UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Spotlight on Santa Barbara County

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

Agriculture
- Integrated Pest Management
- Sub-Tropical Crops
- Production Horticulture

Natural Resources
- Rangeland & Watershed
- Disaster Resilience

Community Health
- CalFresh Healthy Living
- UC Master Gardeners
- UC Master Food Preservers

Youth Development
- 4-H Community Clubs
- College & Career Readiness



Youth at Hapgood Elementary in Lompoc lead school garden tours for parents and community members through a UCCE collaborative project.

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 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.

407 UC Volunteers

$692K Value of volunteer hours

20K Total reach (all programs)



Lettuce impacted by fusarium wilt in Santa Barbara County.

Supporting Agricultural Resilience

Our Integrated Pest Management Advisor supports development and implementation of IPM practices in agriculture. Through partnerships with local growers the advisor trials 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.

> *"4-H gave me a direction. I plan to go into the agriculture industry thanks to this program. It taught me valuable skills and lessons."*
>
> ***-Santa Barbara 4-H member***

https://ucanr.edu/county/santa-barbara-county



Youth at a school-based 4-H club embryology projec+

4-H Youth Development

Through local clubs and countywide events, 4-H youth build and demonstrate their skills in public speaking, leadership, and agriculture. Santa Barbara County has a thriving 4-H program with a focus on preparing youth for success after high school.

555 Enrolled 4-H youth

124 Active volunteers

800+ Animals shown at fair

UC Master Gardeners

Our local expert volunteers provide research-based guidance on sustainable landscaping and growing food. Volunteers host events throughout the county at educational gardens and answer gardening or pest management questions through the Master Gardener helpline and outreach events.

91 | UC Master Gardener volunteers

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%).



Youth-led school garden tours at Hapgood Elementary in Lompoc.
Participants at an Organic Field Day (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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