

**Farm Bureau  
celebrating 99th  
anniversary** RP

6/14/16  
**WATSONVILLE** — The  
Santa Cruz County Farm Bu-

reau's 99th anniversary will be celebrated at its Annual Meeting on June 23 at Live Earth Farms in Watsonville.

The featured speaker for this celebration will be Tom Am Rhein, 2004 Farmer of the Year. He will speak on the topic of "History of the Local Hops Industry."

At the event, the 2016 Farmer of the Year recipient will be announced. The program also includes the election of officers and five board members for the 2016/2017 year. Local breweries will be providing beer for the event.

Ticket price is \$70 per person. For information and/or reservations, contact the Farm Bureau Office at 724-1356 or email [sccfb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sccfb@sbcglobal.net). Reservations for this event are required by June 16. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com).

## AGRICULTURE

# PV's hops headline bureau meeting

## Silvia Prevedelli named Farmer of the Year

By Kara Guzman

[newsroom@santacruzsentinel.com](mailto:newsroom@santacruzsentinel.com)

[@karambutan](https://twitter.com/karambutan) on Twitter

**WATSONVILLE** » Before the Pajaro Valley was known for its berries, it was known for its apples.

And before that, peaking in the 1880s, the Pajaro Valley was known for its hops.

Watsonville resident Tom Am Rhein, Naturipe vice president,

spoke to a crowd of around 150 Thursday about the local history of the beer ingredient, headlining the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau's 99th annual meeting.

The talk took place at sunset at Live Earth Farm, on a bluff overlooking the Green Valley's hoop houses, vineyards and orchards. Local brewmasters poured craft beers for guests, as students from FOOD, WHAT?!, a youth program

with a new location at Live Earth Farm, served sausage and mustard.

Breweries included Corralitos Brewing Co., which sources some of its hops from a Watsonville farm, the only brewery in the county to do so.

In the late 1800s, around 1,000 acres of Pajaro Valley was farmed for hops, said Am Rhein. At first, the labor-intensive harvest was done by Chinese workers.

**FARM » PAGE 5**



Pajaro Valley farmer Silvia Prevedelli in her Pioneer View Road apple orchard.

SHMUEL THALER  
— SANTA CRUZ  
SENTINEL

# Farm

FROM PAGE 1

In the 1930s, the Portuguese took over. Hops eventually gave way to apples, as it became less profitable.

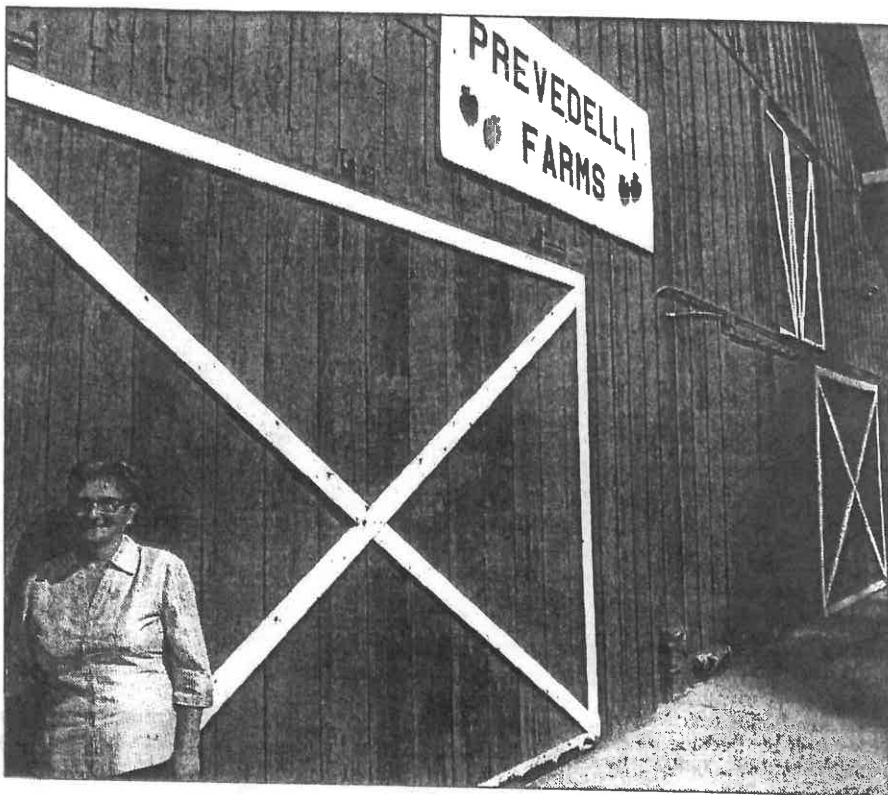
"Hops teaches us a lesson that many are uncomfortable to consider," said Am Rhein, a hops hobbyist who grows a row in his backyard, from the same roots his father retrieved from Watsonville's McGrath Ranch, once a major hops supplier. "Hops entered the valley... and then disappeared. The landscape they created and the knowledge of crop disappeared with them."

