

# The Harvest

CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE, GROWING COMMUNITY

## Spring Edition

YOUR UNITEDAG CONNECTION TO HEALTH, AG, AND COMMUNITY

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## Editor's Note

The Spring edition of The Harvest Quarterly highlights key events, seasonal initiatives, and company updates that are important to share with our broader membership, partners, vendors, sponsors, and agricultural community.

As we recognize May as Mental Health Awareness Month and celebrate the final month of spring, we are reminded of the importance of supporting both personal well-being and professional growth within our industry. Agriculture is rooted in resilience, and fostering a healthy, connected community remains central to our mission.

This edition features the latest developments in agriculture, healthcare, leadership, member programs, and community engagement showcasing the innovation and collaboration that continue to move our industry forward. We are also proud to recognize our valued sponsors and partners whose support helps make these initiatives and shared resources possible.

Together, let's continue planting the seeds of knowledge, collaboration, and wellness across our agricultural community while cultivating opportunities for growth and success for all.

*Maribel Ochoa*

**MARIBEL OCHOA**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# MENTAL HEALTH IN AGRICULTURE: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE



**May is Mental Health Awareness Month**—a time to recognize that mental health is just as important as physical health, especially within the agricultural community. In an industry built on resilience, sacrifice, and perseverance, conversations around stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional well-being are often pushed aside. Yet mental health is not something we should only discuss during times of crisis; it should remain top of mind every day.

For generations, agriculture has carried an unspoken expectation of strength and endurance. Farmers, ranchers, farmworkers, and agricultural professionals often work long hours under intense pressure, facing challenges that are largely outside of their control: weather conditions, market volatility, labor shortages, rising costs, and unpredictable economic conditions. These ongoing stressors can take a significant toll on emotional and mental well-being.

Unfortunately, stigma continues to prevent many individuals in agriculture from seeking help. Too often, mental health struggles are viewed as weakness rather than what they truly are: a human response to overwhelming stress and responsibility. Changing this narrative is essential. Asking for support should be seen as a sign of strength, not failure.

The statistics surrounding mental health in agriculture are both sobering and urgent. According to the CDC, the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting industry has one of the highest suicide rates among all industries in the United States. A 2023 CDC report found that male workers in agriculture experienced a suicide rate of 47.9 per 100,000 workers, significantly higher than the national average for working adults.

Additional research from the National Rural Health Association indicates that farmers are estimated to be 3.5 times more likely to die by suicide than the general population. Studies have also shown that many farmers experience chronic stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion due to financial uncertainty, isolation, and the demanding nature of agricultural work.

One of the greatest barriers to care in rural communities is access. Many agricultural regions have limited mental health services, and even fewer providers understand the unique culture and pressures of farming life. This makes community awareness, education, and support systems even more important.



*Healing takes time, and asking for help is a courageous step.” — Mariska Hargitay*

### Changing the conversation around mental health begins with simple but meaningful actions:

- **Checking in** on family members, coworkers, and neighbors
- **Encouraging** open and honest conversations
- **Reducing judgment** around seeking help
- **Recognizing signs** of stress and burnout early
- **Promoting resources** and support services within agricultural communities

Mental health affects everyone differently, and struggles are not always visible. A person may continue showing up to work, caring for their crops, livestock, employees, or family while quietly carrying overwhelming emotional burdens. Creating a culture where people feel safe talking about their challenges can save lives.

As we recognize Mental Health Awareness Month this May, let us continue working together to remove the stigma surrounding mental health in agriculture. By prioritizing emotional well-being, encouraging compassion, and supporting one another year-round, we can help cultivate healthier individuals, stronger families, and more resilient agricultural communities.

