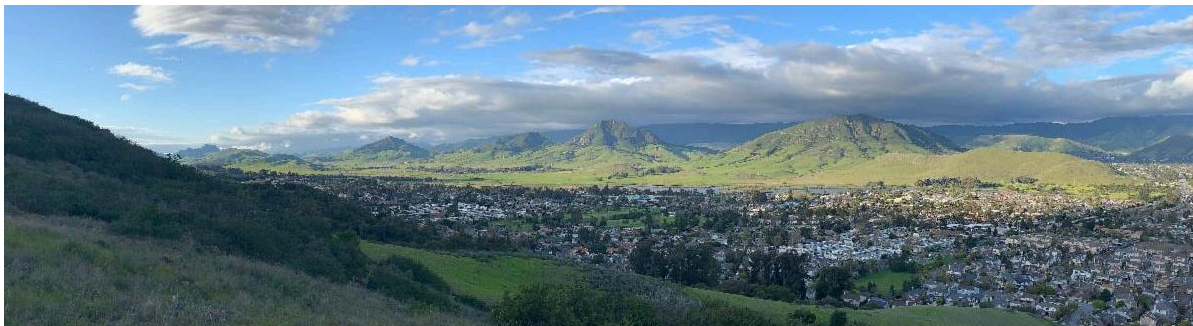




Central Coast Soil Hub Newsletter

Summer 2026

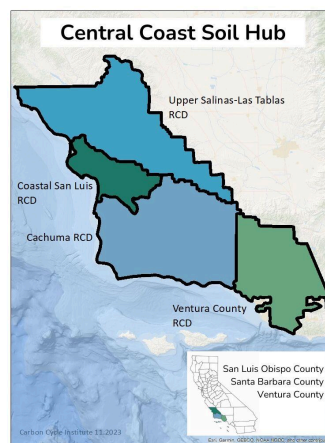
In This Issue:

- Organic Agriculture Conference on the Central Coast
- New resources for cover crops, FSMA Traceability Rule, and more
- Grant funding from CalGLC, USDA, USFWS, and more
- Nominate a farmer for the Rooted in SLO Award
- and much more!

[Click here to view all of the flyers and resources referenced in this edition of the newsletter](#)

Regional Updates

The Central Coast Soil Hub spans three counties and includes four Resource Conservation Districts. The following updates are relevant to farmers, ranchers, and other land managers throughout this entire region.



Upcoming Events

2026 Organic Agriculture Conference - Central Coast Region

Sept. 15 - 16, San Luis Obispo, FREE

The UC Organic Agriculture Institute and local partners (including the Central Coast Soil Hub) invite you to join for two days of organic agriculture programming on the Central Coast. On Tuesday, September 15th, join a bus tour of three organic farms in the region: Talley Farms, Villa Creek Cellars, and Traceland Organics. On Wednesday, September 16th, meet regional resource providers, hear organic research updates, and learn from farmers and technical assistance providers about topics ranging from balancing food safety and sustainability goals to accessing institutional markets. Have organic

certification questions? Visit the Organic Office Hours booth to meet 1:1 with experts that can support you!

These events are free, thanks to our funders at CDFA State Organic Program, CDFA Office of Agricultural Resilience and Sustainability, and USDA AMS West/Southwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program, and programming is tailored to aspiring, transitioning, or currently certified organic farmers and ranchers in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties. Spanish interpretation will be available / Habrá interpretación en español.

[Click here to view the event website](#) for more information and to register by September 5th! Questions? Please contact Lexie Wilson, UC OAI Extension & Outreach Coordinator at lwwilson@ucanr.edu

TODAY: 2026 CalREN Forum: Energy Efficiency as an Affordability Resource

July 29, 1:00 - 3:00, Zoom

Join the California Regional Energy Networks (CalREN) on July 29, 2026, for our annual forum as we explore a critical yet sometimes overlooked topic: how energy efficiency is helping to make energy more affordable for everyday Californians. This year's event will feature updates from the state's regional energy networks alongside a dynamic panel of energy experts and diverse community voices. Together, they will share insights into how local energy programs lower costs and boost resilience in California communities. [Click here to register.](#)

