



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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**MEDIA ADVISORY AND PRESS RELEASE -
EMBARGO UNTIL JULY 18, 2024 AT 7:30 p.m.**

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WHO:

- San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau
- San Luis Obispo County CattleWomen's Association
- San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen's Association
- Local farmers, ranchers and community members in attendance at California Mid-State Fair's Cattlemen and Farmers Day

WHAT: Awards presentation for the 2024 San Luis Obispo County Agriculturalist of the Year, Cattlewoman of the Year, and Cattleman of the Year

WHEN: Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: California Mid-State Fair, Paso Robles Pavilion. 2198 Riverside Ave, Paso Robles. Located at North side of fairgrounds.

VISUALS: Crowd of approximately 1000 people, awards presentation from stage

INTERVIEWS: Interviews with award recipients are available after the event around 7:00 p.m.

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(SEE NEXT PAGE FOR PRESS RELEASE WITH BACKGROUND ON AWARD RECIPIENTS)

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2024 San Luis Obispo County Agriculturalist, CattleWoman, Cattleman of the Year Named
Three local agriculture leaders honored at California Mid-State Fair

PASO ROBLES, CA (July 18, 2024) – Local agriculture organizations recognized three San Luis Obispo County farmers and ranchers during the California Mid-State Fair’s annual Cattlemen and Farmers Day at the Paso Robles Event Center on July 18.

The 2024 award recipients are:

Brian Talley, Agriculturalist of the Year;
Vicki Janssen, CattleWoman of the Year; and
Aaron Lazanoff, Cattleman of the Year.

The respective awards were selected by members of the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, San Luis Obispo County CattleWomen, and San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen’s Association.

“Every year, San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, Cattlemen’s Association, and Cattlewomen select a member who has dedicated their lives to serving the community through farming, ranching, and advocating for agriculture. This tradition started in 1963,” said Farm Bureau Executive Director Paul Clark. “These recipients all have gone above and beyond to make San Luis Obispo County a diversified and successful agricultural powerhouse, topping one billion dollars in crop value per year.”

Continue reading below for more information on the winners. Permission to reprint story is granted with credit to San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau. Photos of the award recipients are available at: <https://www.slofarmbureau.org/news/article/2024-san-luis-obispo-county-agriculturalist-cattlewoman-and-cattleman-of-the-year-named> Please attribute photos to Tom Meinhold Photography.

Brian Talley, 2024 Agriculturalist of the Year

San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau has named Brian Talley, of Talley Farms in Arroyo Grande, as 2024 Agriculturalist of the Year. Brian is President and CEO of Talley Farms and Talley Vineyards in Arroyo Grande. Along with his cousins Ryan Talley (Vice President of Talley Farms) and Todd Talley (Chief Financial Officer of Talley Farms), Brian is leading family-owned Talley Farms through its fourth generation of successful production of vegetables, seed crops, citrus, and avocados. Brian is also President of Talley Vineyards, producing internationally recognized wines since the 1980s. Several other family members take active roles in the companies. Rosemary Talley, Brian's mother and wife of the late Don Talley serves on the Board of Directors of both companies. Brian's wife Johnine serves as Chief Financial Officer of Talley Vineyards while their daughter, Elizabeth, works at Talley Vineyards. His nephews, Byron, Grant, and Elliott Talley are also very active at Talley Farms.

The Talley family started farming in San Luis Obispo County when Brian's grandfather, Oliver Talley, began growing vegetables in 1948. Oliver and his sons, Kenneth and Don, purchased property in the Arroyo Grande Valley in 1966. They continued to expand their land holdings and their farming operations, building a cooler and shipping vegetables. Since then, the family operation has continued to expand, planting their first vineyard in 1982, and making their first wine in 1986.

Following in his grandfather's, father's, and uncle's footsteps, Brian today oversees a multifaceted farming operation consisting of growing, packing, shipping and retailing fresh produce, and the growing of seed crops, citrus, and avocados. Central Coast consumers are able to enjoy true farm-to-table produce through the Talley Farms Box program. More than 6,000 subscribers receive boxes of Talley seasonal produce shipped weekly, containing just-harvested, sustainably farmed produce and fruit.

Along with the farming operation, Brian also is President and CEO of Talley Vineyards, named one of the Top 100 wineries in the world by *Wine and Spirits Magazine* in 2021. The Talleys produce some of California's most highly regarded Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Syrah wines.

Brian and his wife, Johnine have two daughters, Elizabeth and Olivia. As if Brian wasn't busy enough with farming and the wine business, he is heavily involved in supporting not just the agricultural industry but also the local community at large. In 2004, Brian and Johnine formed the Fund for Vineyard and Farm Workers, an organization that provides grants to nonprofit organizations supporting San Luis Obispo County agricultural workers. Brian is a director of AgWest Farm Credit, the agricultural representative on San Luis Obispo County Zone 3 Flood Control District Advisory Committee, past president of the San Luis Obispo Coast Wine Collective, past treasurer of the San Luis Obispo Coast AVA Committee, co-founder and past chairman, World of Pinot Noir, and a past board member of the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce.

Brian and Johnine enjoy cooking, travelling, and hiking. As much as anything else, though, Brian loves his job and the opportunity to help steward the growth and development of the family businesses. About this honor, Brian said, "Our success is rooted in the soil of this beautiful region and everyone who works tirelessly to make San Luis Obispo County a leader in sustainable

agriculture. To be honored in this way, alongside so many others who share my deep connection to the land, is a true privilege.”

San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau salutes Brian and all the Talleys for their ongoing contribution to San Luis Obispo County agriculture and to our communities.

San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau has given the Agriculturalist of the Year award annually since 1988, making Brian Talley the 36th person to receive this honor.