If you or someone you know is struggling, support is available. **Call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 for free, confidential support 24 hours a day.**

### Sources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Suicide Rates by Industry and Occupation — National Vital Statistics System, United States, 2021
- Rural Health Information Hub – Farmer Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- Psychology Today – Understanding Our Agricultural Behavioral Health Crisis
- Food Tank – We’re Ignoring a Major Public Health Crisis—Farmer Mental Health
- The Packer – A Silent Epidemic: Confronting Mental Health in U.S. Agriculture

### UnitedAg Resources

- HealthChats: [unitedag.org/healthchats](https://unitedag.org/healthchats)
- Spring Health: [unitedag.springhealth.com](https://unitedag.springhealth.com)
- Teladoc Health: [teladoc.com/unitedag](https://teladoc.com/unitedag)

# AMERICAN CANCER ASSOCIATION ANNUAL FASHION SHOW

UnitedAg was honored to attend and proudly sponsor the American Cancer Society's Monterey **Celebration of Life Fashion Show** on April 17, 2026, at The Inn at Spanish Bay in Pebble Beach. This year's elegant Old Hollywood-themed event brought together community leaders, survivors, advocates, and supporters for an unforgettable evening celebrating strength, hope, and resilience.

Since its inception, the fashion show has **raised more than \$3 million to support cancer research**, patient transportation services, and the American Cancer Society's 24/7 cancer helpline. UnitedAg was proud to stand alongside the community in supporting the mission to end cancer as we know it and help provide critical resources for patients and families throughout Monterey County.



## A NEW CANCER SUPPORT BENEFIT



### What is benefitSMART?

UnitedAg's benefitsSMART (bSMART) Cancer Solutions puts members first, offering a patient-centered approach to cancer and autoimmune care. Members gain faster access to treatment, expert second opinions, and personalized guidance, empowering them with the knowledge and support needed to make informed healthcare decisions.

With \$0 out-of-pocket costs for covered services, bSMART also helps ease the financial burden, allowing members to focus on their health and recovery.

If you would like to learn more about bSMART Cancer Solutions you can contact our Member Services Team and download the flyer.



No Financial Burden – \$0 Out-of-Pocket for Covered Services



Faster Access to Care



Education, Support & Options – Personalized guidance every step.



Expert Second Opinions – Confidence in your treatment decisions.

# Introducing Hinge Health Through Teladoc Health

## Virtual Musculoskeletal Care Designed to Help You Move, Feel, and live better

We're excited to announce a new benefit available through Teladoc Health: Hinge Health, a personalized virtual care program designed to help you reduce pain, recover from injuries, and improve mobility all from the comfort of home.

Whether you're dealing with everyday joint and muscle aches, recovering after an injury, or experiencing pelvic pain and discomfort, Hinge Health connects you with expert care and support tailored to your needs.

## Specialized Care, Personalized for You

Hinge Health combines virtual physical therapy, gentle exercise therapy, educational resources, and dedicated support from real healthcare professionals who are focused on helping you feel your best.

## With Hinge Health, you can get help for:

- Back and neck pain
- Joint and muscle discomfort
- Recovery from injuries or surgery
- Pelvic health concerns
- Preventing future pain and stiffness

## Convenient Care from Anywhere

Your program is personalized to your goals and schedule, making it easier to fit care into your daily life. Through the app, you'll receive guided exercise sessions, progress tracking, and ongoing support from licensed physical therapists and health coaches.

No commuting. No waiting rooms. Just expert care when and where you need it.

## Why Employees Love Hinge Health

- Convenient virtual access to care
- Personalized treatment plans
- Support from real physical therapists and coaches
- Easy-to-follow exercise programs
- Designed to help reduce pain and improve movement

## Get Started Today

If joint or muscle pain has been slowing you down, Hinge Health can help you take the next step toward feeling better. Stay tuned for enrollment details and information on how to activate your Hinge Health benefit through Teladoc Health.



Scan the QR code or visit:  
[hinge.health/unitedag-join](https://hinge.health/unitedag-join)

\*Not eligible for HSA plans.

\*Eligibility to receive Hinge Health Enso is based on the program in which you are placed, fulfillment of clinical eligibility criteria, and completion of a qualifying number of exercise sessions.

Members and dependents 18+ enrolled in an UnitedAg medical plan are eligible.



