

BENEFITING U

ANNUAL CONFERENCE EDITION – APRIL 2025



Celebrating 45 Years of Growing Healthy, Cultivating Care

As we celebrate UnitedAg's Sapphire Anniversary, marking 45 years of service to the agricultural community, we reflect on our journey of providing innovative healthcare solutions, expanding access to care, and advocating for our members. This milestone is a testament to the dedication and collaboration that have driven our success.

While change is inevitable, our core identity remains rooted in strong connections—connections that inspire us to continue prioritizing the health and well-being of our members. As we look to the future, we're excited to host a series of events, including virtual coffee chats, member meetups, and regional forums throughout the year to deepen those relationships and advance our mission.

Thank you for being part of this journey.



Here's to 45 years of impact—and the future we will shape together!

INSPIRE Annual Breakfast & Meeting

The UnitedAg Annual Meeting was held at The Terranea Resort & Spa in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, where members gathered to celebrate the organization's growth and achievements. The meeting kicked off Wednesday, March 19th at 8:30 am by Eric Bream, Chair of the Board of Directors with the introduction of the 2025-26 Executive Board, including Vice Chair Richard Plato and Treasurer Santiago Martin.

The Board of Directors, consisting of Matt Bastone, Marylu Ramirez, and Gary Thiara, were also recognized for serving on the board. Treasurer Santiago Martin presented the 2024 financial report, highlighting strong revenue growth and the addition of 125 new members, bringing the total to 1,014 member companies.

The meeting also honored long-standing members and staff, with special recognition for those who have been part of the UnitedAg family for over 10 years. **Members raised their glasses to celebrate 45 years of collaboration, growth, and success.**



2025 Board of Directors & Board of Trustees



Annual Breakfast Keynote Daniel Kraft

STANFORD AND HARVARD-TRAINED PHYSICIAN-SCIENTIST, INVENTOR, ENTREPRENEUR, AND INVESTOR

The future of health and medicine is evolving at an unprecedented pace, driven by AI, precision medicine, and digital healthcare. In UnitedAg's Annual Breakfast Keynote, Dr. Daniel Kraft, a renowned physician-scientist and innovator, explored the shift from reactive "sick care" to proactive, accessible healthcare.

He highlighted how CRISPR treatments, wearable tech, and AI-driven diagnostics are transforming the industry, while intelligence augmentation, virtual care, and democratized technology enhance patient experiences. As medicine embraces exponential advancements, the focus is on personalized, data-driven care that improves outcomes and accessibility.

As the healthcare landscape rapidly transforms, Dr. Daniel Kraft's keynote reinforced the need to embrace innovation while overcoming challenges like cost and accessibility. With AI-driven tools, precision treatments, and digital health advancements, the future of medicine is moving toward a more proactive, personalized, and technology-driven approach. UnitedAg remains committed to keeping its members informed and empowered as these groundbreaking changes unfold.



ANNUAL BREAKFAST KEYNOTE SPONSORED BY



Past Board Chairs | 1980 - 2024



William C. Goodrich
 Founder, United Agribusiness League
 1980 - 2011



Bill Forbes
 United Agricultural Association
 1980 - 1983



Al Friesen
 Corona College Heights
 1984 - 1985



Al Pieri
 CA Artichoke & Vegetable Corp.
 1986



Don Regan
 Regan Distributors, Inc.
 1987



Jack Boyd
 Pacific Titan, Inc.
 1988



Dave Donlon
 David J. Donlon Ranch
 1989



Maurice McMillan
 Pro-Ag, Inc.
 1990 - 1991



Ken Creason
 Fillmore-Piru Citrus Association
 1992



Gary Matthew
 Matthew & Sons Mushrooms
 1993



Nicky Hahn
 Smith & Hook Winery
 1994



Jim Rossi
 Rossi Transport
 1995



Mack Ramsay
 Pacific Commerce Group
 1996



Bob Brown
 Speedling, Inc.
 1997



Jerry Armstrong
 Armstrong Egg Farms
 1998



Glenn Miller
 Satcoy Lemon Association
 1999



Tom Amaro
 Pacific Ag Consulting
 2000



Raul Segura
 Segura International
 2001



Mario Chacon
 Del Mar Trading
 2002



Bob Nobel
 Nobel Farms, Inc.
 2003



Joe Fink
 Tanimura & Antle, Inc.
 2004



Miguel Cea
 Ag-Fume Services, Inc.
 2005



Craig Waite
 Growers Container Co.
 2006



Adin Hester
 Olive Growers Council of CA
 2007



Frank Chavez
 AgroCoco
 2008



Chuck Nichols
 Nichols Farms, Inc.
 2009



Paul Powell
 Foothill Packing, Inc.
 2010 - 2011



Pat Regan
 Regan Distributors, Inc.
 2012 - 2013



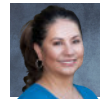
Brian Edmonds
 Corona Coastal Growers
 2014 - 2015



