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University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Making a Difference for California

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Livestock, Range, & Watershed

San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Monterey Counties

UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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Forage Production 2024-2025

Rainfall

The 2024-2025 growing season in San Luis Obispo County had a slow start. A germinating rainfall occurred in November, but December through February were below average rainfall. Overall, the year's precipitation was only 66% of normal. The year started with above normal rainfall in November, then December and January were below normal. February and March had above average rainfall. The rainfall in Table 1 is shown for the Coastal Zone, Central Zone, and Eastern Zone. The overall rainfall as compared to the average is shown in Figure 1. There were 2 sites from the forage production project that were near Pozo. These sites were above average during February- April. The rainfall during April really helped forage production, especially for the sites near Pozo, see Figure 1.

Forage Production in 2024-2025 Varied from 50% Above to 100% Below Average

Table 1. Average rainfall within each rainfall zone.

Location	Long Term Average (in)	No. of Sites Aver-aged	2025 (in)	Below Average	Max (in)	Min (in)
Coastal	17.6	8	12.7	28%	14.5	10.7
Central	14.0	9	9.4	33%	14.9	10.3
Eastern	8.6	10	5.4	37%	6.3	4.6

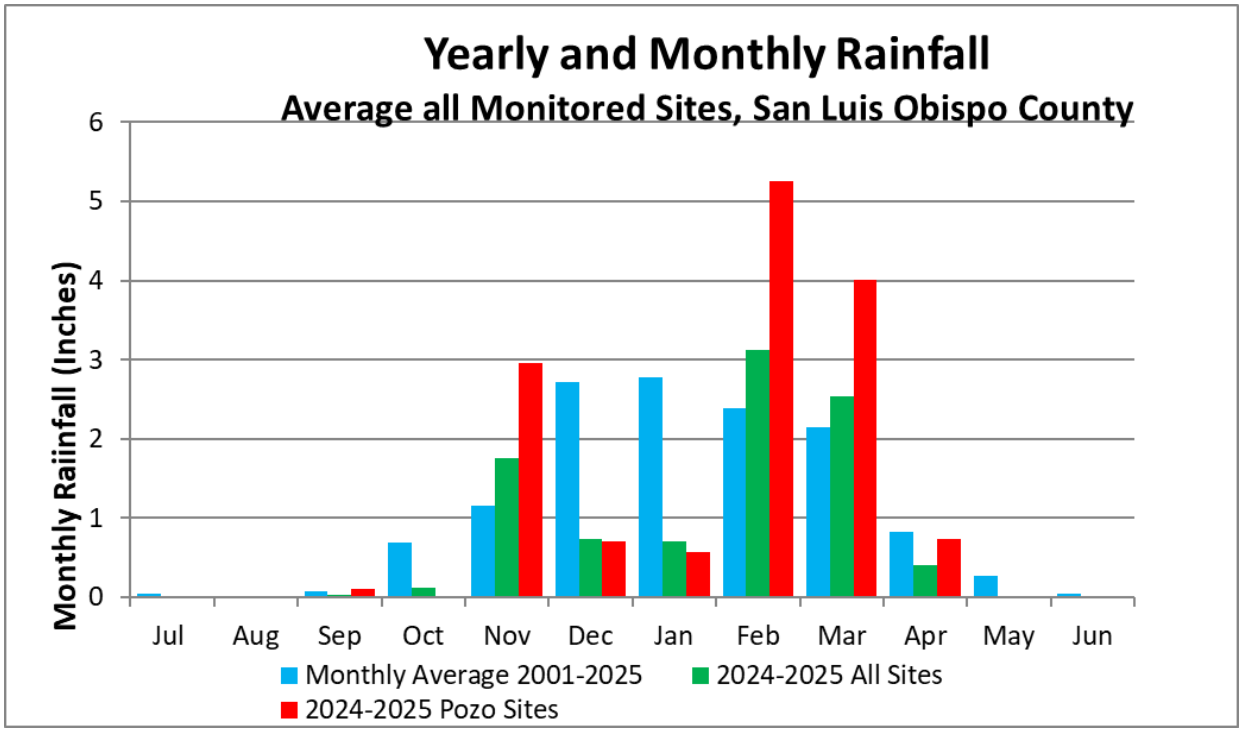


Figure 1. Average rainfall for all sites compared to the long term (2001-2025) average. The area of the Santa Lucia and Garcia Wilderness locations, includes 2 sites near Pozo. These sites had above the average rainfall during November, February and March. There was also about ¾ inch rainfall in April.