# REDDING CLINIC GRAND OPENING

By Chandra Miller  
Photos by Essence Photography



UnitedAg launched its latest wellness center in Redding, California, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and community open house on May 13, 2026, in partnership with the Redding Chamber of Commerce. The event also marked UnitedAg's official membership in the Redding Chamber, underscoring its commitment to the local community.

"We are proud to celebrate the opening of our Redding Wellness Clinic alongside our Chamber partners and community leaders," said **Kirti Mutatkar, President & CEO of UnitedAg**. "This milestone reflects our continued commitment to improving access to care, supporting the agricultural workforce, and strengthening the communities we serve."

The wellness center, located at 1950 Court Street, Suite C, expands access to care and addresses the unique health care challenges faced by agricultural workers and residents throughout the region.

UnitedAg is a member-owned agricultural trade association dedicated to providing innovative health benefits, advocacy, and clinical services tailored to the agricultural industry. Through its growing network of wellness centers and provider partnerships, UnitedAg continues to expand access to affordable care while supporting the long-term vitality of agriculture across California.

Dozens of guests attended the event, including community leaders, agricultural partners, Redding Chamber officials, and representatives from the offices of Senator Megan Dahle and State Assemblymember Heather Hadwick. Attendees toured the facility, met with staff, and learned more about the health care services available through the clinic.

**For more information about UnitedAg clinics visit: [unitedag.org/wellness](https://unitedag.org/wellness)**



# REDDING WELLNESS CLINIC

UnitedAg continues its commitment to the agricultural community with the opening of its seventh new Health & Wellness Clinic in expanding access to high-quality, culturally responsive care for farmworkers and their families.

## Comprehensive Care, Close to Home

The Redding clinic offers:

- Primary care
- Preventive screenings
- Wellness programs
- Vaccinations

**Open 3 days a week Wednesday - Friday, the clinic makes it easier for patients to get care when they need it most.**

## Benefits of our Clinic

- \$0 Copay for services provided by clinic
- No deductible for services rendered at clinic
- Short wait times to seek medical care
- On-site lab services also available

*HSA plan members: \$40 in-person  
\$25 virtual until deductible is met, then \$0.*

## Location:

1950 Court St, Suite C  
Redding, CA 96001

## Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday  
9:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Closed for lunch from 1 to 2 pm\*

## Schedule an appointment

530.241.5670

**For more information, or to book an in-person or virtual care appointment, visit [ua.clinic](http://ua.clinic).**





# AEF REGIONAL AWARDS

By Chandra Miller  
Photos by Letty Sloma Photography  
& Roya Ebtehaj Photography



The Agricultural Education Foundation Scholarship Awards were presented to students throughout California's vast agricultural community.

Among the top recipients in Tulare County were students Maria Zavala of Grimmius Cattle Company, Martina Chairez of Nichols Farms, and Madison Williams of Moovin Transport, Inc., who received the Women in Agriculture Scholarship. Additional, Tulare County scholarship recipients included Alyssa Chairez, Emily De Alejandro, Hayden Williams, Kaden Saltzman, Kenna Saltzman, Maria Huipo-Pedra, Briella Pedro, and Eric Shiers.

In Santa Cruz County students Kalea Dorf-Cardenas of Rijk Zwaan, Serafin Martinez of Alta Vista Farms, Sergio Martinez of Alta Vista Farms, and Christopher Rodriguez of Plant Sciences, Inc. were awarded AEF scholarships.

Additionally, in Santa Barbara County, students to receive AEF scholarships included Leo Ramirez of Rancho Guadalupe, LLC, Jaden Van Wingerden of Westland Floral Company, Eva-Juliana Luna of Rancho Guadalupe, LLC, and Laura Bucio of Rancho Guadalupe, LLC, who received both an educational and vocational scholarship.



Other top recipients were selected in Monterey County. They included students Neassa Kelly of Boutonnet Farms, Anjanette Niemi of Vegetable Growers Supply, and Carl Nielsen of Bullet Ranches, Inc., who received the William C. Goodrich Scholarship. Additional Monterey County scholarship recipients included Nolan Borel, Luke Borel, Haley Pilcher, Madison Pilcher, Caleb Randall, Jasmine Ramirez, and Elenis Tamayo.