Vicki Janssen, 2024 CattleWoman of the Year

San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen have selected Vicki Janssen as the 2024 CattleWoman of the Year. Vicki was born in Santa Monica, California to Jim and Mary Fisher and has one brother, Jim. While growing up, Vicki spent time manufacturing fishing rods and graphite tubing in the family business which was started by her great-grandfather on the Santa Monica Pier in 1922. Her passion was horses and sports.

After graduating from Santa Monica High School, Vicki moved to San Luis Obispo to attend Cal Poly as an Animal Science major, later changed to Physical Education. She graduated from Cal Poly in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education and completed her Teaching Credential in 1980.

After graduating, she worked for the San Luis Obispo County YMCA until 1991. Vicki began working for Supervisor Brackett as the first County Legislative Assistant and in 1993 she worked for Supervisor Harry Ovitt as well. In November 1993 she became the first Manager of the newly formed Agricultural Task Force government watchdog organization.

In 1997, Vicki returned to work for Supervisor Brackett as she finished her term. In 1999, Katcho Achadjian was elected as the 4th District Supervisor and Vicki remained serving as his Legislative Assistant. Then in 2010, Katcho was elected to the State Assembly and Vicki served as the District Director for Assembly District 35, covering San Luis Obispo County and Northern Santa Barbara County until he was termed out in November 2016. In 2017 she found herself back at the County Board of Supervisors working as the Legislative Assistant for 1st District Supervisor John Peschong and once again assisting constituents with county issues.

Vicki’s passion for agriculture and law enforcement keeps her involved in many community organizations. She is a 22-year member of the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Posse, serving as the first woman Captain in 2007, and again as Captain in 2023 and 2024. From 2010-2017, Vicki was a member of the Santa Maria Chapter of California Women For Agriculture and she serves on the Board of Directors for several non-profit organizations including: the San Luis Obispo Law Enforcement Assistance Foundation (SLO LEAF), and the James W. Brabeck Youth Legacy Fund supporting youth in agriculture.

In 1993 she became an active member of the San Luis Obispo County Cattlewomen and served in multiple roles including: Historian-Scrapbook chair, Highway Clean Up chair, Casino Night Fundraiser committee member, Merchandise chair and currently serves as 2nd Vice-President.

Vicki met her husband Matt while working at the Board of Supervisors and they have lived in Atascadero for 30 years with their horses, chickens and border collies. “I am very humbled to be selected as cattlegirl of the Year by the amazing women involved in this organization.”

San Luis Obispo County Cattlewomen are grateful to Vicki for her hard work in County Government, the many community organizations she works with, and especially all she does for their organization.

San Luis Obispo County cattlegirls has given the Cattlegirl of the Year award annually since 1965, making Vicki Janssen the 59th person to receive this honor.

Aaron Lazanoff, 2024 Cattlegirl of the Year

San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen’s Association has selected Aaron Lazanoff as its 2024 Cattlegirl of the Year. Aaron is the Ranch Manager of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, a position he has held since 2008.

Born and raised in the Carmel Valley of Monterey County, Aaron grew up around ranching and the cattle business, showing cattle in both 4-H and FFA. After graduating from Salinas High School, Aaron attended Cal Poly, graduating with a degree in animal science. While at Cal Poly, Aaron was a member of the Rodeo Team, competing in team roping. While attending Cal Poly, Aaron worked at Templeton Livestock Market, and cowboied on ranches up and down the central coast. On summer breaks, he worked ranches in Eastern Oregon and Nevada.

After Cal Poly, Aaron moved to Oklahoma to work for Bill Jacobs on the historic Turner Ranch. He then returned to California, managing cattle ranches in Visalia and in the Carmel Valley. In 1999, Aaron was hired to manage the historic Santa Margarita Ranch by Dick Nock, John Lacey and Kate Loftus.

Aaron became Ranch Manager for Cal Poly in 2008. He oversees all cattle operations and manages 5,000 acres of the school’s property. Aaron also manages the famous Cal Poly Bull Test, a program started in 1956 where students are responsible for raising the bulls, measuring bull health and assessing bull performance. Cattlemen from around California and the United States bring registered bull calves in the spring. Throughout the summer, students measure weight gain, reproductive tests and potential genetic traits. Bulls that exceed the test indexes are then sold at the Cal Poly bull sale to cattlemen from around the country. In addition to these responsibilities, Aaron manages ag student housing, and assists in managing the feed mill, dairy unit, and equine unit.

Aaron continues to be involved in San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen’s Association, serving on its board of directors. He has held all the committee chairs and served as President for two years. He has also served on many California Cattlemen’s Association committees and has been instrumental in getting the next generation of cattlemen involved in the local and state association.

He is current advisor to the Cal Poly Young Cattlemen's group and was instrumental in getting forty-one students to attend the 2023 CCA Convention in Nevada. Aaron is a co-leader of the Edna 4-H beef group and has served as president of the West Coast Junior Rodeo Association. He is also an event director for the California High School Rodeo Association, District 7.

Aaron and his wife, Kristy, have three sons, Ethan, Caleb and Wyatt. The Lazanoffs' recreational life revolves around the boys' involvement in youth rodeo and sports. The boys are following in their dad's footsteps, with a love of the cowboy way of life, all having begun to develop horsemanship skills at a young age. The Lazanoffs also run their own cattle, which teaches the boys the responsibility of owning and expanding a cattle operation.

Aaron said about receiving this honor, "I am proud to be a part of this great organization. Our Cattlemen's Association does so much at the local and state level. So many in our organization, Dick Nock, John Lacey, Steve Arnold, just to name a few, have been mentors to me. I am very honored to be recognized by my peers."

San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen's Association congratulates Aaron and is grateful for his dedication to the beef industry, to Cal Poly, and to the community.

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