



**To:** Jose Chang, Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner

**From:** Shannon Klisch, UCCE Santa Barbara Director

**Date:** May 1, 2026

**Subject:** UCCE Santa Barbara County Q3 2025-26 Report

During the third quarter UCCE in Santa Barbara County continued to pursue applied research and education projects reflecting the highest need areas in agriculture, natural resources, youth development and community health in the county.

Notable changes since our Q2 report: none

### Q3 2026 Agriculture and Food System Programs

**Changes this quarter: No changes**

**Ongoing applied research and extension education programs:**

- Soils, Water, & Subtropicals
- Production Horticulture
- Integrated Pest Management
- Organic Agriculture – Education and Mentorship
- Small Farms

### Q3 2026 Natural Ecosystem and Working Landscapes Programs

**Changes this quarter: No changes**

**Ongoing applied research and extension education programs:**

- Disaster Resiliency Planning and Policy
- Natural Resources and Watershed
- UC Environmental Stewards

### Q3 2026 Community Education & Youth Development Programs

**Changes this quarter: No changes**

**Ongoing applied research and extension education programs:**

- CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE
- Healthy Families and Communities
- 4-H Youth Development
- UC Master Gardeners
- UC Master Food Preservers

Mission: UCCE in Santa Barbara county 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.

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## Q3 Highlighting Current Projects and Outcomes

### ***Nursery & Floriculture Advisor Emma Volk***

Members of the central coast nursery and floriculture industry had a meeting in January 2026 to hear from **UCCE Advisor Emma Volk** and the Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner Jose Chang. Presenters spoke about the importance of coming together as an industry to learn from each other, discuss challenges, and advocate for their collective interests. The industry will continue to meet quarterly and invite speakers from across the state with expertise ranging from integrated pest management to irrigation design. [Learn about upcoming meetings here.](#)

*This work supports increased stability, efficiency, and profitability of the production horticulture industry.*

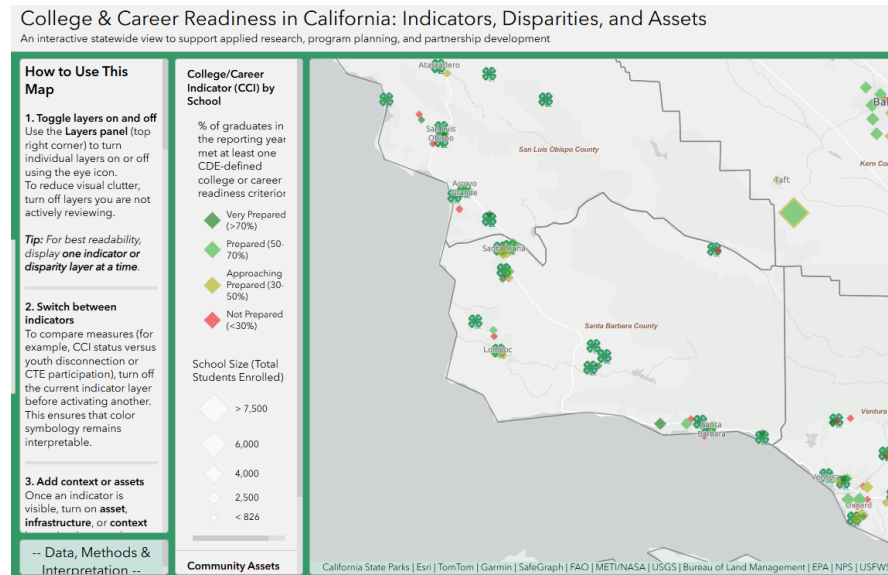
### ***4-H Youth Development Advisor Melissa Guillen***



Playa Del Sur 4-H of Carpinteria members visited the California Women for Agriculture to share about the club's goat and lamb breeding program. 4-H youth 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 youth 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.

*Playa Del Sur 4-H of Carpinteria members along with baby lambs Dahlia and Marie, at the California Women for Agriculture's February meeting. Photo: Ron in 4-H*

## Spatial Mapping to Expand Access to College and Career Opportunities for Youth



Screenshot of the interactive ARCGIS map on college and career readiness. Advisor Guillen

New interactive dashboards developed by Advisor Guillen and partners integrate school-level college and career readiness indicators, demographic data, and community assets to identify gaps in youth development and college and career readiness opportunities. These tools are central to regional planning efforts, allowing program staff and partners to make more data-informed decisions about outreach, partnerships, and program placement.

Early insights highlight distinct spatial patterns in access and opportunity. In Santa Barbara County, both concentrations of socioeconomic disadvantage and disparities in college and career readiness outcomes are more pronounced in the northern part of the county. Qualitative insights from stakeholders and youth reinforce these patterns. Common themes include transportation as a consistent barrier, limited awareness of available pathways, and a mismatch between strong interest in career exploration and access to meaningful opportunities such as internships and work-based learning. As one youth shared, “I would like more chances to explore careers and talk to people about jobs.” At the same time, there are clear strengths, including strong local partnerships, emerging community-based models of support, and 4-H youth reporting access to trusted adults, even as they seek more structured guidance and exposure to career pathways.

Building on these findings, Guillen will continue stakeholder interviews and youth surveys to further inform the needs assessment. These insights are helping to shape more targeted strategies and programming to expand access to college and career readiness and youth development opportunities while also identifying priorities for serving underserved youth.

Explore the dashboards:

[College and Career Readiness in California: Indicators, Disparities, and Assets](#)

[Student Enrollment Patterns, Community Assets and Educational Infrastructure](#)

*The purpose of this work is to support improved access to post-secondary education and career opportunities for all youth.*

### **UC Master Food Preservers & UC Master Gardeners -Advisors Katherine Soule and Emma Volk**

#### **Youth Education: Quick Pickles & “Eating the Rainbow”**

In February 2026, 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: Master Food Preserver Volunteer: Hapgood Elementary students and Lompoc Library families prepared quick pickles using colorful vegetables*

*This work supports improved food and nutrition security, food safety, and community health and wellness.*

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## **Articles published by or about UCCE during Q3:**

### ***Agriculture***

Ag Alert [Research looks to optimize pollination in avocados](#). March 25, 2026. (Cohen, Faber)

Topics in Subtropics: Over 35 [Weekly articles published on the blog](#) during Q3 (selected examples linked below)

- [HLB-Infected Asian Citrus Psyllids Found in Central Coast](#). March 18, 2026 (Faber)
- [Avocado Lace Bug Workshop](#). March 17, 2026. (Faber)
- [Pollinator Plantings Workshop](#). March 16, 2026. (Faber)
- [Avocado Lace Bug Revealed](#). March 4, 2026. (Faber)

- [Mulch Effect on Root Rot](#). March 4, 2026. (Faber)
- Winter 2026 Topics in Subtropics Newsletter Available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

### ***Natural Resources & Fire***

The Guardian. [Can culling your garden slow a fire?](#) March 17, 2026 (Moritz quoted)

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