Webinar: Managing Groundwater with Small Farms in Mind

Aug. 4, 12:00 - 1:00, Zoom

Join UC Small Farms Network and Community Alliance with Family Farmers for a webinar discussion on their upcoming report "Managing Groundwater with Small Farms in Mind". The report is based on three years of statewide research, surveys, focus group discussions, and document review with small-scale farmers. This webinar discussion will highlight the risks, barriers, and opportunities for small farms in long-term groundwater management. [Click here to register.](#)

Central Coast Nursery and Floriculture Meeting

Aug. 18, 12:00 - 1:00, Carpinteria, FREE

Please join us for the quarterly Central Coast Nursery and Floriculture Meeting where Emma Volk will present research on thrips control as well as information about the new invasive Aloe Thrips. Industry personnel from Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties are welcome. Participation is free, and lunch will be provided. [Click here to register.](#)

California Agritourism Summit

Sept. 23 - 25, Paso Robles, \$250

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. The summit program is tailored to farmers and ranchers who offer agritourism, public agency staff, tourism/travel industry professionals, and more. [Click here to register.](#)

Resources and Updates

New Cover Crop Resources Now Available

The Central Coast Soil Hub recently published a new guide to cover cropping resources for farmers and technical assistance providers on the Central Coast. This guide compiles tools, fact sheets, books, and other resources relevant to Central Coast agriculture and includes descriptions and links. [View the full guide here.](#)

This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2023-38640-39571 through the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program under project number WCA24-001. USDA is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Visit western.sare.org for more information or call 406-994-4785.

One of the resources featured in the cover cropping guide is a set of new fact sheets developed by Sustainable Conservation. These fact sheets provide in-depth guidance for three distinct cropping contexts in California's water-scarce environments: cover cropping beyond winter in perennial systems; cover cropping for land repurposing; and cover cropping in annual systems. [Click here to view the fact sheets.](#)

"Topics in Subtropics" Blog

Ben Faber, the UCANR Soil, Water, and Subtropical Crops Advisor for Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, maintains the "Topics in Subtropics" blog to keep specialty crop growers up to date. The blog provides updates on relevant events and resources, emerging threats like new pests or heat waves, research updates from UCANR, and other topics of interest. [Click here to view the blog](#) or [check out the latest newsletter here.](#)

Aloe Thrips: A New Invasive Pest Found in Ventura, San Diego, and Santa Barbara Counties

CDFA recently confirmed the presence of Aloe Thrips in Ventura, San Diego, and Santa Barbara Counties - the first official report of Aloe Thrips presence in the United States. This insect pest can cause blackening and silvering of aloe leaves and may cause plant dieback in severe cases. [Click here to read a detailed update from UCANR.](#)

Helpful Resources from the San Diego Food System Alliance

The Local Food Economy Lab, a project that supports small farm viability in San Diego County, has an online database with many useful resources for farmers and ranchers. While some of the resources are specific to San Diego County many others are statewide

or have local equivalents in each county. [Click here to view the resource library](#) or [check out the resource guides](#) for other groups (like food business owners) here.

New Traceability Rule: Preparing for 2028

The new produce traceability rule in the Food Safety Modernization Act is set to take effect in June 2028. This new rule will require farmers and food businesses to use a standardized approach to recording key details about where food comes from and where it goes throughout the supply chain. Farm Commons has created a set of resources to help farmers prepare for and comply with this new rule. [Click here to view the resource library](#).

Funding Opportunities

New Grant Supports Rancher-Led Learning Projects

Up to \$5000 available from the California Grazing Lands Coalition

CalGLC recently launched the “California Producer’s Grant” to support ranchers and graziers who want to host producer-led learning opportunities. CalGLC encourages events for ranchers to share knowledge with one another and with the public about grazing lands stewardship and the continued viability of ranching. [Click here to learn more and apply](#).

WSARE Grant Supports Farmer-Led Research Projects

Opens Aug. 4

The Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant Program focuses on advancing on-farm sustainability solutions by funding innovative producer-driven research and outreach. With a Farmer/Rancher Grant, a producer and a technical advisor work together to develop a project (1-3 years in scope) that conducts both research and outreach on a sustainable agriculture topic. Up to \$35,000 is available to support these projects. [Learn more about the program here](#).