Anthony Vollerling
 Sunshine Floral, LLC
 2016 - 2017



A.J. Cisney
 Rancho Guadalupe, LLC
 2018 - 2021



Veronica Urzua-Alvero
 Church Brothers Farms
 2022 - 2024

Session 1: Inspiring Change Through Advocacy

Jayson Welter, General Counsel, kicked off the session outlining UnitedAg's advocacy strategy, emphasizing a selective approach to legislative support based on member priorities. Key focus areas include rural healthcare access, Medi-Cal payment rates, water, labor, wages (including PAGA), pesticides, and invasive species. At the federal level, UnitedAg monitors immigration and H-2A issues, leveraging partnerships with the National Council of Agricultural Employers and advocacy groups like the Agricultural Council of California.

The panel featured experts discussing agricultural advocacy strategies. Josh Walters explained how the Alliance of California Farmers and Ranchers supports moderate Democrats in key districts to advance agricultural interests. Louie Brown highlighted the importance of trust-based relationships with legislators. Assemblymember Alexandra Macedo shared insights on navigating Sacramento's political landscape to support agriculture.

Emmy-winning filmmaker Jeff Aiello stressed the need for agriculture to reshape its narrative through storytelling. Board Chair Eric Bream compared advocacy to protecting crops from frost—small changes can lead to significant impact.

A lively Q&A followed, with discussions continuing into the welcome reception, inspiring attendees to engage as advocates for agriculture.



President's Message

During her opening remarks, President & CEO Kirti Mutatkar shared insights from a recent visit to Rome, reflecting on how the city seamlessly blends ancient traditions with modern advancements. She drew a parallel between Rome's enduring spirit and UnitedAg's journey—where **change is inevitable, but the core identity remains rooted in strong connections.**

She referenced the Ship of Theseus thought experiment, which questions whether something remains the same if all its parts are replaced over time. In the same way, while aspects of UnitedAg may evolve—new faces, innovations, and strategies—its foundation remains unchanged: the relationships built with employees, service reps, board members, and members.

Kirti emphasized that innovation is key to longevity. Just as Rome thrived by embracing advancements like concrete and aqueducts, UnitedAg must continue to adapt and innovate to sustain its legacy for future generations.

Her message concluded with a call to action: **strengthen connections and embrace innovation to ensure UnitedAg's lasting impact.**

To watch the full speech, [click here.](#)



Session 2: Inspiring Change with You in Mind

The session explored how innovation, AI-driven solutions, and member-centric programs are shaping the future of healthcare and benefits. Attendees discovered cutting-edge technology and personalized resources that enhance healthcare access and promote long-term wellness. UnitedAg showcased innovative programs, forward-thinking initiatives, and solutions currently being piloted with the sole purpose of putting members first. The event highlighted how UnitedAg is actively shaping the future of benefits with a focus on member well-being.

Key Highlights:

- **AI & Chatbots:** These tools can improve member support with multi-lingual, intuitive, and customizable features.
- **Voice AI & Assistance:** AI-driven support can streamline operations, generate notes, and provide real-time assistance 24/7.
- **Transparent Pricing:** The discussion focused on price equity, discovery, and settlement to create a fair and market-driven healthcare system.
- **Future-Ready Healthcare:** UnitedAg is continuously building strong connections while leveraging technology and data-driven solutions to support continuous improvement.



