

The Bi-Monthly

# HARVEST

December 2024 Edition

## CONTENTS

UnitedAg Townhall  
Virtual Meeting

UnitedAg Recognized as a  
2024 Top Work Place

2024 Ambassador Awards &  
2025-26 Board of Trustees  
Annual Election

AEF Scholarship Programs  
& Annual Silent Auction

New Health Benefits Portal &  
UnitedAg Benefits Connect App

New Mental Health Benefits in 2025  
& UnitedAg Walks NAMI Walk

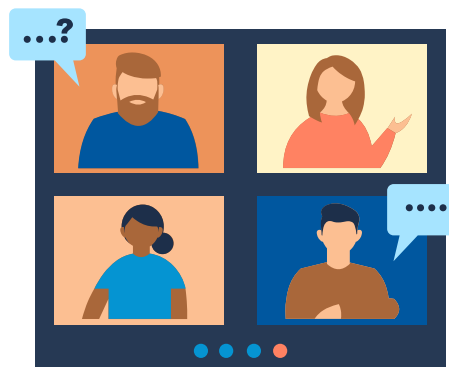
Fourth Quarter Advocacy Update

AgSafe: The ABCs of ATVs

INSPIRE Annual Conference &  
Latest This is Ag! Episodes

New Members, Upcoming  
Events & 2025 Sponsors

## TOWNHALL Virtual Meeting



### Reserve Your Spot for the UnitedAg Townhall!

If you haven't yet secured your spot, now is the time! Join us for UnitedAg's first Townhall Webinar of the new year and be part of this exciting opportunity to connect and engage.

Tune in to hear directly from our leadership team as we share important updates and provide an exclusive preview of what's ahead for 2025. This session will cover key developments, our strategic vision for the year, and initiatives designed to better support you and the agricultural community.

Don't miss this opportunity to gain insights, ask questions, and start the year informed and inspired. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Details:** Tuesday, January 14th from 8:00 am - 9:00 am

**Location:** Zoom Webinar

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



## We've Been Recognized for Our People-First Culture.

We have some very exciting news to share with you. UnitedAg has been recognized as a Top Workplaces 2024 winner by the Orange County Register. This prestigious award is based solely on employee feedback collected through a confidential survey conducted by Energage, LLC, a leading employee engagement technology partner. The survey evaluates key aspects of workplace culture, including themes like feeling Respected & Supported, Enabled to Grow, and Empowered to Execute.

"At UnitedAg, we are committed to creating an environment where our employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to grow," said Chana Hauben, Vice President of Human Resources. "This recognition reflects the passion and dedication of our entire team, and we are honored to be named a Top Workplace."



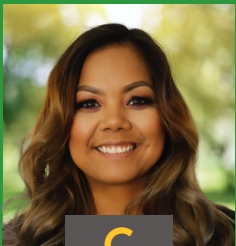
## Our Roots Run Deep

UnitedAg's Roots define and embody our culture, providing a framework for every team member to uniquely contribute to its success. These guiding principles ensure the organization remains grounded and thriving through all seasons.

Together, UnitedAg embodies these values to C.U.L.T.I.V.A.T.E success and innovation.

## Team Members Who Exemplify Our ROOTS

At UnitedAg, we celebrate the dedication and passion of our team members, whose contributions have shaped our organization's success. From 3 to 24 years of service, these individuals have elevated our workplace culture and positively impacted our members. Today, we honor them as they step into new roles, showcasing their leadership, innovation, and ability to inspire. Please join us in celebrating their remarkable achievements and wishing them continued success in their newly appointed positions. They exemplify what it means to grow, thrive, and make a difference at UnitedAg.

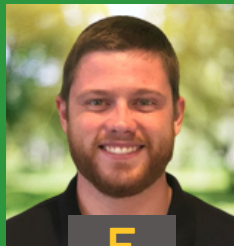


### Channy Lee

Dir., Group Administration  
24 Years

"There's always room for improvement no matter how long you've been doing things. Technology evolves, and so must we!"

**C**  
Can Do  
Attitude



### Dayne Miller

Director, IT  
7 years

"We have to grow as a team to push into the future and that all starts with empowering each other. All we can do is try harder tomorrow."

**E**  
Empower  
Each Other



### Peggy Plair

Director, Claims  
3.5 years

"Trust is the foundation of working relationships and cooperation, allowing us to be vulnerable and open without the need for defensiveness."