In each region, these students were honored for their academic achievement and dedication to agriculture that reflects the values and emerging leadership UnitedAg seeks to cultivate through the AEF Scholarship Program. To date, UnitedAg has awarded \$2.1 million in scholarships to over 1,200 students.

For more information about UnitedAg's scholarship programs and educational initiatives, please visit: [unitedag.org/aef](https://unitedag.org/aef)



# AEF AWARDS AT THE ANNUAL GALA

By Chandra Miller  
Photos by Martin V. Photography



At the Annual Gala Awards Dinner, the Agricultural Education Foundation Scholarship Awards were presented to outstanding students and future leaders in agriculture. This year, UnitedAg awarded more than \$100,000 in scholarships to 40 students representing agricultural companies across California and Arizona, including \$36,500 presented during the Annual Awards Gala.

The Alex Drollinger Memorial Scholarship Award, honoring the late UnitedAg Regional Vice President of Sales for Northern California, was awarded to Wyatt Davidson of UnitedAg and Cristian Vargas of Braga Fresh Family Farms, who each received \$5,000.

Marcus Montgomery of Almont Orchards Incorporated received the Maurice McMillian Memorial Scholarship Award, the top scholarship honor presented annually by AEF, receiving \$10,000.

Educational Scholarship recipients included Laura Bucio of Rancho Guadalupe, LLC (\$1,000), Eva-Juliana Luna of Rancho Guadalupe, LLC (\$1,000), Jaden Van Wingerden of Westland Floral Co. (\$2,000), Leo Ramirez of Rancho Guadalupe, LLC (\$3,000), Max Landon of Buzz's Bees (\$3,000), and Adeline Scott of Basin Irrigation and Drainage Authority (\$4,000).

Vocational Scholarship recipients included Laura Bucio of Rancho Guadalupe, LLC (\$1,000) and Anjanette Niemi of Vegetable Growers Supply (\$1,500).

For more information about UnitedAg's scholarship programs and educational initiatives, please visit:

[unitedag.org/aef](http://unitedag.org/aef)





# 2026 ALEX DROLLINGER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

By Maribel Ochoa  
Photos by Martin V. Photography

This year, at our 46th Annual Convention and Meeting Gala, we proudly celebrated a meaningful milestone the presentation of the very first **Alex Drollinger Memorial Award** to **Cristian Vargas** and **Wyatt Davidson**. More than a scholarship, this award represents the enduring legacy of a man whose passion, integrity, and unwavering dedication left a lasting mark on UnitedAg and the agricultural community.

For more than 20 years, Alex Drollinger served with heart, purpose, and a deep commitment to helping others succeed. Beginning this year, a \$5,000 scholarship will be awarded annually to students who embody the qualities that defined Alex's life: tenacity, perseverance, and determination. In recognition of their exceptional accomplishments and promising futures, the Board proudly honored both **Cristian** and **Wyatt** as inaugural recipients of this special award.

One of the evening's most touching moments came as Rachelle Drollinger shared heartfelt words with the recipients, reflecting on Alex's passion for serving others and encouraging these young leaders to pursue their dreams with compassion and purpose. Her message was a powerful reminder that true leadership is measured not only by success, but by the lives we uplift along the way.

Alex's legacy lives on through the people he inspired, the community he strengthened, and now through the students who will carry his values forward for generations to come. We are deeply grateful to the individuals and organizations whose generosity helped make the Alex Drollinger Memorial Scholarship Award possible and continue to invest in the future of agriculture.

Congratulations to Cristian Vargas and Wyatt Davidson. May you continue to lead with the same heart and dedication that made Alex so unforgettable.



# 2025 AMBASSADOR AWARDS

By Maribel Ochoa  
Photos by Martin V. Photography

Behind every strong agricultural community are individuals who lead with heart, inspire others, and create meaningful change. This year, we proudly celebrate our Ambassador Award recipients' leaders whose passion, dedication, and innovation continue to strengthen the communities we serve.

