

UC Cooperative Extension

May 2026

San Luis Obispo & Santa Barbara County News

Science-based solutions for healthy and resilient communities, food systems, and environments.



UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Message From the Director

GIVING DAY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

May 14-15 Noon to Noon

give.ucanr.edu



UC Master Food Preserver
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources



UCCE drives innovation through hands-on education that matters to our communities. Our advisors, staff, and volunteers deliver workshops for growers, experience-based learning for youth, and public outreach grounded in UC expertise. As needs evolve, so must the way we teach and connect.

Your support during Giving Day will help modernize our classroom, expand our outreach into the community, and support new tools used to deliver educational experiences across our counties. Your gift directly supports programs that make knowledge accessible, relevant, and impactful.

Thank you,

Shannon Klisch

UCCE Director in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo



Your Gift Enhances Learning

Impact Levels

\$100 Expands Hands-On Learning

A \$100 gift helps purchase updated educational materials like field tools, demonstration supplies, or hands-on learning kits and educational reinforcement items.

Impact: More engaging and practical learning experiences along with tools to help people apply what they learned.

\$ 500 Strengthens Community Outreach

A \$500 gift supports outreach in harder to reach communities and can support translation of educational materials, mobile teaching supplies, or community-based demonstrations that bring UC knowledge directly into neighborhoods, farms, and partner sites.

Impact: Education that reaches more people, in more places.

\$5000 Modernizes Our Learning Environment

A \$5000 gift helps improve our classroom and training spaces with technology upgrades and presentation tools, advanced hybrid meeting capability, improved sound or audiovisual equipment, and accessibility improvements that allow more participants to learn effectively.

Impact: A more inclusive, modern learning space that supports both in-person and remote education.

Support education that connects UC knowledge to local communities, today and for the future.

[Donate UCCE San Luis Obispo](#)

[Donate UCCE Santa Barbara](#)

UCCE Advisor Updates

Supporting Youth Mental and Emotional Health in 4-H Competitive Environments



By Matthew R Rodriguez, Marcel Horowitz, Ally Lemmer

Introduction

4-H has a long history of using competition as a method of providing feedback on skill mastery and continued task improvement. Preparing young people to show their animals, photographs, rockets and other 4-H projects at county fairs is a critical step in helping them grow. 4-H adult volunteers provide countless hours mentoring and supporting our young people on a variety of 4-H projects, such as animal science, fashion design, and plant sciences, but often the emotional aspects of losing, selling an animal, or making a public mistake are overlooked.

Preparing for a fair, show or competition can take a considerable amount of time, money, and mentorship. Coordinating schedules, paying for supplies, and balancing 4-H project requirements with other commitments can be challenging to keep up. This work can quickly become stressful economically, socially, mentally, and emotionally.

[Read the full article here](#)

[Contribute to 4-H This Giving Day](#)

Field Day Announcement: Strawberry Fertilization & Irrigation Strategies

Join us for a field day focused on improving water and nutrient management during strawberry establishment. This event will



highlight practical, field-based insights from ongoing research in Ventura County.

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Location: Crisalida Berry Farms, 1980 South Rice Avenue, Oxnard, CA

Participants will learn about pre-plant fertilizer placement options (banded, broadcast, and no fertilizer), and explore third-season results comparing drip tape and micro-sprinklers for crop establishment. Discussions will cover how irrigation decisions affect early crop development and strategies to improve water and nutrient use efficiency. Attendees will also have the opportunity to observe treatment effects directly in the field.

2.0 CEUs have been applied for Certified Crop Advisers (CCA) and VCAILG. Spanish translation will be available upon request (subject to funding).

Free Registration



Disaster Resilience

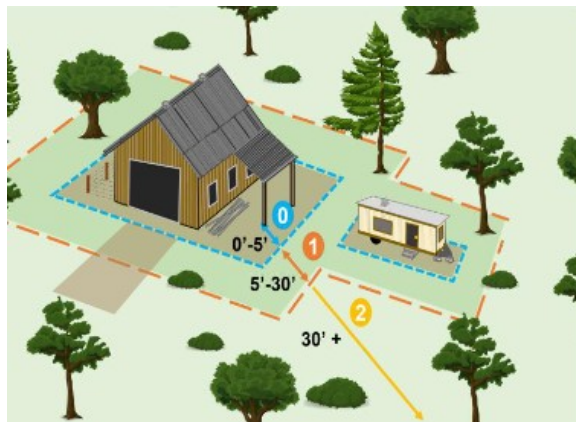
Complied By Lilian Thaoxaochay

May is Wildfire Awareness and Preparedness Month

San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties experienced 23 wildfires throughout 2025. The two largest wildfires were also the biggest in the state: the Madre Fire which started 7/2/2025 and was active for 24 days, and the Gifford Fire which started 8/1/2025 and was active for 74 days. Combined, they burned a total of 212,391 acres as reported by [CALFIRE](#).

Get prepared for the 2026 Wildfire Season by visiting your county's official emergency management website: [ReadySLO](#) and [ReadySBC](#).