And so it has been with open range cattle, iceberg lettuce, apples, string beans, greenhouse roses and other crops, he said.

On Thursday, the farm bureau, which advocates for local farmers on state legislation, also awarded its highest honor, Farmer of the Year, to Silvia Prevedelli, co-owner of Prevedelli Farms.

Prevedelli moved to Watsonville in 1966 from Italy, after marrying Frank Prevedelli, whose parents started the apple farm in 1945.

She began helping with the farm shortly after, once their children were in dia-



SHMUEL THALER — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Silvia Prevedelli stands next to a barn on the Pioneer View Road property where the Prevedelli family has been farming since 1945.

pers.

"I never knew how to drive a tractor or anything," said Prevedelli, who never lost her Italian accent. "So I start learning to do this and that a little bit at a time. I started a few hours a day and then after, a few hours going more and more."

Soon, she was handling a bit of everything — from bookkeeping to packing, delivery and sales. Around 15 years ago, she helped the farm officially register as organic, long after it was already practicing. Now in her 70s, she said her interest in organic practices comes

from her Italian roots.

"I like to work outside really. I like to be in the field and I have a passion in the land to see what's growing, and I have a passion to be with the people and sell. The books, to me, is OK. I do it, OK, but it's not a passion," Prevedelli said.

# Prevedelli named farmer of the year

By TODD GUILD

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

**WATSONVILLE** — With a sweeping view of verdant Pajaro Valley farmlands in the distance, and the sun slipping behind the horizon through cloudless skies, dozens of people gathered at Live Earth Farms Thursday for the 99th annual dinner meeting of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau.

The meeting has long been a way to bring the agriculture community together to celebrate the coming harvest.

It is also a time to name the farmer of the year, an honor that this year went to Prevedelli Farms matriarch Silvia Prevedelli.

Prevedelli came to the U.S. from her native Italy in 1966. She married Frank, whose parents started the farm in 1945.

With no farming experience, she began helping her husband on his farm, growing apples, plums and vegetables for which the farm is still known.

She is now involved in nearly every aspect of the

## FARMER

From page A1

farm's operation.

Wanting to switch to the "natural" farming methods of her homeland, Prevedelli helped the farm become organic just over 10 years ago.

Prevedelli is currently involved in a project that links the health care industry with the agriculture community.

She participates in the "Day on the Farm" program, and gives tours and presentations for the annual Eco Farm Tour, which draws farmers from around the world.

She sits on the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz

County Farm Bureau, and the Agri-Culture Down to Earth Women's Luncheon Committee.

She is active with the Sons of Italy and the California Small Farms Conference.

A fourth-generation family farm, the Prevedelli family has been in Watsonville since 1945.

They grow nearly 40 types of apples and other produce including beans, squash and berries, and have been using organic farming methods for nearly a decade.

The farm was certified as organic more than 10 years ago.

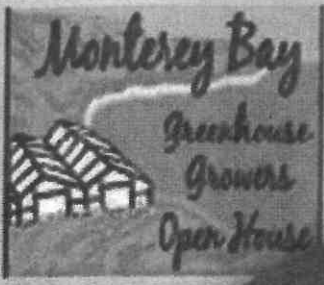
Prevedelli said the award surprised her.

