

February 2026 Salinas Valley California Women for Agriculture (SVCWA) Newsletter



Note from the President

February in the Salinas Valley carries a feeling that is uniquely our own. There's a quiet determination in the fields this time of year—cool mornings, stretches of green across the valley floor as seeds are planted and new life grows, and the steady rhythm of preparation for the busy spring ahead. It's a season of transition, reflection, and anticipation.

Last week's heavy rain certainly reminded us of both the resilience and vulnerability that come with agriculture. While the moisture is welcomed and vital for our groundwater and long-term growing conditions, intense rainfall always brings challenges—field delays, soil saturation, and careful assessments of crop impacts. As always, our growers, farmworkers, and ag professionals have shown adaptability and grit, working thoughtfully to protect both crops and land.

We are also looking ahead to the soon-coming transition of operations from Yuma, Arizona, back to Salinas, California. This seasonal shift is a hallmark of our region's agricultural cycle. As crews, equipment, and operations make their way back to the Valley, there's a renewed energy in the air. The return signals the beginning of another productive Salinas season and reinforces our region's vital role in feeding communities across the country.

Community engagement has been a highlight this month. On February 10, I had the pleasure of speaking with San Benancio 4-H about Monterey County agriculture, the wide variety of careers available within our industry, and how students can find their "spark" as they graduate high school and begin exploring college majors and career paths. It was inspiring to see such curiosity and enthusiasm from the next generation of agricultural leaders.

We're continuing that outreach as board members and volunteers from SVCWA prepare to attend the Monterey County 4-H Fantastic Field Day on February 28. We'll be leading the baking contest rotation and are excited to support youth as they showcase their skills and creativity.

We are proud of the meaningful community engagement we're completing this month and look forward to the many activities ahead. As February unfolds, we are reminded that agriculture is more than an industry—it is a shared commitment, a cycle of renewal, and a community working together.

With appreciation,

Miranda Sampson

President, Salinas Valley California Women for Agriculture



Member Spotlight

Shelly Bracy is from the Salinas Valley and grew up in Prunedale. She currently works at Wilbur Ellis, a pesticide and fertilizer company, as a field scout.

Shelly also attends California State University, Monterey Bay part-time, majoring in Plant and Soil Science, working toward earning her Pest Control Adviser (PCA) license. She is passionate about advancing sustainability in the ag industry.

Before her career in Ag Shelly was a hairstylist for 12 years. During COVID, she made the decision to pursue a new path in agriculture, where she has now been building her career for the past five years.

After learning about CWA through her son's 4-H club, she was inspired to join. Shelly looks forward to contributing wherever she can and continuing to grow within the industry.

Email membership@salinascwa.org if you're interested in being highlighted for our Membership Spotlight for an upcoming month!



2026 Meetings & Events

Our next Board Meeting will be held on March 10, 2026, at 5:30 pm at Visionary Vegetables, 19045 Portola Dr., Suite H, Salinas, CA 93908. Please email salinasvalleycwa@gmail.com if you would like to attend virtually.

We are hard at work setting up farm tours this year. We are looking to have these member tours in April and August and will reach out as soon as dates and times are committed, so make sure you are registered as a member for SVCWA and are reading your emails!

With that, we already have our Scholarship Reception date chosen. Save the date for Sunday, June 14th, from 10 am to 2 pm. Our scholarship reception will be held at the Braga Barn this year. We are excited to soon recognize our recipients at this iconic Monterey County location!

Committees

Interested in joining a committee? Email SalinasValleyCWA@gmail.com.

Scholarship

In our continuing commitment to promote awareness and education, the Salinas Valley Chapter of California Women for Agriculture (SVCWA) offers two scholarship programs for women in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties. Scholarships are now open and are due March 24, 2026.

[Visit our website](#) for links to applications and more information about requirements!



Photo Contest

Our Photo Contest is excited to continue this year, where it all started, with Helen Dunston as the committee chair! Helen founded the photo contest. If you're interested in participating or want to hear more about the responsibilities, email SalinasValleyCWA@gmail.com cc photo@salinascwa.org!

For those who love to participate, start thinking about your submissions for next year! A maximum of 2 entries per person, photos should reflect agriculture, and the photo format should be vertical with at least 300 dpi.

Bus Trip

Our Annual Bus Trip was on November 1, 2025! Thank you to all our big sponsors who made the day successful and possibly our most successful yet - over \$30,000! Our bus trip primarily raises money for our scholarship program, but also helps our organization operate throughout the year. A huge thank you to our premier sponsors!

