

# Golden Slate

January 2011

The Official Newsletter of the California Agricultural Teachers' Association

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## Deadlines

### Copy Due in Elk Grove

March 21, 2011 ..... May 2011

### Issue Date

Articles should be e-mailed to [cata@calagteachers.org](mailto:cata@calagteachers.org).  
 If you cannot submit the article electronically, please be sure your material is typed, double-spaced. Advertisements, graphics and forms must be camera-ready. ☞

## Sacramento Scene

### Freshman Legislative Class Faces Budget Challenge

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

One of the interesting aspects of teaching freshmen was watching their anxious little faces during the first few days of school as they tried to fit into the high school environment, navigate the hallways on campus, and generally avoid being embarrassed by their more senior peers. In high school, the dance of the freshmen happens every year. In Sacramento, it happens every two years.

We just witnessed the swearing in of the newest set of Assembly members and Senators in California, and it looked a lot like the first day of school in the Capitol. New clothes, anxious and excited family members, and plenty of freshman "nervous energy" present in the building.

During the next few weeks, there will be a quick learning curve into the intricacies of navigating the stairwell between the "old" and "new" parts of the Capitol, finding a decent lunch without waiting in line, and how to avoid incurring the wrath of the more powerful seasoned veterans in the building. Just like the freshmen on your campus, some will learn quickly — for others, it

may take some time.

### Budget Crisis

One of the first issues facing this group is the ongoing budget crisis — and it's going to get their attention early. As predicted, the state budget (passed 100 days late) is already some \$6 billion in the red, with an expected deficit well into the \$20+ billion range by the end of fiscal year 2012. Given the economic forecast facing California, that means that we either: cut spending, increase taxes, or do some combination of both of those things.

The State Legislature is now in a special session, called by outgoing Governor Schwarzenegger to deal with the crisis.

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# Sacramento Scene

## Freshman Legislative Class Faces Budget Challenge

(Continued from page 1)

Given the lame duck status of the administration, however, nobody expects anything productive to come out of this session. Governor-Elect Jerry Brown has been meeting with legislative leaders, as well as the caucuses of both houses, in an effort to build support for some type of action after he releases his budget proposals in mid-January.

Whether or not this results in any meaningful progress remains to be seen. As one senior staffer told me the other day, "This is going to be on the dark side of ugly." Years of indecisiveness and inaction have taken their toll, and we are about out of options in dealing with this state's ongoing structural budget problem.

The success or failure of the Legislature in dealing with this crisis may well be determined by the willingness of this freshman class to meet this challenge head on. Hopefully, we will see some effective leadership emerge — we sorely need it!

### National Leadership

Having just returned from the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) national convention in Las Vegas, I can also affirm that we are sorely in need of leadership at the national level as well. During our four-day stay in Las Vegas, I had the unfortunate opportunity to observe two organizations literally sleep-walking their way through existence.

It was painfully obvious that neither ACTE nor NAAE have a clue, a plan, or the focus necessary to shape national education policy relative to issues faced by classroom teachers in career and technical education (CTE) and agricultural education.

Over the next few months we face unprecedented challenges at the national level. The Obama administration has made it very clear that its vision for use of Carl Perkins revolves entirely around increasing the college graduation rate in this country — not vocational or technical skill acquisition by students. With the Perkins Act due for reauthorization, that is not a sentiment that bodes well for our programs.

In addition, administration officials have determined that the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) position held by National FFA Advisor Larry Case will not be filled upon his retirement, and USDOE will do the "bare minimum" required by FFA's national charter relative to the duties of that position.

Given what we observed in Las Vegas, I am convinced that our ability to effectively influence national policy is completely inadequate, and that unless leadership efforts emerge from the National FFA organization or other sources, we are in real trouble.

One of the primary topics of the CATA Mid-Winter Governing Board meeting will be an examination of alternative actions that we might take to partner with other states that share our common concerns, as well as other options to meet these challenges. I look forward to that discussion and the opportunity to visit with all of you at spring regional meetings regarding this topic.

### Positive Impacts

As we prepare for another busy spring season of field days, fairs and other activities, keep focusing on the things that we do that positively affect the lives of your students and people in your community. Despite the many challenges facing us over the past several years, our programs continue to demonstrate that relevant, meaningful instruction coupled with focused leadership and personal development activities are a powerful educational tool.