**L**  
Listen to  
Yourself



# 2024 Ambassador Awards

UnitedAg is proud to announce the recipients of the 2024 Ambassador Awards, honoring remarkable individuals who have shown exemplary leadership and dedication to health advocacy within the agricultural community.

Since its inception in 2019, the Ambassador Program has built a supportive network of health advocates committed to enhancing the well-being of their peers and shaping the future of their organizations. This year, we recognize three outstanding ambassadors for their achievements in the categories of Innovator, Improvement, and Influencer:

- **Veronica Blanco, Innovative Produce** - Ag Influencer Award
- **Rocio Rodriguez, Innovative Produce** - Ag Influencer Award
- **Cristina Lane, Nichols Farms** - Ag Innovator Award

These incredible winners will be celebrated at the 45th Annual Conference Dinner Dance, where we'll honor their contributions to advancing health advocacy in agriculture.



**Veronica Blanco**  
*Innovative Produce*  
**Ag Influencer Award**



**Rocio Rodriguez**  
*Innovative Produce*  
**Ag Influencer Award**



**Cristina Lane**  
*Nichols Farms*  
**Ag Innovator Award**

Looking to make a lasting impact in your organization and the agricultural community? Learn more about UnitedAg’s Member Ambassador Program and how you can join this incredible initiative. Explore the program and discover how it empowers individuals to lead health advocacy efforts and support their peers’ well-being.

Visit [unitedag.org/ambassador](https://unitedag.org/ambassador) to learn more or to join the program today!

## 2025-2026 Board of Trustees Annual Election

As part of United Agricultural Benefit Trust’s (UABT’s) legal compliance, its Board of Trustees must stand for election every two (2) years.

The Board of Trustees is elected by UABT’s participating employers. The Trustees must be owners, partners, Officers, Directors, or employees of one or more employers participating in UABT. As fiduciaries, they have complete fiscal control over UABT and are responsible for all administration and operations. Candidates for the UABT Board of Trustees were nominated by UABT’s Executive Committee.

Electronic and paper ballots were sent out the first week of December to Regular members in good standing. The Board of Trustees for 2025/2026 will be announced and installed at their February 2025 board meeting.

For more information, please email [membership@unitedag.org](mailto:membership@unitedag.org).







## AEF Scholarship Applications Closing Soon – Apply by December 31st!

Time is running out to apply for UnitedAg’s Educational and Vocational Scholarship Programs! These programs, established to support the educational goals of UnitedAg members, their employees, and their dependents.

Since 1989, UnitedAg has awarded scholarships to advance education, provide financial assistance, and foster leadership development. In 2000, the Agribusiness Education Foundation (AEF) was created as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and has since granted over \$1.9 million to more than 1,100 students for post-secondary and vocational education.

### Cultivating the Next Generation of Ag Leaders

UnitedAg is committed to supporting the future of agriculture by providing financial assistance to students pursuing college or university degrees in any field of study. Open exclusively to students affiliated with active UnitedAg member companies (Regular or Associate level). This year, 40 scholarships totaling \$86,000 will be awarded to deserving students.

### Financial Assistance for Vocational Studies

Are you or someone in your organization pursuing agriculture-specific education or training? UnitedAg is proud to offer the Vocational Scholarship, providing up to \$10,000 in financial assistance to support vocational studies at certified trade schools, vocational schools, or other institutions. This opportunity is exclusive to employees affiliated with active UnitedAg members (Regular or Associate level).

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

## Join us on the “Road to \$2 Million” by contributing to the AEF Silent Auction!

Be a part of something impactful! UnitedAg’s Agribusiness Education Foundation (AEF) is hosting its annual Silent Auction to support scholarships for students pursuing careers in agriculture and related fields. Since 1980, we’ve awarded nearly \$1.9 million, empowering the next generation of agribusiness leaders.

### Here’s how you can help us reach our \$2 million milestone:

- **Donate an Auction Item:** Unique experiences, gift baskets, premium products—every contribution counts!
- **Make a Direct Donation:** Support future ag leaders with a financial gift to the foundation.

Your generosity fuels the dreams of deserving students and paves the way for brighter futures in agribusiness. Donate today!

Learn more about our silent auction and programs online at [futureagleaders.org](https://futureagleaders.org).