"It's incredible," she said. "A lot of other people deserve it too. I love what I am doing. Farming is a part of my life."



Register-Pajaronian file

**Silvia Prevedelli was named farmer of the year Thursday evening by the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau.**



RP 6/14/16



**SATURDAY  
JUNE 18, 2016  
10AM - 4PM**



   831-274-4008

[MontereyBayFarmTours.org](http://MontereyBayFarmTours.org)



RP  
6/16/16

# 'A growing success'

## Seventh-annual Monterey Bay Greenhouse Growers Open House Tour on for Saturday

By TODD GUILD

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

**WATSONVILLE** — Pajaro Valley boasts many thousands of acres of berries, greens, apples and artichokes, a bounty that puts the region on the map as an agricultural epicenter.

But as consumers snap up produce and other farm-fresh goods from markets, what they don't see are the people working behind the scenes, growing, harvesting and packaging, and the facilities in which it is all grown.

That changes Saturday during the seventh-annual Monterey Bay Greenhouse Growers Open House Tour.

During the one-day event, four growers open their doors and give visitors a behind-the-scenes glimpse of their world.

It is also a chance for the growers to sell fresh flowers and plants, and donate the proceeds to a charity of their choice. Some will also offer food.

Over the past six years, ap-



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

See TOUR, page A12

### A worker at California Pajarosa Floral prepares to deliver a load of flowers.

## TOUR

From page A1

proximately \$36,000 has been raised for local nonprofits.

The event was launched five years ago when the Santa Barbara-based California Cut Flower Commission called a meeting of local growers to suggest they hold an open house.

The result was a self-guided tour that offers participants a chance to purchase locally grown products, and gives businesses a chance to promote themselves.

At its heart, the tour is a way to persuade consumers to choose locally made products over those grown and shipped from foreign countries. While cheaper, such a choice can bolster the economy and support local farmers.

"It's important to bring attention to the flower industry and the nursery industry in this area," said Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Executive Director Jess Brown. "It's such a strong part of our agriculture industry."

According to Kathleen Willford, who organizes the open house tour, the local cut flower industry brings in more than \$684 million annually.

That can be a financial boon

for the county, she said.

"Ninety-two cents of every dollar goes to the local economy," she said.

More than 250 growers strong three decades ago, the local cut flower industry has taken a catastrophic hit from foreign growers, which are not bound by the regulatory laws that govern those in the U.S., and which pay their workers pittance.

Those growers can therefore undercut those who work and live in Pajaro Valley, Williford said.