There was one part of the county, the Santa Lucis and Garcia Wilderness areas that were above average rainfall. It was interesting that this area, with above average rainfall was also where the Madre and Gifford fires were during this summer.

Production

Overall, forage losses in San Luis Obispo County this year were about 33%. The Coastal and Central Zones had 34% and 12% losses respectively. The Eastern Zone had about 55% loss this year, see Table 2. and Figure 2. There was a lot of variability this year, with some sites having 100% losses, while other sites had above average production, see Table 2 and Figure 3. All the data for all the sites sampled during 2025 are shown in Table 3.

To see the methods used and the site locations, please see the 2001-2022 forage report on our website at: [Forage Production Reports | UC Agriculture and Natural Resources]

Table 2. Available Forage

Location	Long Term Average	No. of Sites	Available	Losses	Max Loss	Min Loss
	(lb/ac)		(% of Avg.)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Coast	3647	8	66%	34%	68%	-19%
Central	2114	9	88%	12%	61%	-51%
Eastern	1300	10	45%	55%	100%	3%

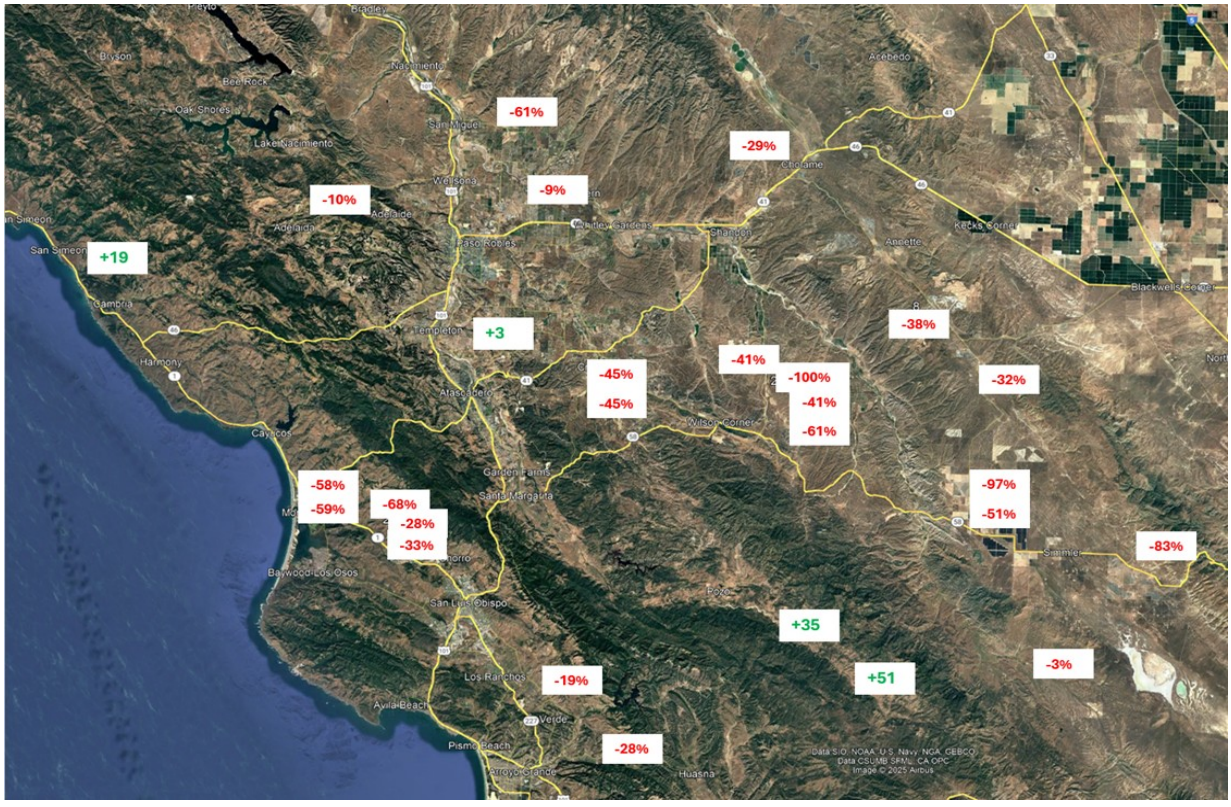


Figure 2. Percent of average available forage at each site samples during 2025, in San Luis Obispo County, during the 2024-2025 growing season. Red = values below average. Green = values above average.

Table 3. Total and Available Forage Values for Each Site, 2014-2025 Growing Season.

Site Name	Rainfall Zone	Rain-fall (in)	2025 Total Production (lbs/ac)	Average Available Production (lbs/ac)	2025 Available Production (lbs/ac)	% of Aver-age (%)	2025 Loss-es (%)
Cambria	Coast	21.1	8119	5475	6499	119%	-19%
Huasna (6 mile east AG)	Coast	20.5	3511	3917	2836	72%	28%
MorroBayS	Coast	15.5	1909	2954	1234	42%	58%
CPW6 (Cal Poly)	Coast	17.0	3931	4858	3256	67%	33%
MorroBayN	Coast	15.2	1892	2968	1217	41%	59%
CPEU8N (Cal Poly)	Coast	17.3	1591	2050	646	32%	68%
CPEU8S (Cal Poly)	Coast	16.9	3194	3104	2249	72%	28%
VRSLO (Edna Valley)	Coast	17.1	3811	3854	3136	81%	19%
Adelaida	Central	19.2	3749	3404	3074	90%	10%
Shandon	Central	11.1	2293	2284	1618	71%	29%
