

# BENEFITING U

FALL EDITION – OCTOBER 2024



## President's Message

by Kirti Mutatkar

As the days grow shorter and autumn sets in, I find myself eagerly awaiting the cool breezes, vibrant colors, and of course, the pumpkin delicacies that make this season so special! This seasonal change serves as a powerful reminder of the constant transformations we encounter in life, and the incredible capacity we all have to create meaningful change for ourselves as well as for others. In both challenges and triumphs, I'm humbled by the unwavering support of our friends, family, and organizations like UnitedAg, which help us navigate through these transitions.

This season, I hope you take the opportunity to embrace and create change—whether it's for yourself or someone else. Whether you're volunteering for a local organization, becoming more active in your community; or simply dedicating a bit more time to your own health and well-being, every effort makes a difference.



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# INSPIRE

## 2025 Annual Meeting & Conference

### Igniting Innovation, Growth, & Leadership in Agriculture

For many years, we've inspired the agricultural community with impactful sessions and dynamic speakers. Our 45th annual conference INSPIRE, set against the stunning backdrop of Terranea Resort on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, promises an extraordinary experience filled with networking opportunities, educational presentations, and breathtaking 270-degree panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and Catalina Island. Come be inspired by a remarkable event that blends coastal charm, unmatched elegance, and a celebration of innovation, growth, and leadership in agriculture.

**Early-Bird Registration opens on October 21st!**  
Visit [unitedagconference.org](https://unitedagconference.org) to learn more.

## Upcoming Events



### HR Roundtables - Tulare

In person (Registration required)



### HR Roundtables - Chico

In-person (Registration required)



### HR Roundtables - Monterey

In-person (Registration required)



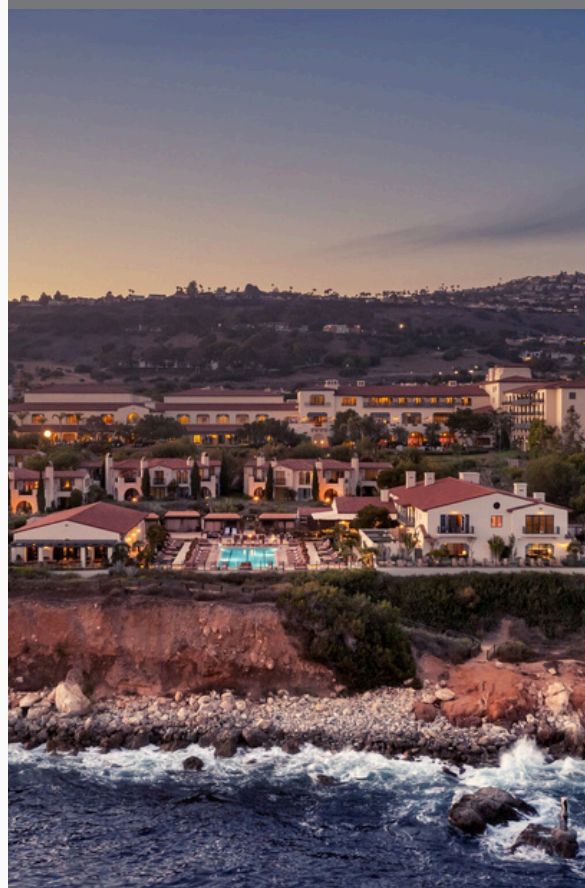
### 45th Annual Meeting & Conference

Terranea Resort

To register, visit [unitedag.org/events](https://unitedag.org/events)

**INSPIRE** invites participants to explore the transformative potential of innovation in agriculture, highlighting how growth and leadership are essential for advancing agricultural success, while inspiring attendees to be proactive leaders in shaping the future of agriculture.

KIRTI MUTATKAR





# 9th Annual Health Benefit Forums

Tulare, Chico & Salinas



## Event Recap

Over the course of three days, UnitedAg leadership hosted the 9th Annual Health Benefit Forums across three key regions of our membership: Tulare, Chico, and Salinas Valley. With more than 130 members in attendance, the forums provided an excellent opportunity for our members to reconnect with leadership and engage in meaningful discussions about the future of healthcare benefits in the agricultural industry.

Participants were introduced to the key benefits and resources that will be launching in the upcoming year. These include launching a more robust health portal that provides real-time access to critical health benefits information, as well as the development of a new mobile app designed to conveniently store health ID cards.

These enhancements reflect our continued commitment to better supporting our members' needs by offering more accessible and user-friendly health tools. Additionally, members learned about exciting new health initiatives, expanded network access through our partnership with Blue Shield National Network, and enhancements to our wellness programs, all tailored to meet the unique needs of our agricultural community.