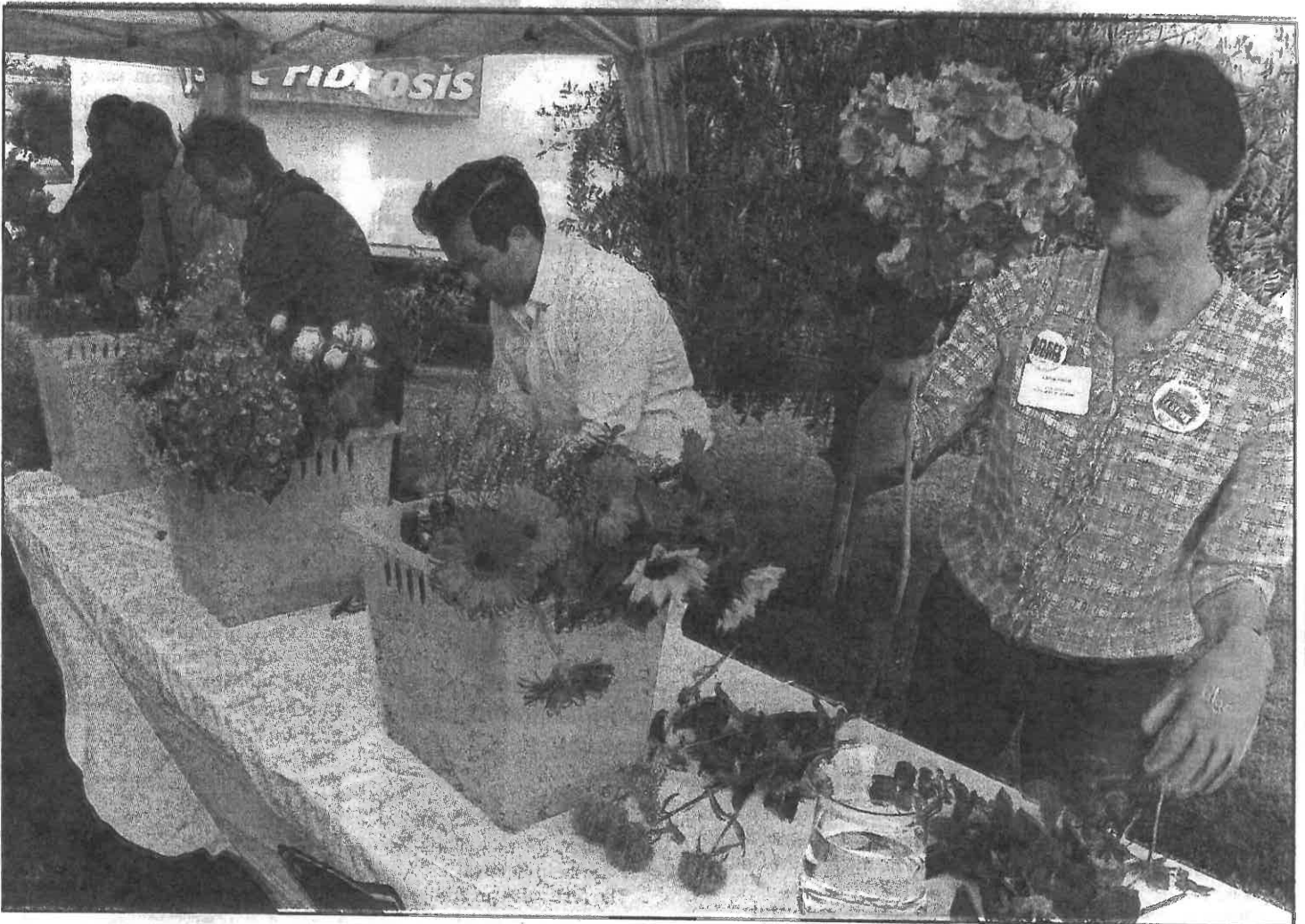
According to California Pajarosa Floral President Paul Furman, 99 percent of the roses sold in the U.S. come from places such as Columbia, Africa and Holland.

Still, more than 1,500 people took the tour last year, and Furman said he has seen increased numbers of consumers who are demanding locally grown agricultural products.

"It's a growing success," he said.

Stuart Kitayama of Kitayama Brothers Farms, which has participated in the tour since its inception seven years ago, said the event is a chance to meet the community that supports him.

He said the event is also an opportunity for him to see his yellow growers, and serves as a reunion for more than 30 family



Congressional candidate Casey Lucius, City Councilman Jimmy Dutra and others take part in a flower arranging competition Wednesday at California Pajarosa Floral in Watsonville to help kick off the annual Monterey Bay Greenhouse Growers Open House.

Tarmo Hannula/Reglater-Pajaronian

members who show up to help  
 "It seemed like a good thing to do, and it turned out to be more than we realized," he said.  
 Kivayama also said he enjoys the chance to support Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, his company's charity of choice.  
 "That's been a good connection," he said.

•••  
 The seventh-annual Monterey Bay Greenhouse Growers Open House Tour will take place Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The event is free.

Experts will share inside secrets about growing fresh flowers, citrus and native plants.

For information, visit [www.montereybayfarmtours.org](http://www.montereybayfarmtours.org) or call 274-4008 or email [tours@montereybayfarmtours.org](mailto:tours@montereybayfarmtours.org).