**Maria Barrios**, recipient of the **Ag Improvement Award**, has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to continuous improvement and education. Through her leadership and support, she has helped create positive outcomes for *Prime Time* employees and their families, making a lasting impact on those around her.

Recipients of the **Ag Influencer Award**, **Veronica Luna** and **Laura Bucio**, have used their voices and leadership to uplift and inspire others across the *Rancho Guadalupe* community. By fostering meaningful connections and advocating for employees and their well-being, they continue to serve as trusted ambassadors and role models.

The **Ag Innovator Award** recognizes *Veronica Blanco* and *Rocio Rodriguez* for their creativity, forward-thinking ideas, and commitment to innovation. Their dedication to improving how we serve our members and communities reflects the vision and progress that continue to move agriculture forward.

Together, these remarkable leaders embody the spirit of service, compassion, and innovation that drives our mission every day. Congratulations to all of our Ambassador Award recipients for helping us continue **Agcelerating** Change and inspiring healthier, stronger communities for the future.





# Inspiring Conversations

By Chandrea Miller / Photos by Martin V. Photography

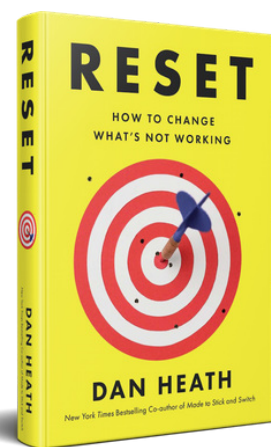
This year's conference brought together an outstanding lineup of guest speakers and industry leaders who shared powerful stories, valuable insights, and forward-thinking perspectives with our community.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Fiona Ma, Dan Heath, Tom Nunes, Dean Noble-Tolla, John Petito, Menahem (Meni) Shikhman, Dhiraj Jeyanandarajan, Louie Brown Jr., Jeff Aiello, Lynn Jacquez, Joshua Walters, and Jaycob Bytel for inspiring meaningful conversations and encouraging new ways of thinking across our industry. We are equally grateful to moderators AJ Cisney, Santiago Martin, and Jayson Welter, whose energy and thoughtful leadership helped guide engaging discussions throughout the conference.

A standout session of the event was presented by New York Times bestselling author Dan Heath, who introduced key ideas from his book *Reset*.

His session challenged attendees to rethink how organizations approach change and progress, exploring why the middle of change efforts can often feel the hardest, how inefficiency can sometimes accelerate innovation, and why traditional “buy-in” may not always be the key to transformation.

Through practical insights and compelling storytelling, Dan encouraged attendees to consider a powerful idea: what if meaningful progress could happen without additional resources? The same people, the same assets — but dramatically better results. His message resonated deeply throughout the conference:



**Yesterday, we were stuck.**

**Today, we reset.**



*AgCelerate*



# A Toast to Agriculture

By Chandrea Miller / Photos by Martin V. Photography

The 46th Annual Meeting & Conference kicked off with memorable wine tours to two of Paso Robles' premier wineries — Pear Valley Vineyards and Hope Family Wines. More than 100 conference guests enjoyed an afternoon of wine tastings, light refreshments, and networking set against the scenic backdrop of California's renowned wine country.

Known for its welcoming atmosphere and award-winning Rhône and Bordeaux varietals, Pear Valley Vineyards offered guests a relaxed tasting experience surrounded by rolling vineyard views. At Hope Family Wines, attendees sampled handcrafted wines from one of Paso Robles' most celebrated family-owned wineries, known for its hospitality and signature Austin Hope Family Wines.

The wine tours provided conference attendees with an opportunity to unwind, build new connections, and strengthen existing relationships within the agricultural community. Guests mingled throughout the afternoon, sharing conversations, laughter, and camaraderie while experiencing the charm and hospitality that make Paso Robles wine country a sought-after destination.