### Scan to Donate

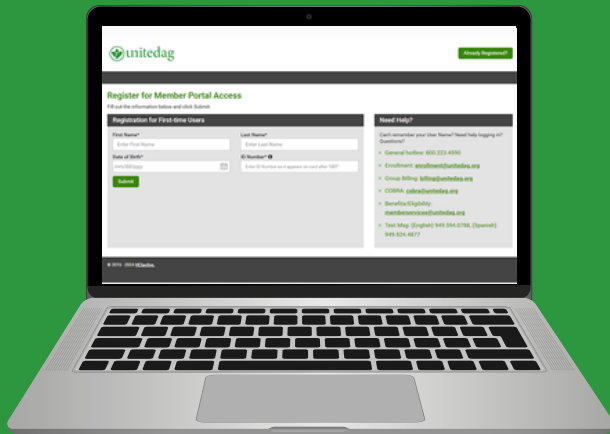


[unitedag.org/silentauction](https://unitedag.org/silentauction)



# Discover UnitedAg's New Health Benefits Portal

## Launching January 1, 2025



We're thrilled to introduce our intuitive Health Benefits Portal, designed to revolutionize the way you manage your health benefits. Launching on January 1, 2025, this cutting-edge platform offers a seamless and user-friendly experience, providing you with instant access to essential health plan information and powerful tools to take charge of your healthcare.

### Key features of the portal include:

**Intuitive Navigation:** Easily find the information you need with just a few clicks.

**On-Demand Tools:** Access your benefits, claims, and healthcare resources anytime, anywhere.

**Enhanced Convenience:** Simplify your healthcare management with an all-in-one platform tailored for your needs.

Whether you're checking coverage details, tracking claims, or exploring wellness resources, the Health Benefits Portal is here to make managing your benefits effortless and stress-free.

Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to experience greater ease in managing your health benefits.

## Available Now—Get the New UnitedAg Benefits Connect App

You asked and we responded! Announcing the **UnitedAg Benefits Connect** app, now available for download on both **Apple** and **Android** devices. This innovative app is designed to provide you with instant access to your health benefits, ensuring that you always have your benefits information and identification card handy, wherever you go.

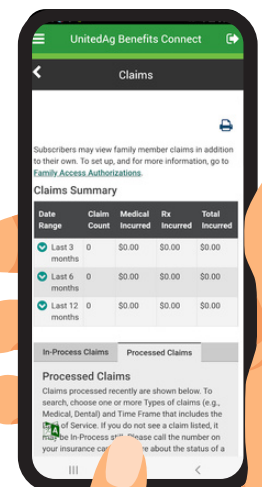
### Key Features:

- **Digital Health ID:** Never leave home without your health benefits ID – it's always accessible on your device.
- **Effortless Management:** View and manage your health benefits in just one click.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** Navigate your benefits and information quickly and intuitively.

Whether you're at a doctor's office, pharmacy, or on the go, the UnitedAg Benefits Connect app ensures you have everything you need to stay connected and in control of your healthcare.

**Want to learn more about the UnitedAg Benefits Connect app and new Health Benefits Portal?** Tune in to the **OPS Forum on December 19th at 9 AM** to get all the details! Register at [unitedag.org/opsforum](https://unitedag.org/opsforum).

Register now to secure your spot and stay ahead with the latest tools to support your team and streamline benefits management.



# Your Mental Health Benefits are Expanding in 2025

**Beginning January 1st, UnitedAg members will have access to the new Spring Health resource focused on Specialty Care.** Spring Health has expanded their platform to encompass Specialty Care to Advance Treatment for High-Acuity Behavioral Health Conditions.

Spring Health data indicates that 1 in 4 members struggle with risks for serious depression, 1 in 10 struggle with SUD, 1 in 15 are at risk for an eating disorder, and 1 in 25 exhibit suicidal or injurious behavior. By enrolling the highest-risk individuals into care, Spring Health's solution increases their likelihood of successful treatment tenfold at one-tenth the cost of traditional acute care options. The solution also helps employers address the highest-acuity cases that account for 80 percent of their behavioral health spend.

**Stay tuned for more information about the new Specialty Care resource!**

Spring Health

## Spring Health Specialty Care Program

**Rapid Access to Best-in-Class Care for Complex and Acute Behavioral Health Conditions**

Specialty-trained Care Navigators use results from each precision mental health assessment to address the needs of high-risk members early, helping to identify specific goals and guiding them to the right level of care, including longitudinal support to keep them healthy.



