

AGES 8-12



Learn something new
about gardening at the
Lompoc Library!



REGISTER

Starting Feb. 18th



UC Master Gardener
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources



UC Master Food Preserver
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Lompoc Public Library | 501 E North Ave | 805.875.8775 | lom.blackgold.org/youthprograms

Calendar of Classes & Events

Tomatoes A to T:

Saturday, February 21, 2026:
10:00am-12:00pm: San Luis Obispo:
Garden of the 7 Sisters

Garden Talk Growing Tomatoes:

Monday, March 2, 2026: 7:00pm-
8:00pm: Zoom

Paso Robles Victory Garden

Workshop Series (Saturdays in
March)

Saturday, March 7, 2026 - Saturday,
March 28, 2026 1:00pm-4:00pm
Paso Robles, Centennial Park, Live
Oak Room

Building Healthy Soil for Home

Gardens and Landscapes:
Saturday, March 21, 2026: 10:00am-
12:00pm: Paso Robles: Garden of
the 7 Sisters

How to Grow and Preserve Your

Own Herbal Bounty: MG & MP
Collaboration
Saturday, May 16th, 2026: 10:00am-
12:00pm

San Luis Obispo, UCCE Auditorium

Upcoming Events

Small Farms Conference Kicks Off Feb 22

The 38th California Small Farms Conference entitled "Digging in Together: Small Farms - Deep Resolve" kicks off February 22, 2026. It features a week-long series of virtual content followed by in-person regional gatherings on February 27th. Registration is "pay what you can". To see a list of topics and presenters - visit their [website](#). This event is hosted by Community Alliance with Family Farmers.

Funding Opportunities



[Supplemental Disaster Relief Program \(SDRP,](#)

Deadline: April 30, 2026) – The **USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)** began accepting applications on November 29, 2025, for *Stage 2* of SDRP for producers with uninsured or shallow

drought-based losses from 2023 and 2024 that were not previously covered by *Stage 1* of SDRP. Applicants who receive funds from this program must purchase federal crop insurance or NAP coverage for the next two available crop years at the 60% coverage level or higher. For more information about San Luis Obispo County, contact the Templeton Office (65 S Main Street, Suite 106, Templeton, CA) at (805) 434-0398. For more information about Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, contact the Santa Maria Office (920 E Stowell Road, Santa Maria, CA) at (805) 928-9269.

UCCE in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties improves the lives of local residents by working with growers, families, volunteers, and partners to advance science-based solutions in agriculture, natural ecosystems, community health, and youth development.

Your support helps in many ways.

Thank you.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Contact Us

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