

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Grower-Shipper Foundation Announces AgKnowledge Program Class XVI 2024

Salinas, CA (February 2024) — The **Grower-Shipper Foundation** and their co-sponsoring partner, the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner are pleased to announce the 2024 **AgKnowledge Program Class XVI** Fellows. These 23 community members have been accepted into the program and will participate in a nine-month executive educational program. AgKnowledge provides participating fellows a deeper understanding about the heritage, diversity, stewardship and complexity of Monterey County agriculture and the interdependencies of agriculture, local government and the community.

#### 2024 AgKnowledge Class XVI - Fellows

- **Alena Anousinh**, Water Quality Program Associate, California Marine Sanctuary Foundation
- **Mindy Carpenter**, Head of Field Operations & Farm Implementation, FarmWise
- **Michael Castro**, Director of Community Initiatives & Partnerships, Community Foundation for Monterey County
- **Sam Eastman**, Vice President, Brent Eastman Insurance Services
- **Seth Gustafson**, Assistant Professor, Applied Environmental Sciences, California State University Monterey Bay
- **Piret Harmon**, General Manager, Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
- **Thomas Horvath**, Interim Dean, College of Science, California State University Monterey Bay
- **Christianna Kearns**, Associate Chief Operating Officer, Salinas Valley Health
- **Taven Kinison Brown**, Community Development Director, City of Gonzales
- **Xiaotong Liu**, Assistant Professor, College of Business, California State University Monterey Bay
- **Kendall Mills**, Senior Auditor, Clifton Larson Allen
- **Manny Morales**, Owner, Gerd Schneider Nursery
- **Geoffrey Morgan**, President/CEO, CHISPA
- **Debbie Paolinelli**, Assistant County Administrative Officer, Monterey County
- **Camille Polson**, Director of Finance & Property Management, Ag Land Trust
- **Dora Ramirez**, Union Representative, UFCW Local 5
- **Luis Ricardo Rodriguez**, Hydrologist, County of Monterey Housing & Community Development
- **Kimberly Rivera-Zamora**, Sales Representative, Driscoll's
- **Larry Samuels**, Special Advisor to the Chancellor, University of California, Santa Cruz
- **Jake Stroud**, Assistant Treasurer-Tax Collector, Monterey County
- **Ram Subramaniam**, Vice President, Academic Affairs, Hartnell College
- **Karla Tinajero**, Finance Manager II, Monterey County Health Department
- **Ezequiel Vega Rios**, Assistant County Administrative Officer, Monterey County

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The **AgKnowledge Program** focuses on issues and public policies affecting and influencing the local Monterey County agricultural industry. The issues include but are not limited to food safety, food security, labor, immigration, technology, agri-marketing, conservation, urban-agriculture interface, air, and water.

The Fellows spend nine (9) Fridays between March and November attending scientific and policy forums, visiting farms and processing facilities along with meeting key leaders and innovators within the fresh produce industry. One of the program's most popular facets is the "Boots on the Ground Day," spending time with a local grower becoming immersed in agriculture from a hands-on perspective.

The **AgKnowledge Program** is co-sponsored by the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's office. The program is supported by many agricultural industry partners including the Grower-Shipper Association.



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[www.growershipperfoundation.org](http://www.growershipperfoundation.org)

The **Grower-Shipper Foundation** is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to raise community awareness of the positive impact agriculture makes in our lives.