Creston	Central	11.2	854	574	314	55%	45%
Pozo	Central	20.3	3729	2269	3054	135%	-35%
RockPileRd (East of Pozo)	Central	19.3	4547	2659	4007	151%	-51%
SanMiguel	Central	10.3	1186	1664	646	39%	61%
Templeton	Central	12.8	3410	2666	2735	103%	-3%
Estrella	Central	10.3	2694	2357	2154	91%	9%
Creston2	Central	11.1	1174	1148	634	55%	45%
Bitterwater (Bitterwater RD)	East	8.4	1608	1928	1203	62%	38%
SodaLake (Carrizo Plain)	East	8.0	621	1281	216	17%	83%
Bitterwater2 (Bitterwater RD)	East	8.4	2026	2379	1621	68%	32%
CamattaN	East	8.8	1334	1350	794	59%	41%
CamattaS	East	8.2	470	1331	0	0%	100%
TopazB3 (Carrizo Plain)	East	9.0	418.9	514	14	3%	97%
TopazST (Carrizo Plain)	East	8.9	781.8	771	377	49%	51%
ShellCreek	East	8.7	1495	1620	955	59%	41%
BranchMtn (Carrizo Plain)	East	8.7	1353	973	948	97%	3%
CamattaT	East	8.5	874	855	334	39%	61%

(Losses ranged from 100% below to 51% above average)

Looking Back -The Ranching Sustainability Self-Assessment

A Special
Tribute to George Work and Chuck Pritchard

By
Royce Larsen

More than 15 years ago, the Ranching Sustainability Self-Analysis Assessment (RSA) was created by and for local ranchers, with input from UC Cooperative Extension, the USDA NRCS, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. It's a tool, that was developed to record land use practices for your own historical purposes. It was also used as a gauge to look at your own practices and a reminder of sustainable practices that you may have been putting on the backburner. The idea for this project came about, in some respects, from other farming practices that use self-assessment as a tool for their own record keeping. We closely followed the Central Coast Vineyard Team's approach, and thank them for sharing the SIP Certification procedures with ranchers. The Ranching Sustainability Self-Assessment did not include any kind of "Certification" nor were we collecting or sharing any rancher's information. For any that may be interested, the RSA manual is still located on our website, and you may use it as you wish for your own records. Click on the link to download if for free.