The excursions set the tone for a successful conference centered on collaboration, engagement, and celebrating the people who help move California agriculture forward.

**For more information and to register, visit [unitedagconference.org](https://unitedagconference.org).**



# Celebrating Excellence & Leadership

By Chandrea Miller / Photos by Martin V. Photography

During the Annual Conference, the UnitedAg team proudly recognized outstanding employees during this year's Top Roots Awards, honoring individuals who exemplify dedication, leadership, and service to our members and community.

Congratulations to Bang Nguyen, recipient of the Top Roots Award, for his exceptional commitment, teamwork, and positive impact across the organization. His dedication reflects the values and mission that continue to strengthen UnitedAg and the communities we serve.

We also recognized Georgina Castaneda for an incredible 28 years of service and thanked her for her longstanding dedication, professionalism, and hard work supporting our members on the field to better understand their health benefits.

In addition, UnitedAg is pleased to announce the promotion of Hoda Afshari to Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Hoda joined the UnitedAg team in 2020 as a Staff Accountant and quickly distinguished herself through her strong financial expertise, collaborative leadership style, and commitment to operational excellence. In January 2025, she was promoted to Controller, where she assumed responsibility for overseeing the organization's accounting operations, financial reporting, budgeting processes, compliance, and internal financial controls.

As Controller, Hoda played a critical role in strengthening UnitedAg's financial infrastructure and ensuring sound fiscal management across the organization. She successfully led key financial initiatives, improved reporting efficiencies, supported strategic planning efforts, and provided trusted guidance to leadership teams. Her ability to combine analytical insight with strategic thinking helped position UnitedAg for continued growth and long-term sustainability.

Hoda's exceptional performance, dedication, and leadership in the Controller role made her a natural choice for the position of CFO. In her new role, she will continue helping guide UnitedAg's financial strategy while supporting the organization's mission of serving members and advancing innovative healthcare solutions for the agricultural community.

**"The Impact Awards recognize the incredible dedication and passion of the UnitedAg team,"** said Kirti Mutatkar, President & CEO of UnitedAg. **"Our employees continue to lead with purpose, strengthen our mission, and create meaningful impact for our members and the agricultural community. Their commitment is what drives UnitedAg forward and helps us build a stronger future for generations to come."**

Congratulations to all of our honorees for their remarkable achievements and continued commitment to excellence at UnitedAg.



# PAC Golf Tournament Swings Into Action for a Good Cause

By Chandra Miller / Photos by Martin V. Photography

Conference attendees teed off at the beautiful Hunter Ranch Golf Course in Paso Robles for UnitedAg’s 3rd Annual PAC Golf Tournament, raising funds in support of the UnitedAg State PAC, AgPAC. Set against the scenic hills and vineyards of California’s Central Coast, the tournament brought together members of the agricultural community for a memorable day of golf, networking, and camaraderie.

Golfers began the morning with breakfast before heading out onto Hunter Ranch’s picturesque 18-hole championship course, known for its emerald fairways, oak trees, natural lakes, and vineyard views. Throughout the day, players enjoyed refreshments, a catered lunch, and a variety of on-course contests that added excitement to the tournament. The atmosphere reflected the strong sense of community and support that defines UnitedAg events.

Proceeds from the tournament benefited the UnitedAg State PAC, which supports the election of pro-agriculture candidates to the California State Assembly and Senate, helping ensure a strong voice for California agriculture.

Jayson Welter’s team earned the title of Best Overall Team, finishing the tournament with an impressive score of eight under par.

**“It was a perfect day and a beautiful course,”** Welter said. **“Everyone had a great time and we raised money for the PAC.”**

The tournament also featured men’s and women’s contests for Closest to the Pin and Longest Drive. Christina Morley swept the women’s contests, taking home top honors in both categories.

“Well, technically I was the only woman playing, and I’m a novice golfer,” Morley joked. “That said, I had so much fun and found a new love for the game — I’ll definitely play again next year.”