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Session 3: Tech Talk

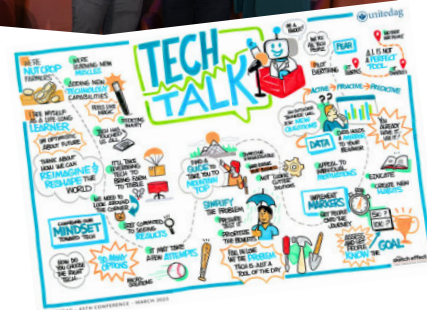
The agricultural industry underwent a rapid transformation, driven by cutting-edge technology that enhanced efficiency, sustainability, and productivity. At UnitedAg's 45th Annual Conference, the Tech Talk session explored how ag tech—ranging from AI-driven analytics to precision farming and automation—revolutionized the field.

This engaging discussion highlighted the latest advancements shaping agriculture's future, offering practical insights on how technology optimized operations and drove profitability. Attendees gained valuable perspectives on leveraging innovation to stay ahead in an increasingly competitive industry.

Key Takeaways from Tech Talk

The session emphasized the importance of embracing technology while fostering a mindset shift in agriculture:

- **Tech as an Enabler:** New capabilities, such as predictive analytics and automation, empowered farmers to make data-driven decisions.
- **Mindset & Learning:** Staying adaptable and open to change proved crucial for maximizing the benefits of evolving ag tech.
- **Problem-Solving Approach:** Rather than chasing the latest tools, farmers and agribusinesses focused on solving core industry challenges.
- **AI & Data Utilization:** AI, while not perfect, enhanced decision-making and efficiency. Data-driven insights helped optimize farm management and sustainability efforts.
- **Implementation & Motivation:** Setting clear goals, tracking progress, and fostering innovation contributed to long-term success.



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Annual Luncheon Keynote Cassie Holmes

FINDING MORE HAPPINESS IN YOUR TIME

The luncheon keynote Cassie Holmes, award-winning researcher and author of *Happier Hour*, delivered an inspiring presentation on how to beat distractions, expand your time, and focus on what truly matters. She challenged the common belief that having more free time automatically leads to happiness, emphasizing instead that happiness comes from how we use our time, not how much of it we have. Key insights from presentation:

- **Avoid "Time Poverty"** – The feeling of never having enough time can lead to stress and unhappiness.
- **Quality Over Quantity** – Meaningful activities and connections matter more than just having more free time.
- **The "Time Jar" Method** – Prioritize important activities first to ensure time is well spent.
- **Turn Routines into Rituals** – Small, intentional changes can enhance joy and fulfillment.
- **Protect Your Time** – Reduce distractions, commit to priorities, and appreciate the present moment.

Holmes' message was clear: Happiness doesn't come from having more time—it comes from making the most of the time we have. By making intentional choices, focusing on meaningful activities, and setting boundaries to protect our well-being, we can create a more fulfilling and balanced life.

Her insights resonated deeply with attendees, offering practical strategies for reducing stress, improving productivity, and finding joy in everyday moments.



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WomenAg Graduates | Class of 2024

Fifteen outstanding women were honored at our Annual Awards Dinner for completing the 12-month WomenAg Leadership Academy. This program empowers women in agriculture with the skills, confidence, and connections to lead.

Debbie Adam, CFO and Owner of Innovative Produce and a 2017 alumna, delivered a special message on how the academy helped her embrace a leadership style true to herself—nurturing, empathetic, and supportive. She emphasized that leadership isn't one-size-fits-all and credited the program for building her confidence, and connecting her with a supportive network.

As the newest graduates step forward, they carry with them not only the knowledge and experiences gained throughout the program but also the responsibility to lead with purpose and integrity. Debbie's story is a testament to the impact of the WomenAg Leadership Academy—a program that continues to shape the future of women in agriculture, one leader at a time.



WomenAg Academy Alumni | 2024

Erika Branch
Summit Almonds

Melanie Brubaker
GCI Ins. Brokers

Lauren Crosby
Visionary Vegetables

Yariana Garcilazo
Olam Food Ingredients

Laura Garza
UnitedAg

Lennet Giron
Trilogy Personnel

Yadira Hernandez
UnitedAg

Tina Jones
Trilogy Personnel

Delia Kobayashi
Bay & Basin Ins.

Veronica Luna
Rancho Guadalupe

Barbara Meza
Taylor Farms

Kira Navison
Scattaglia Growers & Shippers

Navneet Thiara
Empire Nut Company

Mickayla Ursini
UnitedAg

Merrilee Vanderwaal
Sac Valley CPA

2025 Woman in Agriculture Scholarship Recipient – Maria Zavala



This year marks a significant milestone for the Agribusiness Education Foundation as it surpasses \$2 million in scholarships awarded since its inception in 2000. To date, the foundation has supported more than 1,200 students in their academic pursuits, reinforcing its commitment to fostering the next generation of agricultural leaders.

