

March 2026

UCCE Advisor Updates

Webinar: The Secret Life of Biopesticides

March 19, 2026 | 12:00 PM

A simple, practical introduction to biopesticides. Discover what they are, how they're discovered, and how they work. Then learn where to find them, and when and how to use them effectively in a home garden as part of a sustainable pest management approach.



[Register Here](#)

Creating a welcoming farmers' market for low-income shoppers: Evidence-based strategies

When: Wednesday, March 18, 9-10 a.m.

Where: Zoom

Register: [Click here to RSVP](#). Space is limited.

Description:

Are you a California Certified Farmers Market Manager? This workshop is for you! Join this one-hour virtual workshop to learn about evidence-based strategies and practical advice that could help you improve the accessibility and draw for low-income shoppers at your farmers market.



Participants will learn about a set of evidence-based practices and an accompanying assessment tool called "Growing Your Market". The tool was developed by UC Davis researchers that analyzed 80+ research studies to increase the reach of farmers markets. A wealth of research-based approaches were identified that farmers market managers can consider, including program availability, marketing, market culture, and more. Participants will also hear from a panel of farmers market managers, who will share some lessons learned from their experiences with CalFresh and related programs, targeted outreach, and partnerships.

Presenters:

- Dr. Cassandra J. Nguyen, Assistant Professor of Cooperative Extension, UC Davis Department of Nutrition, Davis, CA
- Shauna Royten, Executive Director Royten's Enrichment Academy Community Hope (REACH) California City Farmers Market, California City, CA
- Quesha Bernard, Market Manager, KTS Certified Farmers Market, Ridgecrest, CA
- Cara Mae Wooldge, Executive Director, Napa Farmers' Market, Napa, CA

Photo by symbiot Free Use: Healthy Farmers Market image

[Registration Link](#)

4-H Youth Development: A New Advisor's Reflection

As a new 4-H Youth Development Advisor, I have been deeply grateful for the warm welcome from our clubs, volunteers, members, and families. From my first club meetings to county events and Presentation Day, I have been invited into spaces filled with leadership, ownership, and heart. I've watched youth confidently lead meetings, care for their animals and project work with pride, and deliver presentations. One 10-year-old delivered a presentation with clarity, preparation, and confidence well beyond his years. I've also spoken with members already setting ambitious goals, including one aspiring to study animal genetics and attend veterinary school.



Walking in the Carpinteria Holiday Parade with the Playa del Sur 4-H Club, who even welcomed my family to join, was a powerful reminder that 4-H is more than a program. It is a community. In just a short time, I've seen why 4-H has such a rich and enduring history. I am honored to serve and inspired to continue expanding meaningful opportunities for youth across San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

Photos by Melissa Guillen

Disaster Resilience

Compiled by Lilian Thaoxaochay

March is Flood Safety month. [PrepareSLO](#) and [ReadySBC](#) have numerous resources for how to prepare for a potential emergency and/or evacuation. These websites also contain county-specific maps for monitoring water levels in around high flood risk areas.

While some storms may be unpredictable and their impacts unknown – you can help prepare your home and family for a future event by making plans now!

2026 Farm Bill Updates

Last week, the House Agriculture Committee voted to advance [The Farm, Food, and National Securities Act of 2026](#) to the House floor for a full vote. If it passes, it will advance to the Senate for consideration.

The House Agriculture Committee has provided a [Title by Title Summary](#) of their bill.

The “Farm Bill” is an important part of US agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and forestry policy. It contains 12 distinct titles covering a broad range of topics including Crop Insurance and Conservation Programs for farmers. Title IV covers Nutrition which accounted for [77% of dollars in 2018 as reported by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#) and funds programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP.

The Farm Bill is supposed to be renewed every five years. However, the last Farm Bill was signed in 2018, expired in 2023, and has since been extended three times through temporary measures. The most recent extension will expire on September 30, 2026.

Small Farms

Disaster Assistance for California Small Farms Impacted by extreme weather or drought? The California Underserved and Small Producer (CUSP) Program is still providing direct-relief grants up to \$20,000 per eligible producer for eligible losses and/or expenses. [Deadlines vary by organization](#). To receive more information or application assistance in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties – contact Claire Tuohey Mote at (805) 781-5949 or ctuoheymote@ucanr.edu (English and Spanish).



Photos by: Lilian Thaoxaochay: February Storm Clouds from Tank Farm Road , San Luis Obispo

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

March 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 March 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



Achillea mix
SLO MG Kathy Cinowalt,
Photographer



Ceanothus 'Blue Jeans'



Heuchera-maxima-
Island-Alum-Root4



Salvia apiana

UC Master Gardeners of Santa Barbara County



Come join Santa Barbara Master Gardeners for a free backyard composting workshop March 28th at the Minami Community Center. Registration is required. More information and registration can be found below.

