UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

Spotlight on San Luis Obispo County

UC Cooperative Extension in San Luis Obispo 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. We work to support the economic vitality of local agriculture and promote healthy, safe, and resilient communities.



Learning about organic production methods in the field at the UC Central Coast Organic Agriculture Conference. Paso Robles

Supporting Agricultural Resilience

Our Integrated Pest Management Advisor supports development and implementation of IPM practices in agriculture. Through partnerships with local growers UCCE conducts trials of celery and lettuce varieties and their resistance to soil pathogens on the Central Coast. The goal is to reduce the impacts of disease and improve profitability for local growers through sustainable pest management. Through field days, growers compare variety performance firsthand and choose the most resistant options for their farms.

77%
Of growers gained useful information

60%
Plan to use the information in the future

The Power of Volunteers

UCCE harnesses the power and expertise of our diverse volunteers. Our volunteers attend rigorous trainings in topics ranging from plant science to youth development. They return all of that right back to our communities through educational events and workshops.

420
UC Volunteers

$1.5M
Value of volunteer hours



Extension happens in the field.

Advisor Royce Larsen gives a talk at the Range Conference.

UC ANR Mission

UCCE is part of the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). Our mission is to cultivate thriving communities, sustainable agriculture, resilient ecosystems, and economic prosperity in California through development and sharing of equitable and collaborative science-based solutions that have national and global impact.

> "The 4-H program has helped me develop my public speaking, team building and leadership skills."
>
> - San Luis Obispo 4-H Youth

https://ucanr.edu/county/county-san-luis-obispo



1,102
4-H Youth

4-H youth showing at Field Day 2025. Photo: A Torres

4-H Youth Development

Through local clubs and countywide events, 4-H youth build and demonstrate their skills in public speaking, leadership, and agriculture. San Luis Obispo is home to one of the largest 4-H programs in California, with 24 clubs supported by 244 volunteers and serving more than 1,000 youth.

132
UC Master Gardeners

UC Master Gardeners

Our local expert volunteers provide research-based guidance on sustainable landscaping and growing food. Volunteers host events throughout the county at three educational gardens and answer gardening or pest management questions through a helpline and outreach events. Through a unique collaboration with the Juvenile Services Center, volunteers host a weekly garden hour on site where youth experience the cycle of food production, get outside, and help plan and care for the garden. These efforts build local resilience and cultivate thriving people and communities.

"We've tasted some very uncommon fruits and vegetables... I enjoy my time there and hope I am contributing in a small way."
-UC Master Gardener on her work at Juvenile Services

Small & Organic Farm Support

Organic certification can support economic and environmental sustainability for local growers. However, small and large producers face administrative difficulties with organic certification.

- UCCE offers mentorship and resources through workshops, webinars, field days, technical assistance, and mentor matching.
- Workshop attendees report greatly improved knowledge (74%) and need for more resources to support transitioning to organic (84%).



Participants at an Organic Field Day in Creston (2025)

UC Master Food Preservers

Food preservation is an essential skill for helping people reduce food waste, access local seasonal food, and build confidence in preparing and storing food safely. Many people may not have access to equipment or reliable information about food safety or food preservation, putting them at risk for illness and greater food insecurity. Our volunteers deliver research-based information to the public through hands-on workshops throughout the county where participants learn safe food handling skills including canning, dehydration, and fermentation. Participants gain practical skills and tools to prevent food waste and nourish their families for a thriving community.

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