### Services include:

- Prevention and education
- Self-help tools
- Virtual one-on-one coaching
- Virtual outpatient treatment
- Virtual intensive outpatient treatment
- Inpatient residential treatment
- Community and recovery support
- Family counseling & support

### Engagement efforts include:

- Emails
- Flyers
- Messaging templates
- Specialty Care-specific trainings & webinars

## The Spring Health Specialty Care Difference



### Reach

*Proactive outreach based on multiple pathways catches more high-risk members earlier*



### Retain

*Guiding members into right-sized care and regular follow-ups keeps members engaged*



### Recover

*Evidence-based interventions and aftercare mean members get better, and stay better*

# UnitedAg STEPS OUT for Annual NAMI Walk



 **NAMI Walks**



On Saturday, November 16th, the UnitedAg family came together with thirty-five team members, friends, and loved ones to participate in the annual NAMI Walk for Mental Illness. The event took place at the iconic Angel Stadium in Anaheim, CA. Organized by the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**, the NAMI Walk is a cherished annual tradition that brings communities together to show their unwavering support for individuals living with mental illness. For UnitedAg, this event held special significance as it honored our members who courageously battle mental illness each and every day.

The collective effort of our team and participants at the NAMI Walk was truly inspiring. We are excited to share that the event raised over \$200,000, which will go toward advocacy and support for the millions of Americans living with mental illness. These funds will also bolster grassroots initiatives aimed at improving the lives of those affected by mental health challenges. For more information about our involvement in community events or our ongoing commitment to mental illness awareness and advocacy, please contact [membership@unitedag.org](mailto:membership@unitedag.org).





# The ABC's of a Successful ATV Safety Program

By Theresa Kiehn, President of AgSafe



In today's agricultural industry, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) have become indispensable tools for managing a wide variety of operations where their versatility is invaluable. Since their introduction in the 1980s, ATVs have revolutionized farm work, offering a faster and more efficient way to navigate challenging terrains, transport supplies, inspect crops, and perform other vital tasks. Their ability to access hard-to-reach areas has made them a favorite among agricultural operations, enabling greater productivity.

However, their widespread use also brings significant risks, including rollover incidents, collisions, and operator injuries. These hazards underscore the importance of understanding how to operate ATVs safely, adhering to regulatory requirements, and implementing effective safety measures. By combining proper training, maintenance, and protective equipment, agricultural operations can harness the benefits of ATVs while minimizing the potential dangers with their use.

## THE LAW

ATVs used for agricultural operations are subject to different regulations compared to recreational use. Recreational use falls under California Vehicle Code 38503, enforceable by local law enforcement and the California Highway Patrol. For agricultural operations, jurisdiction falls to Cal/OSHA, guided by the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 8, Section 3664, which specifies operating rules for agricultural equipment. For detailed information, visit [CCR Title 8, Section 3664](#).

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF AN ATV SAFETY PROGRAM

CCR, Title 8, Section 3664 outlines safety directives for operating equipment. A written ATV safety program must include safe operation guidelines, maintenance protocols, pre-inspection checklists, required personal protective equipment (PPE), and emergency response protocols. Employees must be trained in these components and educated on ATV operation.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF AN ATV SAFETY PROGRAM

To ensure safe ATV operation as outlined in CCR, Title 8, Section 3664, avoid operating near ditches, embankments, holes, or steep slopes, and reduce speed on turns, slopes, or rough surfaces. Always maintain situational awareness, especially near row ends, roads, and trees, and operate smoothly without jerky movements. Passengers are not allowed, and equipment must only hitch to approved drawbar and hitch points. When stopped, secure brakes and engage park locks. Operators should conduct daily pre-inspections using a checklist to assess tires, wheels, controls, cables, lights, oil, fuel levels, brakes, and emergency kits, documenting issues for supervisors to review and address promptly. Employers must provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including a U.S. DOT-approved helmet, eye protection, gloves, boots, long-sleeved clothing, and high-visibility gear, ensuring all PPE is provided at no cost to employees.

## NOW WHAT?

Before the busy season, take time to implement a comprehensive ATV safety program. California leads the nation in annual ATV fatalities, highlighting the risks of inadequate safety measures. Protect your employees by prioritizing safety now. For more information, contact AgSafe at [agsafe.org](https://agsafe.org) or 209.526.4400.