We extend our gratitude to everyone who attended and contributed to the discussions. Your participation and feedback are invaluable as we continue to prioritize the health and well-being of our members.



Photos from the Chico Forum

### Topic 1: Wellness initiatives

Many UnitedAg members have embraced wellness incentives and developed a gamification reward system to encourage participation in biometric screenings, flu shots, and follow-up appointments at the Health & Wellness (H&W) Center. However, some hurdles remain. A key impediment is access to care, especially for after-work appointments, leading to a recommendation for introducing an evening clinic day. Additionally, diabetes management continues to pose challenges, with employees often struggling to follow up on appointments or utilize resources like Livongo.

On the opportunities side, creative physical activities like a walking path with a QR code system for step tracking and raffle entries can make wellness initiatives more engaging. Participation in such activities adds an element of fun to the wellness programs. Many members have onboarded similar wellness challenges by offering both in-person and virtual health fairs to accommodate employees across different counties. There is also growing interest in implementing a gamification system to reward employees for completing key wellness activities, further incentivizing healthy behaviors.

### Topic 2: Adoption of Technology

The attendees discussed how new technology programs can support cost containment by reducing operational costs if properly adopted. However, educating employees on using these platforms is time-consuming, with registration being a significant hurdle. Many employees lack confidence in the tools, causing frustration, but once registered, they find the platforms valuable due to familiarity with systems like Facebook. Attendees suggested that UnitedAg implement Single Sign-On (SSO) to simplify password management and streamline navigation, with some companies already using Face ID as a workaround.

Another great way to increase tech adoption would be by including spouses in efforts, as they often manage the family health benefits and was seen as another opportunity to enhance engagement. While technology boosts efficiency, many raised concerns about maintaining a human touch. Participants emphasized the importance of balancing tech-driven efficiency with proper education. Employee training on new tools is necessary but challenging, as it takes time and impacts productivity. Despite these challenges, the long-term benefits of tech adoption were acknowledged, with the need to balance education and operational demands.

### Topic 3: Challenges to Employee Health Benefits Decisions

Balancing workforce demographics poses significant challenges for employers. The aging workforce increases healthcare utilization and renewal costs, making retention difficult despite their valuable expertise. Conversely, younger employees are harder to retain, highlighting the need to understand their motivations, as they could offer better utilization potential. Inflation further complicates these issues, as employers find it challenging to justify health investments while employees struggle with affordability. Regarding clinic accessibility, attendees noted the importance of promoting the regional clinics but emphasized the need for extended hours, particularly on weekends, to improve access. Members suggested that increased utilization could justify longer hours, a point acknowledged by our wellness partners as feasible if demand rises.

Additionally, provider availability in regions like Paradise, CA, has become problematic due to recent fires driving many physicians to leave or close their practices. This shortage complicates healthcare access in the region, underscoring the need for innovative solutions, such as telemedicine, to address these gaps.





The clock is ticking for the close of our 2024-25 Scholarship application process! UnitedAg is proud to offer over \$86,000 in scholarships to students pursuing higher education, whether they are working toward a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree. In addition, we've earmarked \$10,000 specifically for vocational education—a fantastic opportunity for those looking to advance their skills in the agriculture sector.

## Vocational Scholarship Opportunities

This exclusive scholarship is available to employees affiliated with active UnitedAg members (Regular or Associate level). It provides financial assistance for agriculture-specific education and training at certified vocational schools, trade schools, or other recognized institutions. Whether you're seeking to enhance your technical knowledge or develop new skills in areas like farm management, equipment operation, or agribusiness, this scholarship is designed to support your journey.

## Don't Miss Out!

Applications for both the academic and vocational scholarships are closing soon, so take advantage of this incredible opportunity to invest in your future. Apply now and help us shape the next generation of leaders in agriculture!

Learn more and apply online at [futureagleaders.org](https://futureagleaders.org).



## 2024 Scholarship Award Ceremonies



## Meet Madison Williams 2024 WomenAg Scholarship Recipient

Madison Williams, a recent high school graduate, is attending Texas Tech University, majoring in Agribusiness with a minor in Dairy Science. She has been an active leader in the agricultural community, serving as President of the Visalia Rockettes Jr. Drill Team and Administrative Assistant at her family's business, Moovin Transport. Madison also represented her community as a spokeswoman at the Miss Woodlake Lions Rodeo.

A dedicated member of the CVC FFA Chapter, she earned her Greenhand, Chapter, and State degrees while consistently achieving high honor roll throughout high school. Her leadership with the Rockettes helped the team secure numerous titles and awards over the years.

