

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

UCCE Advisor Updates

Mindfulness Lessons Show Promise for Preschoolers

By Katherine Soule

Can a short mindfulness curriculum help young children build healthier habits? University of Cooperative Extension researcher, Katherine E. Soule PhD, and colleagues from the University of New Hampshire piloted *Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies*, a four-lesson program that SNAP-Ed educators delivered to 96 children ages 2 to 5 in early childhood classrooms. Teachers and caregivers reported that youth experienced significant gains on all 14 measured behaviors, with the largest shifts in mindful eating, yoga practice, emotional expression, and quiet reflection. Families also described children bringing the skills home and sharing them with others. The pilot had no control group, so the results are preliminary, but the authors have already revised the curriculum using educator feedback ahead of broader testing. Read [the full study](#) in the 2026 *Journal of NEAFCS*.

Class room exercise display featuring yoga poses. Photo Credit :Katherine Soule



Disaster Resilience

By Lilian Thaoxaochay

\$1.55M Program for Well Water Testing and Treatment in SB County Launches

Earlier this year, the Central Coast Water Board [voted to put the \\$1.55 million penalty](#) for a 2024 sewage spill in Goleta towards a pilot project to improve drinking water for local communities. The first 100 eligible homes in Santa Babara County will receive a water test, and free installation of an in-home water treatment system, and/or replacement water supplies for the household. Apply [here](#).

Beyond this new pilot, well testing for drinking water in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties will continue to be made available through the [Central](#)

[Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program](#) which is a free and voluntary program for residents. A technician and guidance will be provided for an initial sample to better support and orient households about the process. However, subsequent sampling and fees are the responsibility of homeowners and residents.

If your well water is contaminated, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara County residents may qualify through a [pilot replacement program](#) for free bottled water.



Following the 2024 sewage spill in Santa Barbara County, Goleta Beach was closed to the public. Photo Credit: Lauryn Cummins, Daily Nexus.

Super El Nino Preparation Continues

In late September, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a [State of Emergency](#) ahead of the 2026-27 Wet Season.

Santa Barbara, San Diego, Sonoma, and Orange Counties among other local jurisdictions have also declared local emergencies due to early season activity, damages to beaches and homes, and a growing need for additional support to prepare ahead of the Super El Nino. Newsom's declaration authorizes state resources to provide much needed relief for local governments and communities including the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Water Resources, and the California Natural Resources Agency.



San Luis Obispo County residents interested in how to prepare can visit the updated 2026-27 El Nino resources provided at [ReadySLO.org](#).

Santa Barbara County residents can review the online [Storm Preparation suggestions](#) as well as re-watch the October 1, 2026, [virtual town hall](#).

UCANR is also preparing materials and a resource database can be found on the [California Institute for Water Resources' website](#). For information related to agricultural operations, refer to [The Disaster Blog recommendations for farms](#).

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



Thank you to the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors for proclaiming Oct 4th-10th, 2026, National 4-H Week in San Luis Obispo County. At the board meeting, 4-H youth from Cambria shared the impact 4-H has made in their lives. From one of our youth: "[4-H] has prepared me for the challenges that come after high school. I have learned to be a confident leader through 4-H thanks to all of the people who have helped me in this program."



UC Master Food Preservers

A Heartfelt Thank You to CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE

Following the recent sunset of the program, the UC Master Food Preservers extend our sincere gratitude to the CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Program in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. Over the years, our two teams have partnered on countless projects to bring food preservation and food safety education to communities across our two counties. We are deeply thankful to the CalFresh Healthy Living team for their dedication to providing nutrition, gardening, and physical activity education. Their work has made a lasting difference throughout each county, and we are proud to have worked alongside them.



Calendar of Classes & Events

Native Plants to Support Wildlife:

Saturday, October 17, 2026: 10:00am-12:00pm, Garden of the Seven Sisters

Sourdough 101: Saturday, October 24, 2026: 10:00am-12:00pm, San Luis Obispo, UCCE Auditorium

Composting, pest management, California natives & pollinators: Victory Garden Series: Saturday, October 17, 1:00 PM–4:30 PM: Paso Robles, Centennial Park Live Oak Room
Seed saving, vertebrate pests, container/small space gardening: Victory Garden Series: October 24, 1:00 PM–4:30 PM: Paso Robles, Centennial Park Live Oak Room



Upcoming Events

Field Tour: Regenerative Grazing and Technology in Action at Camp San Luis Obispo (SLO) (**FREE**)

