



# THE GOLDEN SLATE

The official newsletter of the California  
Agricultural Teachers' Association

## The Growth of the Ag Mechanics Fair

*By Dan Crookham, Exeter High School*

I remember many years ago when Chris Dixon was teaching in Kern County, and she took up the cause of the Agriscience Fair Career Development Event (CDE). She was a tireless cheerleader, and although I did not directly supervise a project entry for many years, I certainly knew what it was, and I knew that supporting my coworkers and our students was a worthwhile endeavor. I feel a bit like Chris now as I promote participation in the Ag Mechanics Fair CDE. It is here, and it is growing. I hope that you, too, will support it and consider entering students this April.

Some sections and regions have had project competition events over the years, and of course, many chapters participate in the Agriscience Fair CDE. Both of these were part of the inspiration for the Ag Mechanics Fair. This contest allows our students to compete on the state level with their actual projects on-site and to meet face-to-face with a judging panel to defend and explain their projects. The three high scores from a school will be the chapter's team score, and awards are presented much as the Agriscience Fair awards are. There is no maximum number of projects that a chapter may enter. This contest is inclusive. The same rules have been adopted by the California Youth Ag Expo, which will host its ag mechanics contest in August.

One comment we hear from advisors is the obvious logistical issue of transporting large projects to the contest site. Yes, that is a valid point. But we overcome these same challenges to get kids to our local fairs, statewide contests, and conferences. I know that we can shift the paradigm to include our mechanics kids in these statewide shows and

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contests as well. The April date fits right between the Fresno State and Cal Poly State Finals contests and will continue to be discussed, but it must fit on the calendar somewhere; so it's April 27 this year. College of the Sequoias (COS) Tulare will be the host again, and they ran a great contest last year.

Josh McKenzie (Mira Monte HS) and I are working with Charlie Abee at COS to grow this contest and continue the discussion of its merits. If you have any questions about entries or the contest format, please check out the Curricular Code or contact any of us. The future of the Ag Mechanics Fair is a bright one, and we hope to have your chapter in attendance in April.

