

# Firstfruits Farm **SLO**



# 2025

# Impact Report

Feeding food insecure neighbors through sustainable, volunteer-powered farming

# Our mission

Caring for the earth and our neighbors by organically farming and freely giving fruits and vegetables to people experiencing food insecurity in San Luis Obispo County, California.



## Pillars of operation



### **PLANTING HOPE**

In a world divided by clan, creed, practice, status, and politics, Firstfruits Farm SLO is committed to choosing love first.

With love for the earth and love for our neighbors, we aim to be an intersection for our community and inspire hope for generations to come.

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### **GROWING GENEROSITY**

From seed to harvest, we cultivate our crops through volunteer-run activities, welcoming all ages and skill levels.

Everyone is invited to use their capabilities generously as we grow food to feed our community.

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### **HONORING DIGNITY**

We affirm the human right to dignity and belonging, celebrating diversity in our volunteers and recipients.

Through agency partnerships, our donated produce reaches individuals and families with limited access to high-quality, community-grown, fresh food.

# A message from the board

As we reflect on 2025, one word rises to the top: **Resilience**. In a county where food access challenges remain persistent and living costs continue to rise, this year asked us to adapt, clarify, and stay rooted in our mission. We feel both grateful and grounded.

Every hour volunteered and every dollar donated carried the work forward. From the first green bean planted to the last carrot packed, from each bed flipped to every potluck shared, you brought grit and heart to the farm.

Local groups generously rolled up their sleeves, including the California Army National Guard, California Conservation Corps, Lozano Smith, SLO Bar Association, and Trinity Presbyterian Church (just to name a few). Students from Cal Poly, Cuesta College, and local K-12 schools brought refreshing energy and curiosity.

Sometimes resilience looks like pruning. We made the tough decision to conclude our orchard program on Serpa Ranch due to insurance limitations, leadership capacity, and lower-than-hoped yields. This shift allows us to consolidate resources into one primary location and focus where we can have the greatest impact. The trees will continue to be cared for by a dedicated group of friends, and we remain grateful for the seasons it gave us.

Our board experienced change as well. Wes and Dinora concluded long tenures of service with our deep gratitude. Their steady leadership helped shape who we are today. As Ben stepped in to become President, we also welcomed Joy as Secretary and value the fresh perspective she brings.

At the same time, we invested in tools that support our future. A new BCS tractor is already helping us increase efficiency in our permanent beds and steward our land well. Farming is practical work, but it is also creative and hopeful. A new mural by local artist Bonnie Johnson celebrates the precious earth and beautiful produce it grows.

**Whether you gave time, resources, expertise, or encouragement, you are part of every crate of produce that leaves the farm.** That steady commitment makes every harvest possible. Keep reading to see what's ahead for 2026 and beyond.

**Ben H.**  
PRESIDENT

**Joy S.**  
SECRETARY

**Rick W.**  
TREASURER

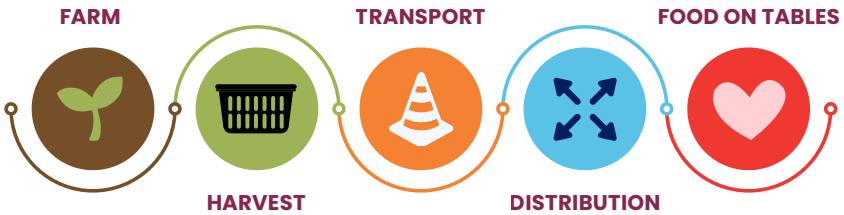
**Kathy K.**  
FARM LIAISON

**Sara A.**  
COMMS DIRECTOR



## The need for fresh food

Access to fresh food should never depend on income or circumstance. Firstfruits Farm SLO began as a dream in 2011 to address limited access to fresh, healthy produce and was incorporated as a non-profit in 2019.



### Food insecurity doesn't always look like an empty cupboard.

It can look like:

- a parent skipping meals so their kids can eat,
- a senior stretching groceries on a fixed income,
- or a student choosing cheaper, less nutritious food when rent leaves little room in the budget.

It disproportionately affects children, communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and single-parent households. Often it's quiet and unseen: folks may appear "fine" while constantly calculating what they can afford to put on the table.