During this year's prestigious awards ceremony, the foundation proudly recognized one of its top scholarship recipients, Maria Zavala. Maria is a dedicated student at California State University, Fresno. Currently a sophomore, she is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Business and is expected to graduate in 2027.

In recognition of her academic excellence, leadership potential, and passion for agriculture, Maria was honored with the esteemed **Woman in Agriculture Award**, presented by the Education Committee and the Board of Directors. This distinguished scholarship celebrates Maria's achievements and her commitment to making a lasting impact in the agricultural industry.

As the foundation continues to expand its reach and support for students like Maria, it remains steadfast in its mission to empower future agricultural professionals through education, mentorship, and financial assistance.

Ambassador & Sales Awards

During the Sapphire Dinner Dance, UnitedAg proudly celebrated its 45th anniversary, honoring the dedication and achievements of our community.

We honored the 2024 WomenAg Leadership Academy graduates for their commitment to leadership and growth in agriculture. We also honored our top ambassadors, whose dedication to advocacy, outreach, and engagement has significantly strengthened UnitedAg's mission and impact. Additionally, we recognized our top-performing sales representatives, who have demonstrated excellence in service and support, going above and beyond to ensure our members receive the highest quality care, guidance, and solutions tailored to their needs.

A special congratulations to **Cristina Rocha of Nichols Farms**, recipient of the prestigious **Ag Innovator Award**, and to **Veronica Blanco and Rocío Rodriguez of Innovative Farms**, who were honored with the **Ag Influencer Award**. These individuals have made a profound impact in promoting health and wellness within their organizations, setting an inspiring example for the agricultural community. Their dedication to improving the well-being of their employees is truly commendable.

Another highlight of the evening was the Live Auction, where the dynamic and enthusiastic auctioneer, Louie Brown Jr., created an unforgettable experience. Thanks to his dynamic energy and expertise, an impressive \$27,000 was raised for the AEF Foundation, supporting initiatives that make a lasting impact on our community.

As we reflect on this milestone event, we extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to making the Sapphire Dinner Dance a resounding success. Your continued support and dedication to UnitedAg's mission inspire us to keep driving innovation, advocacy, and excellence in the agricultural industry.

Here's to 45 years of progress—and many more to come!



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Sapphire Celebration Annual Dinner Dance & Awards



UnitedAg's Annual Dinner Dance & Awards celebrated 45 years of leadership, innovation, and community in agriculture. The evening honored outstanding contributions with the Ambassador and Service Rep Awards, along with a special tribute to longtime UnitedAg members.

The WomenAg Leadership Academy took center stage with guest speaker Debbie Adam of Innovative Produce, the Class of 2024 graduation, and a special AEF presentation from the 2025 Woman in Ag Scholarship Award Winner, Maria Zavala. The evening also featured a live auction benefiting AEF, supporting its mission to provide financial assistance and leadership development to help members, their employees, and their families achieve their educational goals.

With fine dining, dancing, and a shared spirit of unity, the celebration was a true testament to UnitedAg's legacy and its dedication to the future of agriculture.

To view the full photo gallery, visit unitedagconference.org/gallery.



ANNUAL DINNER DANCE SPONSORED BY



American
AgCredit



Welcome Reception

Fuego Trio

Attendees savored the rich flavors of Mediterranean cuisine while enjoying breathtaking ocean views at UnitedAg's 45th Welcome Reception. The evening came alive with the rhythmic melodies of Fuego Trio's Spanish guitar, creating a vibrant atmosphere reminiscent of the heart of Spain. Under the open sky, attendees connected, celebrated, and kicked off the milestone event in style.



Coastal Resin Board Workshop



2nd Annual PAC Golf Tournament



Golfers enjoyed a premier day of play and networking at The Links at Terranea, a scenic oceanfront course in Rancho Palos Verdes. The tournament supported UnitedAg's advocacy efforts, with all proceeds benefiting our Federal PAC to help support candidates who champion the agricultural industry. It was a day filled with camaraderie, competition, and a shared commitment to strengthening the future of agriculture.



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