**Note:** *This is not a complete list of elements. A complete ATV safety program must include company-specific protocol, hazards, unique identifiers, and other applicable processes unique to each individual operation.*



# Fourth Quarter Advocacy Update

By Jayson Welter, General Counsel, UnitedAg



Each year UnitedAg's Advocacy Committee sets its legislative priorities with input from our membership. This year, we continued to focus on healthcare, PAGA, water, pesticides, labor and wage issues at the state level and to monitor immigration and H2-A regulations at the federal level. Additionally, with this being an election year, we worked to support candidates that will be allies in Sacramento and Washington D.C.

As usual, it was an interesting year in Sacramento. This year there were 2124 bills introduced, slightly fewer than in 2023 but still an unbelievable number. 991 Bills made it to the Governor's desk with him vetoing 183 of them, a veto percentage of 18%.

We spent the year advocating for and against legislation, much of which was changed and amended in the last few days of session. However, one bill that was changed for the positive was AB 1963 which was originally proposed to ban Paraquat. The bill that was signed now requires a scientific review of the chemical by DPR by 2029. Senator Caballero's SB 366 was sent to the Governor's desk to create a threshold and target for water storage in California's water plan but the Governor vetoed the bill because it conflicted with his plan.

A bill which has received a lot of attention and miscommunication is SB 399. The new California law attempts to prohibit mandatory employer meetings regarding labor organizations known as captive audience meetings. Specifically, an employer is prohibited from subjecting or threatening to subject an employee to discharge, discrimination, or retaliation because the employee declines to attend an employer-sponsored meeting or refuses to listen to any communications with the employer where the

purpose is to communicate the employer's opinion about religious or political matters which includes labor organization. There continues to be a lot of questions about the boundaries of what an employer can and cannot say. Hopefully, there will be some clarity in the new year.


Last, another bill that we advocated for was Senator Dahle's SB 1423 which had bipartisan support in both the Assembly and Senate. This bill established cost-based reimbursement community hospitals when seeing Medi-Cal patients. This would prevent hospitals with a large number of Medi-Cal patients from operating at a loss. The good news is that this bill did get signed into law, however, the bad news is the implementation is delayed until 2026. Hopefully, the Distressed Hospital Loan Program can keep these struggling hospitals alive until this law is implemented.

It was an election year and UnitedAg was active in supporting candidates and evaluating ballot proposals. One proposal we spoke out in support of was Proposition 35. While many of our struggling rural hospitals have been helped by the Distressed Hospital Loan Program, it does not address the root cause of their financial struggles which, in most cases, is the inadequacy of Medi-Cal payments. Hospitals lose money when seeing Medi-Cal patients and our rural and agricultural communities have a high percentage of Medi-Cal patients, and a low percentage of patients covered by commercial insurance. Many of the hospitals in our rural communities are struggling, and our agricultural communities are already underserved and lack access to healthcare. To address the issue, Prop 35 creates a stable funding mechanism for access to healthcare, specifically, increased Medi-Cal payments.

*Continued on the next page*







Prop 35 does not create a new tax, rather, it is an extension of an existing tax on health insurance companies. However, Prop 35 does have one very important improvement to the current tax, which is accountability. Prop 35 ensures that the money raised by the tax will be used for healthcare. Previously, the money raised by this tax was routinely used for other purposes not related to healthcare. Prop 35 ensures that this tax will continue and will be allocated for its intended purpose -- access to healthcare.

**Below is a short summary of each Proposition that affected healthcare or agriculture:**

- **Proposition 4:** Issue natural resources bonds to authorize the state to borrow \$10 billion to respond to climate-related disasters and help ensure clean drinking water. Passed 59.8%
- **Proposition 32:** Raise minimum wage to increase California's hourly minimum wage from \$16 to \$18, with annual adjustments for inflation. Failed 50.7%
- **Proposition 34:** Restrict spending by healthcare groups to require healthcare providers to spend most of their revenue from federal prescription discounts on direct patient care. Passed 50.9%
- **Proposition 35:** Permanently fund Medi-Cal Healthcare Services to extend a tax on managed health insurance plans, funding Medi-Cal healthcare services for low-income residents. Passed 67.9%

As for the election, UnitedAg was proud to support candidates who will fight for healthcare, agriculture and our communities in Sacramento.