•••  
 Participating growers, and the charities they are supporting:

#### Cut flowers

- California Pajarosa, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks
- Kivayama Brothers, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

#### Citrus trees

- Four Winds Growers, Avomas Home & School Club

#### Succulent plants

- Succulent Gardens, Elk Horn Slough Foundation



OPEN GREENHOUSES

SENTINEL 6/16/16

# POLITICOS ARRANGE BLOOMS IN CONTEST



PHOTOS BY SHMUEL THALER — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

State Assembly candidate Karina Cervantez Alejo, far left, and Congressional candidate Jimmy Panetta, second from left, work furiously on their flower arrangements as they, and three others from the political world, compete in the 7th annual Flower Design Throwdown at California Pajarosa Floral in Watsonville on Wednesday. Heidi Perlmutter, from Anna Caballero's State Senate campaign and Congressional candidate Casey Lucius are at right.



# Monterey Bay Greenhouse Growers tour will take place this Saturday

By Ryan Masters

[rmasters@santacruzsentinel.com](mailto:rmasters@santacruzsentinel.com)  
[@ryanmasters831](https://twitter.com/ryanmasters831) on Twitter

**WATSONVILLE** » Each contestant stood, shears in hand, before an identical yellow bucket filled with baby's breath, hydrangea, gerbera daisies, butterfly bush, sunflowers, roses, green trick dianthus and kumquats on the stem.

"This year we've invited local candidates and politicians to compete," said Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Executive Director Jess Brown. "We're tired of all the debating, so we've decided to see what they could do with flower design."

At the count of three, the politicians reached for the

flowers, signaling the start to the 7th annual Flower Design Throwdown, a five-minute, winner-take-all, gladiator battle of flower arranging.

Jimmy Panetta, 20th District Congressional candidate, hacked away with his shears; his opponent, Casey Lucius, separated the red, white and blue flowers; Karina Cervantez Alejo, 30th District Assembly District candidate, bundled like-sized stems; and Watsonville City Councilmember Jimmy Dutra avoided rose thorns as he worked.

Meanwhile, dark horse contestant Heidi Perlmutter, a staff member for Anna Caballero who stood in as a proxy

**BLOOMS** » PAGE 8

## Blooms

FROM PAGE 1

for the absent 30th District Assembly District candidate, methodically addressed her bucket of flowers with intense focus.

The promotional contest, which took place Wednesday on the property of commercial cut flower farm California Pajarosa, served as a ceremonial opening to this Saturday's Monterey Bay Greenhouse Growers Open House tour.

The behind-the-scenes tour will give the public a peek at the variety of flowers, succulents and other nursery products grown in the area, while explaining the farms' sustainable methods and cultivation secrets.

Guests will be able to purchase fresh flowers and plants at each of the locations, with proceeds going to local nonprofits selected by each farmer. In addition to California Pajarosa, Saturday's open houses include Four Winds Growers, Kitayama Brothers and Succulent Gardens.

During the past six years, approximately \$35,000 has

## MONTEREY BAY GREENHOUSE GROWERS OPEN HOUSE

**What:** Free, farmer-guided tours of local farms.

**When:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday.

**Where:** California Pajarosa, 133 Hughes Road, Watsonville; Four Winds Growers, 887 Casserly Road, Watsonville; Kitayama Brothers, 481 San Andreas Road, Watsonville; and Succulent Gardens, 2133 Elkhorn Road, Castroville.

**Information:** 831-274-4008 or [montereybayfarm-tours.org](http://montereybayfarm-tours.org).

been raised for local nonprofits through the annual Monterey Bay Greenhouse Open House, according to event and floral coordinator Kathleen Williford.

Williford said the Wednesday's contest was held to raise awareness of the region's cut flower farms, which she said have a \$682 million economic impact on Santa Cruz and Monterey counties every year.

"And 92 cents of every dollar goes directly back into the local economy, which supports roads, schools and jobs," said Williford.



Casey Lucius, who is running for the U.S. Congress seat held by Sam Farr, lets her creativity bloom as she works next to Watsonville City Councilmember Jimmy Dutra at the Flower Design Throwdown Wednesday.