## **+12% rise in food costs in the U.S. over the past 5 years**

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

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## **27% of California households with children are experiencing hunger**

Source: California Association of Food Banks 2025-6 budget

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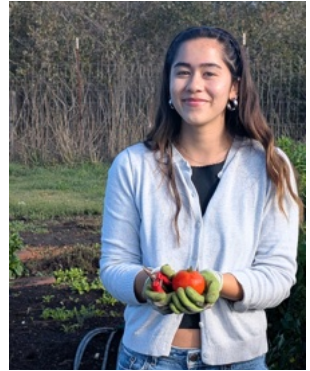
## **12% of SLO County residents are experiencing food insecurity**

Source: Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap*



# Powered by volunteers

Meeting this need takes people. We are 100% volunteer-run, with no paid staff or board members. Every seed planted, bed harvested, and crate packed is done by the community.



From first-time farmers to seasoned professionals, everyone is welcome as an essential part of the work. **871 volunteers shared their time in 2025.**



Even the smallest hands find meaningful work here—pulling weeds, gathering greens, and discovering where food comes from.

# 2025 at a glance

Every pound of nutritious food harvested and shared with neighbors across San Luis Obispo County.

**29,604** pounds of produce

**\$139k** commercial value

HARVESTS	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL
<b>Allium</b> Garlic, leeks, onions, shallots	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Brassicas</b> Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, radishes, turnips	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Citrus</b> Lemons, limes, oranges	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Cucurbits</b> Cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, squash			✓	✓
<b>Greens &amp; herbs</b> Basil, chard, cilantro, lettuce, mint, oregano, parsley	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Nightshades</b> Peppers, tomatillos, tomatoes			✓	✓
<b>Pome</b> Apples, pears			✓	
<b>Root vegetables</b> Beets, carrots	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Stone fruit</b> Apricots, nectarines, peaches, plums, pluots		✓	✓	
<b>Succotash</b> Beans, corn, peas			✓	✓

# College Corps partnership

College Corps places students in service roles with local non-profits, where they commit to consistent weekly hours addressing community needs like food access, climate resilience, and education. In return, students receive financial support and professional development from state or federal funds.

For the farm, this program bring steady leadership, fresh energy, and consistent support that strengthens day-to-day operations and deepens our impact. We're so grateful to have 3 Fellows from Cal Poly for the 2025-26 school year.



**Anna F.**

MARKETING

Supporting social media, email marketing, and event planning (while getting inspired to grow my own garden).



**Husim M.**

BIORESOURCE & AG ENGINEERING

Gaining hands-on farming experience alongside other volunteers.



**Rolando S.**

LIBERAL STUDIES

Practicing my Spanish and English by connecting with distribution partners & families and growing food for the community.



**CAL POLY**

# Tending the earth

Everything we grow begins below the surface, where living soil, rich with organic matter and microbes, creates the foundation for abundant, nutrient-dense food.



**New in 2025: a BCS walk-behind tractor.** This compact, two-wheel tractor is a versatile machine that powers multiple attachments for bed prep, cultivation, mowing, and more. With it, we can prepare beds more consistently, manage weeds efficiently, and work through tough clay soil. The added efficiency helps us steward the soil with care while reducing physical strain on volunteers.



Permanent beds protect soil structure by minimizing compaction, allowing roots, microbes, water, and air to move freely so crops can thrive season after season.



Compost feeds and revitalizes our soil, while wood chips suppress weeds and hold moisture.



A new mural by local artist Bonnie Johnson celebrates the soil, the sun, and the bounty produced for neighbors.



# From seed...

Crops are chosen with care, prioritizing nutrient-dense varieties that are culturally familiar, seasonally appropriate, and well-suited to our soil and coastal climate.



Seeds begin in trays with carefully prepared soil where strong roots develop in a greenhouse before transplanting into the field.



Drip irrigation slowly delivers water to plant roots, reducing waste, preventing evaporation, and supporting steady, healthy growth.



Volunteers tend the growing plants until harvest, when ripe produce is gathered, washed, and packed.

## ...to table

Once harvested, produce moves into the community through trusted partner organizations in the SLO Food Bank Agency Partner Network.



They're deeply connected to their communities, ensuring fresh produce reaches neighbors efficiently and in ways that honor dignity and choice.



ESTERO BAY  
KINDNESS COALITION



*We want to express our sincere appreciation for the outstanding work you do. Our partnership has helped feed many people in the community.*

Richard Martegson

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

# Field hurdles and highlights

Every season brings changes in weather, soil health, weeds, and pests that keep us learning and adapting.