Photo Credit: Great Coyote Fire (1964) Burns in Santa Barbara County, [EL Dartanner](#)



Learn more about [Home and Landscape Preparedness](#) as well as [Farm or Ranch Preparedness](#). In recent months, the UCANR Fire Network has also held and posted several [post-fire recovery webinars](#) with lists of resources for communities impacted by wildfire on topics from water and soil testing to livestock and rangeland recovery.

Photo Credit: UCANR Fire Network, Example of 3 Lengths of Defensible Space Including Zone 0

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 here.](#)

UCCE Community Education Programs



UC Master Food Preservers

Your giving helps us share research-based practices that empower families to safely preserve food, reduce food waste, increase food security, and explore healthy eating. Your support makes a difference in building healthier communities! [#GivingDay](#)



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Preserve today,
relish tomorrow.

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Contribute to Master Food Preservers This Giving Day

UC Master Gardeners of San Luis Obispo County



June 20th 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 June 20th 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**

Master Gardener Giving Day

National Agritourism Curriculum Train-the-Trainer Pilot Program



UC SAREP is partnering with a national team to develop a National Agritourism Curriculum and Toolkit for professionals that serve agricultural producers. In September 2026, we're launching the pilot of the National Agritourism Trainer Curriculum, a train-the-trainer program built to grow the knowledge and skills of agritourism service providers across the country.

We're bringing together a small, select group of practitioners starting September 2026 for a 10-week virtual training series (roughly 2 hours of live sessions plus 2 hours of independent work per week, about 40 hours total). Afterward, participants take part in a brief feedback period to help us refine the final curriculum. If you are interested in expanding your capacity to serve agritourism operators in your region and would like to participate in this pilot training, [please complete this brief form](#).

More information about this project can be found on the [project's webpage](#). Please contact Rachael Callahan (rmcallahan@ucanr.edu) with any questions.

Calendar of Classes & Events

[Master Food Preservers-Flavored Butters and Salts](#) : Saturday, May 16, 2026: 11:00am-12:00pm
Shandon Library

[Lunchtime in the Garden:](#)
Wednesday, June 2, 2026: 11:30am-1:30pm
San Luis Obispo, Garden of the 7 Sisters

[How to Grow and Preserve Your Own Herbal Bounty](#): MG & MFP Collaboration Saturday, May 16, 2026: 10:00am-12:00pm San Luis Obispo, UCCE Auditorium
[Native Plants in Your Garden](#): Saturday, May 30, 2026: 9:30am-10:30am, Buellton, SYV Botanic Garden-Amphitheater, River View Park

[Citrus and Avocado Workshop and Plant Sale](#): Saturday, June 20, 2026: 9:30 am-12:30pm San Luis Obispo, Garden of 7 Sisters
[Lunchtime in the Garden](#): Wednesday, July 1, 2026: 11:30am-1:30pm San Luis Obispo, Garden of the 7 Sisters



Funding Opportunities

Small Farms

Compiled by Claire Tuohey-Mote

Grants Available for Small Farms

- New Producer Grant from AgWest Farm Credit. This up to \$15,000 grant is designed for farmers that have 2 years or less of operation and is meant to assist with the large capital investment that farming requires. Find more information about the application on [AgWest Farm Credit's grant page](#). Applications are open until May 31, 2026.
- Tractor Replacement Incentive Program from SLO County Air Pollution Control District. Farmers can replace their old diesel tractors with newer, cleaner models, including electric tractors. Find out more about the program on the [District's Grant page](#). Applications are open until August 2026 or until funding is fully contracted.
- California Underserved and Small Producer Grant from California Department of Food and Agriculture. For any small scale farm that has sustained extreme weather related losses from 2017 - present, this grant will reimburse you! Please see the [California Underserved and Small Producer Grant page for more information](#).

Small Farm Staff Research Associate Claire Tuohey-Mote is available to assist with any of these applications and others that farmers are interested in. Please contact Claire at ctuoheymote@ucanr.edu or 805-704-9098

Upcoming Events



Safety Fest in Paso Robles

PasoSafe is hosting its 5th annual community emergency and safety event on Saturday, June 6th, 2026, from 10AM-2PM at the Paso Robles Downtown City Park. Participate in fun safety learning activities, watch K-9 demonstrations, and meet local first responders. Admission and parking are free. To learn more about the event, visit the [Safety Fest website](#).

Fire Savvy: Finding and Navigating Fire Information in California

As fire season ramps up in California, attend this webinar on Thursday, May 21, 2026, from 9AM-10AM to learn more about resources for keeping up to date with fire events. The event is free, but [registration is required](#) to receive a link for the zoom.

Free Registration



California Agritourism Summit September 23-25, 2026 San Luis Obispo County

The [California Agritourism Summit](#) brings together leaders, experts, and practitioners to connect, learn, and engage. Through keynote speakers, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and farm tours, participants will gain practical tools and inspiration to strengthen agritourism in California.

Who Should Attend

Many stakeholders are critical to the success of agritourism. Visit the [California Agritourism Summit website](#) for more information. We look forward to seeing you September 23-25, 2026 in San Luis Obispo County!

Stay in the Loop!

Be the first to know when registration opens, the agenda is announced, and secure early bird pricing by completing this [Interest Form](#).



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.

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Contact Us

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