# AEF Scholarship Alumnus Making an Impact in Law



## Matthew Amaro

Matt Amaro, a past recipient of the Agribusiness Education Foundation (AEF) scholarship, has established an impressive legal career. Now in his fourteenth year of legal practice, Matt serves as the Supervising Research Attorney for the Tulare County Superior Court. In this role, he and his team provide essential legal research support to trial court judges and staff, ensuring that complex legal issues are thoroughly analyzed and addressed.

Before joining the court, Matt built a solid background in private practice, focusing on litigation matters. He most recently worked at the Visalia law firm of Ruddell, Stanton & Bixler, and prior to that, at Khan, Soares & Conway in Hanford.

During his time at both firms, Matt frequently represented clients from the agricultural industry, providing legal services on a variety of business-related matters.

What truly sets Matt apart is his strong connection to agriculture and his commitment to helping family farms remain viable, particularly as the next generation faces tough decisions about staying in or exiting the industry. As more family farms consider selling in the face of generational shifts, Matt's dedication to preserving these businesses is more important than ever. His passion for supporting agriculture through his legal work reflects his belief in the importance of sustaining the backbone of the region's economy.

Matt's journey from an AEF scholarship recipient to a Supervising Research Attorney in Tulare County reflects his dedication to both his profession and the agricultural community.

## INSPIRE

### 2025 Annual Meeting & Conference



**March 17-19, 2025**  
Terranea Resort  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

### About the Conference

As we celebrate 45 years of service to agriculture, our milestone conference offers members the chance to connect with industry leaders, explore cutting-edge solutions, and gain insights into the future of ag health and technology. Through panel discussions, networking, and the serene setting of Terranea, members will leave inspired and ready to elevate their businesses.

**Early-bird Conference registration opens Monday, October 21!**

### Sponsorship Opportunities

Explore our unique sponsorship opportunities to elevate your business at our Conference or year-round exposure through many a la carte options. Find a sponsorship level that aligns with your goals.

Visit [unitedagconference.org](https://unitedagconference.org) to learn more and become a sponsor.





# WomenAg Leadership Academy Members Participate in Legislative Day

Sacramento

This past July, eighteen members of the UnitedAg WomenAg Leadership Academy participated in Legislative Day at the State Capitol in Sacramento. The event provided a unique opportunity for participants to engage directly with lawmakers and learn about the legislative process, all while advocating for the agricultural industry.

During the visit, academy members gained a deeper understanding of how important it is for industry professionals to play an active role in legislative matters. Legislators depend on hearing directly from those impacted by agricultural policies to make informed decisions. By sharing their experiences and concerns, participants helped raise awareness about the potential challenges and opportunities created by current and future legislation.

This hands-on experience highlighted the value of advocacy and underscored the importance of staying involved in legislative efforts that influence the future of agriculture. The UnitedAg WomenAg Leadership Academy continues to equip its members with the skills and knowledge to become strong voices for the industry, ensuring agriculture remains at the forefront of policy discussions.



*"There is strength in vulnerability because it keeps us humble and continuously seeking to grow." - Brenda Allison*

Apply for the 2025 WomenAg Leadership Academy today!  
[unitedag.org/womenag2025](https://unitedag.org/womenag2025)

## Staff Anniversaries

Alex Drollinger	23
Kirti Mutatkar	23
Laura Betancourt	23
Donna Bares	21
Bang Nguyen	18
Bo Ban	3
Justin Sosnowski	3
Karena Olivarez	3
Craig Angier	2
Jonathan Rivera	2
Marina Albert	2
Ren Santos	2
Jason Phan	1

## Welcome to the UnitedAg Family!

AgRobotics, Inc.	JTB Tank Lines, LLC
American Pistachio Growers	Keiths Meat Market, Inc.
Cafe Tori Investments, LLC	KRPC
Central CA Implement Co.	Miller Glass, Inc.
Central Coast Brewing, Inc.	North State Pump & Electric
Chaffin Farms	Oak Ridge Cabinets, Inc.
Chaffin Harvesting	Red Bluff Motor Sports
Colusa Golf & Country Club	SBC Delivers
DaCosta Farms, LLC	The McConnell Foundation
Eddie Axner Construction, Inc.	Turtle Bay Exploration Park
Farmlink Project	Turtle Bay Holdings, Inc.
Fior di Sole, LLC	Walberg, Inc.
Foods Etc.	Wylatti Resource Mgmt., Inc.
Geo Aggregates	

## Thank You 2024 Sponsors