Persistent bermuda grass and stubborn hemlock added pressure to the field. The lingering effects of the 2023 flood in the lower field have required extra labor and steady rebuilding of soil health.

Our Farm Ops team refreshed their food safety courses and improved harvest techniques to reduce waste.



We continue to optimize to avoid big peaks or valleys in production.



The best-producing crops were tomatoes and summer squash, with over 3,500 lbs each!



*Each and every week, Firstfruits helps us feed over 170 households in Morro Bay, Cayucos and Cambria with healthy produce for our food insecure families!*

**Bobby DeLancellotti**

ESTERO BAY KINDNESS COALITION

# Business shoutouts

Son Care Foundation generously provides the land we farm on. Local businesses have stepped in with facility support, tractor work, field planning, wood chips, volunteer gifts, and even delicious pastries to keep volunteers going.



# 2025 financials

Financial accountability is central to how we operate, and we strive to be transparent in both our work and our budget.

Platinum  
Transparency  
2026

**Candid.**

## BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY

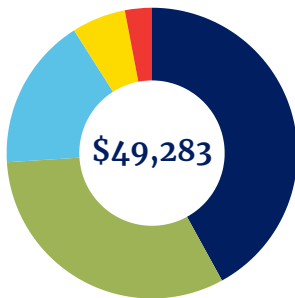
### Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$	80,411	(+8% YoY)
Equipment		25,515	(+66% YoY)
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Total assets	\$	105,926	

### Liabilities and net assets

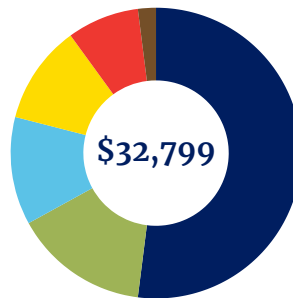
Liabilities	\$	104	
Net assets		105,822	(+18% YoY)
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Total liabilities and net assets	\$	105,926	

## INCOME



- Recurring donations 42%
- One-time donations 32%
- Asset sale 17%
- Local business support 6%
- Grants 3%

## EXPENSES



- Farming 52%
- Fundraising & recruitment 15%
- Depreciation expenses 12%
- Admin 11%
- Insurance 8%
- Capital purchases 2%

# Growing into 2026

The same resilience that shaped last year carries us forward.

**We gathered our board, volunteers, and local residents for two workshops to envision what's next for the farm.** Looking ahead, we are strengthening the systems that make generous harvests possible.

## HIGH-TUNNEL

Working with NRCS to secure funding for a high-tunnel. This simple structure will help extend the growing season of select crops.



## THE TRIANGLE

Stepping into stewardship of the area north of the field to improve parking, reduce weed pressure, and better care for the creek corridor.

## BOARD

Expanding representation while filling key Volunteer Coordinator and Development Director openings on the board.



## FINANCES

Protecting the long-term viability of the farm by seeking new funding sources after the unexpected loss of several longstanding donors.

# Friends of the Farm

Your generosity strengthens the farm and fuels lasting impact across San Luis Obispo County, season after season.

Become a monthly sustaining donor as a Friend of the Farm. Go to [FirstfruitsSLO.org/support](https://FirstfruitsSLO.org/support)

## SOWERS

\$15/mo

## POLLINATORS

\$50/mo

## IRRIGATORS

\$100/mo

## SUSTAINERS

\$250/mo



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*Recipients love the fresh fruits and vegetables that we pick up at your farm Friday night and distribute Saturday morning. Thanks for all you do!*

Walt Sanders

ROCK HARBOR OPEN ARMS PANTRY

# More ways to support

Together, we're working toward long-term change in the community every day.

## **VOLUNTEER**

Join a regularly scheduled harvest or farm care event.

## **LEAD A TEAM**

Step up to lead projects and support other volunteers.

## **BRING A GROUP**

Plan a field trip or team-building event for your school, business, or club.

## **BOARD SERVICE**

Bring your ideas to help drive our mission forward.



## **IN-KIND GIFTS**

Donated items from our wishlist help keep costs low and impact high.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Sponsor an event, host a bake sale, create a friendly challenge, etc. to raise funds.

## **PLANNED GIFTS**

Making a planned gift ensures the farm can continue for generations to come.

## **CAR DONATION**

Donate a vehicle through Mission Cars and 50% of proceeds can go to the farm.



**WEBSITE**  
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