Below are the candidates we supported this year and the outcome:

**Alexandra "Ali" Macedo**

Assembly District 33, **Won 62.9%**

**Assemblymember Esmeralda Soria**

District 27, **Won 53.9%**

**Assemblymember Dr. Jasmeet Bains**

District 35, **Won 57.6%**

**Assemblymember Juan Alanis**

District 22, **Won 56.2%**

**Kristie Bruce-Lane**

Assembly District 76, **Lost 46%**

**Catherine Stefani**

Assembly District 19, **Won 60.5%**

**Joey Acuña**

Assembly District 36, **Lost 48.2%**

**Nick Schultz**

Assembly District 44, **Won 65.9%**

**David Tangipa**

Assembly District 8, **Won 53.7%**

UnitedAg values its strong partnerships with advocacy leaders like the National Council of Agricultural Employers, the Agricultural Council of California, and Kahn, Soares & Conway. This year, we proudly joined the Alliance of California Farmers and Ranchers and its Community Fund. Together with these organizations and through our own efforts, we continue to champion agriculture and advance healthcare in our communities.

We encourage everyone to stay informed and engaged in the legislative process next year. For questions or to get involved, contact Jayson Welter at [jwelter@unitedag.org](mailto:jwelter@unitedag.org).



# INSPIRE

2025 Annual Meeting & Conference

March 17-19, 2025

Terranea Resort

Rancho Palos Verdes, CA



It's not too late to secure early-bird pricing for **INSPIRE UnitedAg's 45th Annual Conference**, March 17-19, 2025, happening at the Terranea Resort. Celebrate our Sapphire Anniversary with three dynamic breakout sessions, an innovative keynote speaker, and prime networking opportunities. Connect with industry leaders and explore new ways to be inspired!

The conference promises to deliver a unique blend of tradition and forward-thinking strategies designed to energize and inspire attendees. Don't miss the unveiling of special anniversary highlights that pay tribute to UnitedAg's history while looking boldly toward the future.

In honor of UnitedAg's 45th anniversary, take advantage of **enhanced sponsorships** featuring expanded signage and exclusive branding during key moments of the Conference. Gain valuable exposure and align your brand with UnitedAg's legacy of collaboration and innovation.

**For more details, watch our exciting video trailer, explore our website and browse the digital brochure.**



## INSPIRE

2025 Annual Meeting & Conference

March 17-19 | Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

[Click here to watch the sneak peek!](#)

### Episode 36: Stan Welsh

*UnitedAg Health & Wellness Clinics*

### Episode 35: Veronica Urzua-Alvero

*Church Brothers Farms*

### Episode 34: Jayson Welter

*UnitedAg*

### Episode 33: Charles Ernst

*CoreVantage*

### Episode 32: Christopher Valadez

*Grower-Shipper Association*

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THE HARVEST | DECEMBER 2024

## Upcoming Events Webinars & Meetings

**Maximize Your Membership  
with UnitedAg**

December 18 at 10:00 am

**OPS Forum: New Health  
Portal Demo & Training**

December 19 at 9:00 am

**Townhall Virtual Meeting**

January 14, 2025 at 8:00 am

**2025 APMA Forum**

February 5-7, 2025

Monterey, CA

**AgSafe ACTIVATE25 Conference**

February 25-27, 2025

Monterey, CA

**2025 World Ag Expo**

February 11-13, 2025

Tulare, CA

**UnitedAg Annual  
Conference *INSPIRE***

March 17-19, 2025

Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

Visit our website to register

[unitedag.org/events](https://unitedag.org/events)

## Welcome New Members to the UnitedAg Family

AgRobotics, Inc.

American Pistachio Growers

Azcal Management Co.

Berco Redwood, Inc.

Berry Joe Corporation

Cafe Tori Investments, LLC

Central California Implement  
Company

Chaffin Farms

Chaffin Harvesting

Colusa Golf & Country Club

DaCosta Farms, LLC

Del Reka Corp.

Eddie Axner Construction, Inc.

Farmlink Project

Fior di Sole, LLC

Geo Aggregates

Great Harvest Farms, LLC

Higgins Pest and Weed

HPS Tech California, LLC

Johnny On The Spot Portable

Toilets, Inc.

Keith's Meat Market, Inc.

Mead Orchards, Inc.

North State Pump and Electric

Nuno Iron and Mfg., Inc.

Oak Ridge Cabinets, Inc.

S and L Meat Sales Company

Stone Land Company

Supreme Almonds of California

The McConnell Foundation

Turtle Bay Exploration Park

Turtle Bay Holdings, Inc.

Visinoni Brothers, Inc.

Wylatti Resource Management

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