Please note that registrants should be from Unincorporated Northern Santa Barbara County or Santa Maria.

[Information and Registration](#)

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



Program Highlights

2026 Training Class: High-Acid Lab

In February, volunteer trainees completed their second in-person lab. Working in small groups, they prepared and safely preserved homemade salsa using atmospheric steam canning—a method used for processing properly acidified foods. The training program blends weekly online instruction with local, volunteer-led labs focused on hands-on skill building



Photos by: Master Food Preserver Volunteer: Trainees practiced preparing and safely preserving homemade salsa during a supervised high-acid lab

Youth Education: Quick Pickles & "Eating the Rainbow"

In February, two youth-focused collaborations introduced participants to colorful vegetables and simple pickling techniques. At Hapgood Elementary, 20 students prepared quick pickles while practicing safe use of kitchen tools and safe food handling. At the Lompoc Public Library, 24 families joined a partnership program with UC Cooperative Extension (CalFresh Healthy Living, UC Master Food Preservers, and the UC Master Gardeners of Santa Barbara County). Participants learned pickling basics, soil and gardening connections, and made quick pickles using root vegetables to take home.



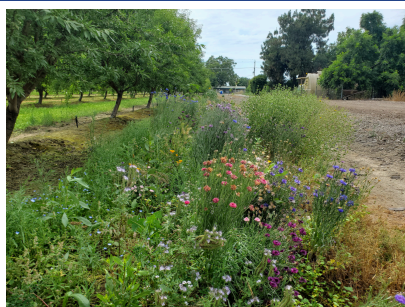
Photos by: Master Food Preserver Volunteer: Hapgood Elementary students and Lompoc Library families prepared quick pickles using colorful vegetables

Calendar of Classes & Events

[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: San Luis Obispo: Garden of the 7 Sisters
[Backyard Composting Workshop- Santa Maria:](#) Saturday, March 28, 2026: 10:00am-12:00pm: Santa Maria: Minami Community Center
[Backyard Composting Workshop- Santa Maria:](#) Saturday, March 28, 2026: 1:00pm-3:00pm: Santa Maria: Minami Community Center
[Hands-On Class: Sauerkraut:](#)
 Saturday, April 11, 2026 : 10:00am-11:00 am: Paso Robles Library Study Center

[Hands-On Class: Sauerkraut](#)
 :Saturday, April 11, 2026: 12:00pm-1:00pm: Paso Robles Library Study Center
[Roses: Pruning, Pests, and Diseases:](#) Saturday, April 18, 2026 10:00am-12:00pm: San Luis Obispo: Garden of the 7 Sisters.
[Hands-On Class: Spring Food :](#)
 Tuesday, April 22, 2026: 2:00pm -3:30pm: Lompoc Library
[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
[Hands-On Class: Peach Salsa:](#)
 Saturday, May 9, 2026: 10:00am-11:00am: Paso Robles Library Study Center

Funding Opportunities



The RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program) Farmer-to-Farmer Collaboration is looking for enthusiastic producers interested in receiving financial and technical support for implementing on-farm practices that support pollinators. Funding is available to distribute over \$1million to California producers in select counties to plant cover crops, conservation cover, wildlife habitat, hedgerows and more pollinator-

friendly practices.

In order to apply, you must have a Farm Service Agency number and be located within Fresno, Madera, Merced, Monterey, Napa, San Luis Obispo, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Sonoma, or Stanislaus county. We encourage all eligible producers to apply by early Spring 2025, with a goal of planting habitat in Fall of 2026. [Apply here!](#)



[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.

Partner Resources

Chipper Days

San Luis Obispo County: If your spring cleanup involves clearing flammable vegetation, the Fire Safe Council of San Luis Obispo County and local partners offer free Chipper Days in high risk neighborhoods. [Find out if you're eligible](#) for free curbside chipping services. Events are already scheduled for Atascadero in March (sign-up ends on March 22), and Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande, and San Luis Obispo in April. [Visit the reservation site for sign-up deadlines](#).

Santa Barbara County, South Coast: Santa Barbara County's chipping calendar resumes in April 6, 2026, along Paradise Road. [Visit their website to see the chipping schedule](#). If you live in a service area, you do not have to RSVP for curbside services. Most eligible neighborhoods were mailed a postcard with their chipper date and directions. Questions about the project may be directed to Kate Furlong, kfurlong@sbfiresafecouncil.org.



Photos by: Fire Safe Council: Bad Chipper Pile VS Good Chipper Pile

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

UC Cooperative Extension | 2156 Sierra Way Suite C | San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!