I am confident that our programs will continue to grow and prosper, and look forward to working with all of you to ensure that we have the resources necessary for that to happen. Hope you had a great holiday season! ☼

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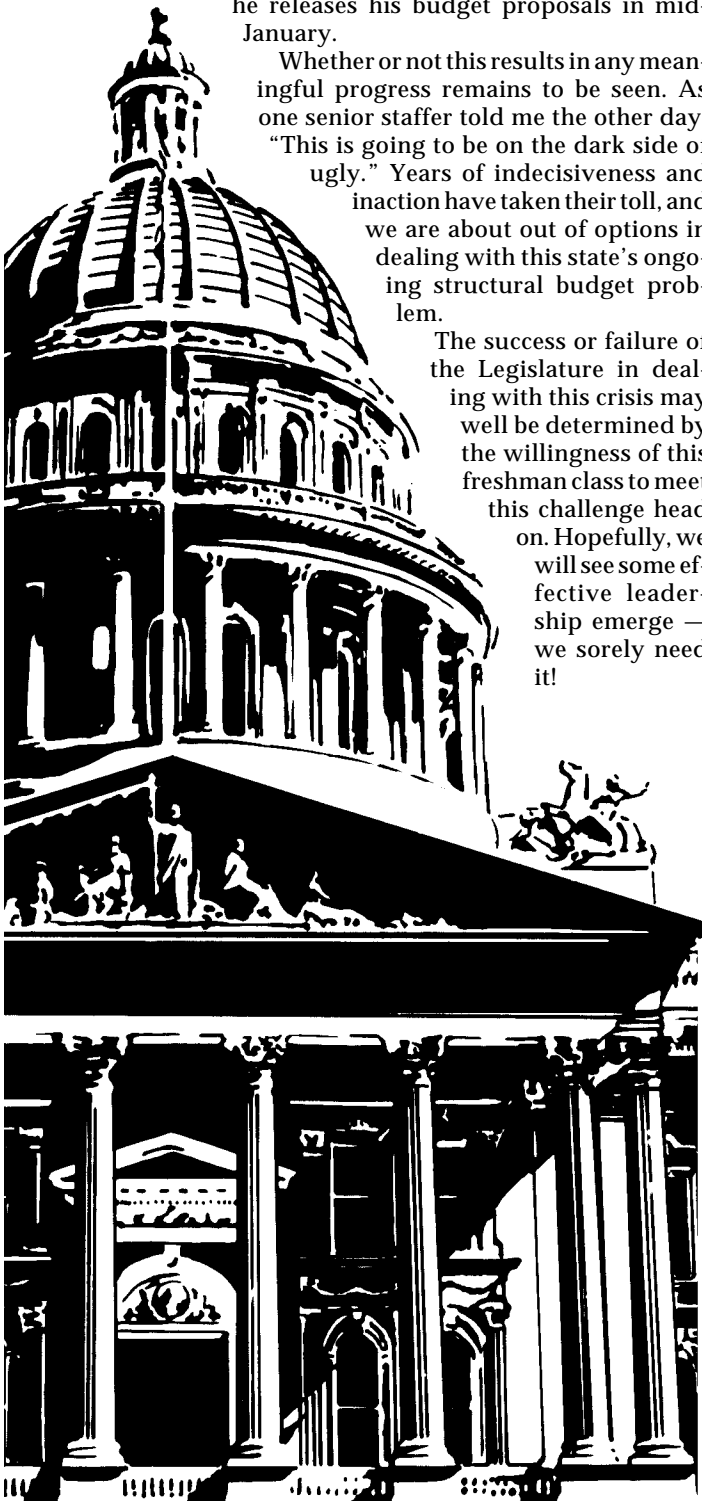
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# Officers' Corner

## Increasing Standards Doesn't Make Them Smarter

By Darol Fishman, CATA President

As a 28-year veteran, and please don't refer to me as a "grizzled old vet"... I'm not there yet... I have seen many changes and buzzwords in our profession. There was a time not long ago when we referred to our profession as Vocational Agriculture, which meant many of our lessons and teachings, both in and out of the classroom, were designed to provide hands-on job skills training for our students.

We used contests and competitions through the Future Farmers of America to provide a means for our students to polish those skills and become more proficient in their chosen area of interest. And don't forget the Supervised Occupational Experience Program, which then took our students to the real world of job preparation where they became an entrepreneur and operated their own business or were employed by a local company and applied those skills learned in their Vo-Ag classes — and could actually "earn while they learn."

All of the verbs in the previous sentences are in the past tense... thanks to my fifth grade teacher Mrs. Robinson, so you may be asking if I believe the basic foundations of our way of teaching have gone the way of the dinosaur?

### Focus Shifted

By no means, but our focus and terminology has shifted to a point where we need to sell our programs even more and the market has become somewhat convoluted. Thanks to "political correctness" and the thinking that more syllables sound smarter, we now teach Agricultural Education and use Career Development Events through the FFA as instructional tools so our students can feel good when they tried real hard but still got their butt kicked and can go to their Supervised Agricultural Experience Program in the school greenhouse and raise a flat of flowers, which is a viable entrepreneur project because it's in their record books.

Over the course of time, things have evolved and in order to survive, Vo-Ag programs have changed with the times as well, and I'm not so sure for the better. Increased graduation requirements have forced many high school students out of many vocational classes and into a general education pattern.