Sam Eastman won the men’s Closest to the Pin contest, while Jacob Vieira claimed the men’s Longest Drive title. The 3rd Annual PAC Golf Tournament once again proved to be a successful and enjoyable event, bringing together agricultural leaders and supporters for a day of friendly competition, meaningful connections, and advocacy for California agriculture.

Learn more about AgPAC at [unitedag.org/advocacy](https://unitedag.org/advocacy).

# Innovation Launched for Future Pest Management: CAPCA Advances Efforts Addressing California's Rat Infestation

## Rat Infestation Spurs Call for New Pest Management Blueprint



By Ruthann Anderson, California Association of Pest Control Advisers (CAPCA)

Sacramento, CA – California continues to experience a persistent rat infestation, now entering its third consecutive year. The California Association of Pest Control Advisers (CAPCA) has been at the forefront of efforts to address this issue, elevating awareness among key stakeholders alongside longstanding measures such as education, bait station deployments, and ongoing monitoring. Despite these interventions, rats continue to cause damage, underscoring the need for expanded resources and updated pest management strategies across the region.

**Background:** Rat Infestation and Contributing Factors. Rats have historically been a maintenance-rated pest in California and have not received significant funding or large-scale innovation. However, changing conditions — including shifting weather patterns and the abandonment of orchards and vineyards due to economic and policy pressures — have created unintended harbors for pests.

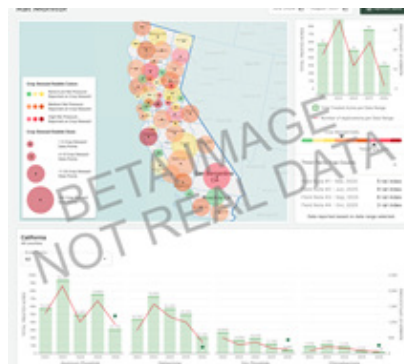
**Challenges:** Regulatory and Resource Gaps  
While robust processes exist for addressing A-rated, invasive pests, maintenance-rated pests lack clear pathways for prioritization. The absence of definitive guidelines for pest populations that grow to infestation levels from agencies like CDPR coupled with a lack of UC resources to quickly prioritize innovation and research for established pests have contributed to the current situation, leaving PCAs without adequate tools to respond efficiently to escalating infestations.

The regulatory environment surrounding pesticide handler requirements and rodenticide mitigations remains ambiguous, further complicating response efforts.

### **CAPCA Innovation: A Blueprint for the Future**

Using anonymized county-level data streams, CAPCA has developed a one-of-a-kind, comprehensive pest-monitoring map in the Crop Steward app to track rat infestation levels across the state. This tool aims to provide PCAs and growers with current reported levels, potential early warning, and the tools and strategic framework needed to combat emerging pest challenges, ensuring the agricultural community remains informed and ready.

Insights gained from current rat monitoring efforts are already informing the development of a broader blueprint to guide responses to maintenance-rated pests. CAPCA plans to expand data integration beyond rats for enhanced real-time pest monitoring and early detection, so that solutions can be found promptly. PCAs can sign up for Crop Steward for free at [cropsteward.com](http://cropsteward.com).





# 2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS - Q2

## West Coast Produce Expo

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May 29  
JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort  
Palm Desert, CA  
More Info: [unitedag.org/events](https://unitedag.org/events)

## OPS Forum: SAIN Mexico Network

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June 10  
Online Webinar  
Register: [unitedag.org/events](https://unitedag.org/events)

## Taste of Redding

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June 14  
Redding City Hall - Sculpture Park  
Redding, CA  
Tickets: [tasteofredding.org](https://tasteofredding.org)

## HealthChats: Nutrition

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July 16  
Online Webinar  
Register: [unitedag.org/healthchats](https://unitedag.org/healthchats)

Synergy  
Growing Stronger Together

47TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
VEA NEWPORT BEACH RESORT & SPA  
NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA  
APRIL 14-15, 2027

TO LEARN MORE VISIT [UNITEDAG.ORG/CONFERENCE](https://UNITEDAG.ORG/CONFERENCE)

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