Please join the Central Coast Rangeland Coalition for a visit to the Regenerative Grazing Open Air Lab (R-GOAL), the U.S. Army's first regenerative agriculture program. This site visit will help explore the opportunities and challenges of collaborative grazing management on a military site at Camp San Luis Obispo. [More information can be found on the Central Coast Rangeland Coalition Blog.](#)

Date: Thursday October 29, 2026

Time: 9 am-12 pm

Location: Camp San Luis Obispo- Specific location will be shared with those who register

REGISTER: <https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=49907>

Register by October 19, 2026

Webinar 2: Finding Common Ground: Collaborative Grazing Planning for Shared Stewardship of Cultural and Natural Resources (**FREE**)

This webinar explores collaborative research at Cal Poly's Swanton Pacific Ranch. Working alongside tribal partners, land managers, archaeologists, and rangeland conservation professionals, the research team is developing strategies to preserve cultural resources while supporting sustainable cattle grazing on working landscapes. Learn how remote sensing, geophysical assessments, and traditional ecological knowledge are helping inform resource and grazing management plans that balance cultural stewardship with resilient rangelands. [More information can be found on the Central Coast Rangeland Coalition Blog.](#)

Date: November 12, 2026

Time: 4:00-5:30 PM

REGISTER: <https://ucanr.zoom.us/meeting/register/iyBNnd8iTv6djCdzaRHxeQ>

Register by November 6, 2026

Online registration for the Invasive Tree Pests Workshop: Santa Barbara County on October 27, 2026 in Santa Maria is now open.

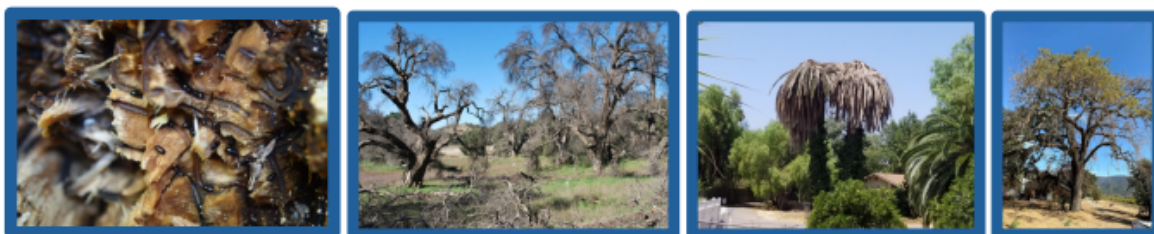
The target audience include arborists, tree professionals and foresters; however, the event is open to the public. CEU applications have been submitted.

Several emerging tree pests will be discussed in this full day event (8am - 3pm): Detection, reporting, treatment, infested wood management, and more.

[Registration fee is \\$30/person. Space is limited.](#)

Sponsored by Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner/Weights & Measures, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, and CAL FIRE Forestry.

[More information and to register please see our flyer](#)



Funding Opportunities

Farmer/Rancher Research and Education Grants Open

The [Western SARE Grant program](#) is currently open. Applications are due October 28, 2026, at noon. Interested parties should reach out now for any required partnerships. Funds vary by category (Farmer/Rancher Grant \$35k; Local Education and Demonstration Grant \$60k; Professional and Producer Grant \$85k), but each project will have 3 years to execute their research, education, or demonstration projects.

Community Partners

Small Farmer Survey Live Until Oct 31

Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) has opened their [annual survey](#) for all California farmers, ranchers, and land stewards to share their



experiences and help guide policy priorities for the next legislative cycle. The survey is available in English and Spanish and will be open until October 31st.

A copy of the 2026 farmer policy platforms priorities from the previous survey is available [here](#).

The Resilerator

A comprehensive 10-week course designed for farmers, ranchers, and fishers with 2+ years of experience. This course is presented by California Farmlink and is offered to producers in both English (virtually) and Spanish (in person in Salinas with an option to live-stream). The *Resilerator* is like a business accelerator, but the emphasis is on long-term resilience, sustainable profits, and responsible practices, rather than an accelerated sprint towards short-term profits. Find more details and the application on [CA Farmink's website](#). Next Session: October 6 – December 15, 2026



Cachuma Resource
Conservation District

The [Cachuma Resource Conservation District](#) is looking for a new Executive Director. The Executive Director serves as chief administrative officer, responsible for managing and directing internal business operations and public Board hearings of the District that are consistent with the strategic plan, goals and objectives, and policies and procedures established by the Board of Directors. For more information, visit the [job posting](#) on the RCD's website.

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](#)

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

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