3C-REN Agriculture Energy Solutions Program

Tired of watching your electricity bills climb and not knowing what you can do to lower it? The Tri-County Regional Energy Network (3C-REN) is here to help. 3C-REN offers no-cost technical assistance designed specifically for growers and agricultural operations. Through the **Agriculture Energy Solutions program**, you can get a clear picture of your energy use with a utility bill analysis, a simple first step that shows where savings may be hiding. Want a deeper dive? A facility assessment provides customized recommendations for energy-saving opportunities across your site. Worries about the upfront cost of upgrades? We can connect you with incentive programs that may help cover the cost. [Click here to learn more](#).

Funding and Equipment Available Through USFWS

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has funding and equipment available to help Central Coast landowners with voluntary conservation projects. The “Partners for Fish and Wildlife” Program provides free technical and financial assistance for projects that improve wildlife habitat on private lands. Restoration projects are customized to address each landowner’s unique needs and Partners Program biologists help plan, manage, implement, and monitor these restoration projects. Participating landowners continue to own and manage their land.

The Partners Program also has a no-till seed drill available to private landowners and other conservation partners. The drill is available for free, even if you do not participate in USFWS funding programs.

[Click here to learn more about the Partners Program](#) and [click here for information about the seed drill](#).

Find Funding Opportunities with the Farmer Funding Database

The [Farmer Funding Database](#) is now available from the Central Coast Soil Hub! This document lists funding opportunities for farmers and ranchers on the Central Coast and will be updated periodically as new opportunities become available. Funding opportunities include project planning and implementation, infrastructure and equipment purchases, educational scholarships, and more.

San Luis Obispo County Updates

Nominate a Farmer for the “Rooted in SLO Award”

The Rooted in SLO Award recognizes a woman or non-binary leader who has made a meaningful contribution to a healthier, more connected San Luis Obispo County through food & farming. This award honors individuals whose work helps cultivate a stronger local food system, supports community wellbeing, and inspires others through service, leadership, and action.

Nominees will be recognized at the 2nd Annual Farm Games Hoedown at City Farm SLO. This event will feature four teams competing in farm-themed games, live music and dancing, BBQ dinner, live and silent auctions - all to support City Farm’s educational programming.

[Click here to nominate a farmer](#), or [check out the Farm Games Hoedown here](#).

Ranching and Blacksmithing Classes at Cuesta College

Cuesta College offers a variety of free classes through the non-credit Vocational Education Program. The primary goal of the Ranch Education classes is to create farm and ranch employees and managers who have a basic grounding in animal handling and care, ranch design and maintenance, pasture maintenance and herding techniques.

Upcoming fall classes include Intro to Livestock ID and Handling (Aug. 24 - Oct. 3) and Intro to Farm Maintenance (Oct. 10 - Nov. 21). Spring classes will include Intro to Land

Use and Planning (Jan. 11 - Feb. 27) and Intro to Livestock Health (Mar. 6 - Apr. 24). One-day blacksmithing classes start in September.

[Click here to learn more about the ranch education classes](#) and [click here to learn about blacksmithing classes](#).

We Want to Hear From You!

The Central Coast Soil Hub was created to serve the local agriculture community and to support resilient and sustainable agricultural operations. To do this well, we need to know what farmers and ranchers in the Central Coast *actually* want and need. We are conducting a survey to understand how we can best meet the needs of all agricultural producers on the Central Coast. This survey is anonymous, so please answer honestly.

[Take the Survey Here.](#)

Thank you for your participation and feedback!

[Click here to view all of the flyers and resources referenced in this edition of the newsletter](#)

[Click here to subscribe to future editions of the Central Coast Soil Hub Newsletter](#)

Thank You For Reading

If you have suggestions for what to include in future editions of the newsletter, please reach out and let us know! If you would like to learn more about the Central Coast Soil Hub, [visit our webpage here](#). Thank you!

Questions? Email the Hub Coordinator, Joshua Kouri: josh@coastalrcd.org

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