May 2014-A prototype

There were many authors who helped in creating the Ranching Sustainability Self-Assessment including: George Work (Chair) Rancher, Cliff Garrison Rancher, Kevin Kester Rancher, Royce Larsen UCCE, Aaron Lazanoff Cal Poly, Chuck Pritchard Rancher, Steve Sinton Rancher, Karl Striby NRCS, Bill Tietje UC Berkeley, and Jack Varian Rancher, that participated in this project. Other collaborators are listed in the RSA. Click on the link above to see the RSA.

Sadly, two of the authors have passed away. We will miss their guiding influence, great leadership, compassion, and their deep understanding of ranching and sustainability practices they themselves practiced. They were very instrumental in the development of the RSA, as well as leaders of ranching and environmental stewardship in our community.

A Special Tribute to George Work and Chuck Pritchard

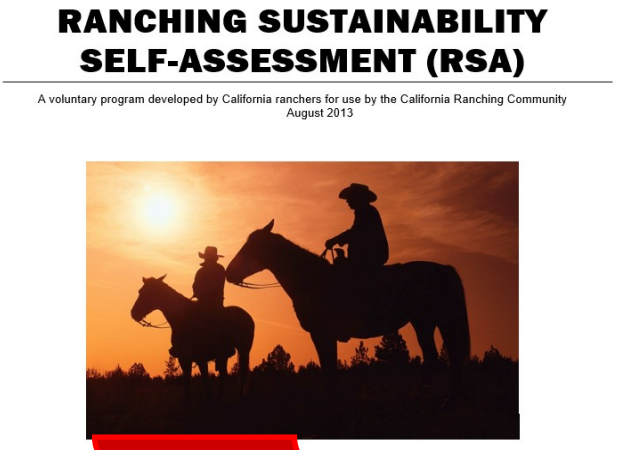
George Work (passed away June 5, 2025), Work Ranch; Technical Advisor to the Upper Salinas Las Tablas Resource Conservation District; 1984 Soil/Water National Winner; Planning Fellow for Roots of Change; 2004 National Environmental Stewardship Award (National Cattlemen's Beef Association); National Marriage Encounter honored George and Elaine as Volunteers Of The Year.

Chuck Pritchard (passed away November 22, 2024) Rancher, Bitterwater Land & Cattle Company; President of the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District; Member of the Range Management Advisory Council to the State Board of Forestry; 1998 Biodiversity Conservation Award (California Biodiversity Council)

The RSA was an important document that has helped ranchers assess their own management practices on their ranches. Many thanks to George Work and Chuck Pritchard who showed leadership, insight and knowledge of sustainable ranch practices in getting the RSA completed.

Times of using computers is changing rapidly. To keep up we have now updated the RSA and put it online. The new version is now called the California Rancher Sustainability Assessment (CRSA). To support a broader group of California ranchers, our project team updated and digitized the RSA into a new format which we put online. Like the original RSA, the CRSA is intended to provide a simple method of self-evaluation, but with a few updates to ensure broad applicability. The CRSA is also paired with science-based digital resources to support adoption or continuation of best practices.

The CRSA currently offers an Assessment in five modules covering forage management, soil health, wildlife management, drought management, and generational succession. These topics incorporate ecological, social, and economic components of modern ranching and connect each module to the bigger picture of ranch sustainability. Within the modules, each question also links to one or more resources in the library. The library is a repository of free digital resources such as UC ANR publications, YouTube videos, and articles from other Extension universities as relevant. The website: https://crsa.cnr.berkeley.edu where the CRSA is located is currently experiencing problems. As soon as it is functioning again we will let you know.



CRSA development was funded by a UC ANR Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) grant, Project #20-6284.

CRSA University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension
California Rancher Sustainability Assessment



With many turns of events, and budgets and layoffs, we are still waiting for the General Technical Report that will be published through the US Forest Service, which will contain the papers presented at the 8th Oak Symposium. Sorry for the delay, we now expect the proceedings to be completed by the end 2025.

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