**"We're tired of all the debating, so we've decided to see what they could do with flower design."**

— Jess Brown, Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Executive Director

The local cut flower industry used to be much larger, according to Williford and California Pajarosa's Paul Furman. Before the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Eradication Act became law in 1991, opening the market to South American importers, the region boasted more than 250 cut flower growers.

"There are maybe 20 now," said Furman. "We've only survived because of solid business decisions and a willingness to change with the times."

As the time limit lapsed, the politicians made last second adjustments to their floral designs before stepping back to admire their work.

"In all the years we've done this, those are the five best arrangements I've ever seen," said John Furman, longtime owner of California Pajarosa.

When asked to explain his strategy, Panetta said, "Symmetry and balance — just like politics."

Yet this time all the politicians lost. The judges handed the prize to a visibly surprised Perlmutter.

Her secret?

"I watched a bunch of YouTube videos on floral design last night," she said.

# Luncheon enjoys record-breaking attendance

RP  
5/21/16

**WATSONVILLE** — The ninth annual Down to Earth Women Luncheon was held at Driscoll's Rancho Corralitos in Watsonville, and had a record attendance of more than 300 women.

This event is for women who are involved in, or support, agriculture in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. The purpose of the luncheon is to raise funds for Agriculture's Focus Agriculture program, the Jimmie Cox Memorial Scholarship fund and the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau's school programs.

This year's featured speaker for the event was Christina Stembel, founder of Farmgirl Flowers, who spoke on the topic of "Growing Your Business." Brittany Nielsen, news anchor for KSBW Action News 8, was the Mistress of Ceremonies for the luncheon.

Also speaking at the event was Cynthia Druley, executive director of CASA of Santa Cruz County, who spoke about her experience as a participant in Agriculture's Focus Agriculture program. Maya Capurro-Frosch, 2016 Jimmie Cox Memorial Scholarship recipient, spoke about her education and how the scholarship will help her achieve her degree.

# DOWN TO EARTH



Fancy hats were the order of the day at an annual luncheon that serves as a fundraiser for agricultural education at the Driscoll's plant on Corralitos Road. Photo by Tarmo Hannula

## Luncheon enjoys record-breaking attendance

*Staff report*      *LIFE - JUNE 2016*

**WATSONVILLE** — The ninth annual Down to Earth Women Luncheon was held at Driscoll's Rancho Corralitos in Watsonville on May 12, and had a record attendance of more than 300 women.

This event is for women who are involved in, or support, agriculture in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. The purpose of the luncheon is to raise funds for Agri-Culture's Focus Agriculture program, the Jimmie Cox Memorial Scholarship fund and the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau's school programs.

This year's featured speaker for the event was Christina Stembel, founder of Farmgirl Flowers, who spoke on the topic of "Growing Your Business." Brittany Nielsen, news anchor for KSBW Action News 8, was the Mistress of Ceremonies for the luncheon.

Also speaking at the event was Cynthia Druley, executive director of CASA of Santa Cruz County, who spoke about her experience as a participant in Agri-Culture's Focus Agriculture program. Maya Capurro-Frosch, 2016 Jimmie Cox Memorial Scholarship recipient, spoke about her education and how the scholarship will help her achieve her degree.



# The future of agriculture

Congratulations to Maya Capurro Frosch.

The Aptos High School senior was recently awarded Agri-Culture's 2016 Jimmie Cox Memorial Scholarship.

The annual scholarship is awarded to a student who plans on majoring in agriculture. Frosch is the team captain of both the varsity golf and basketball teams at her school, and has received the Distinguished Student Award for the social studies department as well as the AP Scholar Award. She was accepted into four universities, and has selected Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where she plans to study agricultural business.

"We had a record number of applicants this year, we wish we could have given them all a

scholarship," Agri-Culture President Steve Bonfadelli said. "Maya is an outstanding individual. She is a well-rounded student. She will be a great addition to the agriculture community when he finishes college."

Agri-Culture has partnered with American AgCredit, so the recipient of the Jimmie Cox Memorial Scholarship also receives an additional \$2,000 award from the American AgCredit Scholarship Program. This brings the total scholarship amount to \$4,000.