In order to keep these students, many Agriculture programs have worked their curriculum to meet a graduation or college/university entrance requirements, most of which involve the sciences or the arts (Ag. Biology, Animal Science, Floral Design) and everyone is happy as classes flourish and programs are full. Graduation requirements are being met, the numbers to justify the program are being met, and teachers are meeting their contractual obligation with enough students to justify their jobs.

But when one really looks at the situation, are the true needs of our students and their employability being met? Or life skills for that matter... Can they balance a checkbook, do they know how loans and interest work, and can they fill out a reasonably sound job application packet? More English and math requirements don't mean we are producing a better product... they just have more requirements to graduate.



Darol Fishman

### Basic Skills Training

Teaching cutting-edge technology is great; however, it is my belief, in conjunction with businesses in our community that students need to be trained on the basic skills of how things work or operate. Our industry partners believe in our class offerings, which are pretty much the same as they were some 20 years ago. The course content has changed, however, to reflect technical changes in the field.

A 4-stroke diesel engine still runs on the same cycle it did 100 years ago and there may be differences in designs between manufacturers, but a diesel engine is a diesel engine. Employers are not looking for journeyman level employees to start! They want someone who can show up to work on time, put in an honest day's work, and have the basic building blocks so

they can be trained on brand-specific equipment by the company they work for.

### Developing Supervisors

Along with this comes the issue of developing supervisors who know the job and can manage a crew of people. My brother is a lead electrician at a carrot-processing plant and received his basic training in high school and built on that through his local community college and union. He's making more money than the teachers who taught him... a possible sign of a successful program.

Our profession is not immune to the same problems in the agriculture industry as we are part of that same industry. Many of our young teachers do not have the practical experience it takes to provide a quality **vocational** training program. They

met the graduation requirements of their local high schools, had the right classes to enter college, and they are well versed in the leadership roles they learned through the FFA, but have little "on the job" training to bring into the classroom/lab setting.

This is no fault of their own, but it belies the issue of our agriculture classes meeting graduation requirements and standards and not relaying the **real world** experiences required to train our young workforce.

### Vocational Agriculture

How are we going to develop students for careers? Education needs to free itself from the trap that says all students need to be trained in the computer, science and biotechnology fields where they supposedly can make the big bucks. Vocational Agriculture needs to take the lead role... as it has many times before... in making our educational leaders and legislators realize that many of their well-intended but ill-conceived educational plans for all students to go to college are not working.

(Continued on page 4)

**Our students don't need to be trained on the cutting-edge of technology... they need to be provided with basic training that can be built upon by an employer.**

# Teacher Educator News

## UC Davis Happenings

By Lynn Martindale, Agriculture Education Teacher Supervisor, UC Davis

Agricultural education is doing well at UC Davis; Agricultural and Environmental Education (AEE) undergraduate major, credential program in Agricultural Education, the beginning of student organizations: Collegiate FFA (CFFA), Student California Teachers Association (SCTA), Friends of Agricultural Student Teachers (FAST) and three outstanding student teachers.

### Undergraduate Major:

#### Agriculture and Environmental Education, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

The undergraduate major in Agricultural and Environmental Education (AEE) has continually been growing, and we are expecting more growth with it being in the catalog and on the website. The major is housed in the Animal Science Department, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

The undergraduates have various opportunities to take hands-on courses in all six domains of agriculture. A student who majors in AEE and completes the credential program has a credential in Single Subject Agriculture, Agricultural Specialist and K-9 Science.

We are looking forward to

this being a pipeline for the Agricultural Education Credential Program.

#### Agricultural Education Credential Program, School of Education

We, Cary Trexler and I, are building the agricultural education credential program, slowly but surely. The undergraduate major, the CFFA, the Student California Teachers Association (SCTA) are all avenues for students to learn about the agriculture education credential program.

Because the agricultural education credential program is small, we both teach courses that are not in the agricultural credential program. We hold responsibilities outside of agricultural education, in science education supervision and general education courses for

the School of Education. There are numerous meetings and responsibilities that are expected of us unrelated to agricultural education.

Unfortunately there are only two of us, so we must be selective about everything we do, simply because we cannot go and do everything, even if we wanted to.

#### CFFA 2010

Collegiate FFA provides a number of professional development opportunities to help students get an edge in today's job market. Students who are looking for a career in education or industry, Collegiate FFA has what you need to jump-start your career. The invitation was sent out via Facebook to UC Davis students who were active in FFA, and more than 20 students showed

up to the first meeting.

Officers were elected at the second meeting:

- ✓ President: *Adrienne Bradley* from the Bear River FFA Chapter;
- ✓ Secretary: *Kiah Twisselman* from the Atascadero FFA Chapter;
- ✓ Treasurer: *Sarah Warren* from the Winters FFA Chapter;
- ✓ Reporter: *Margery Magill* from the Marysville FFA Chapter; and
- ✓ Sentinel: *Isai Herrera* from Perris FFA Chapter.

They are looking forward to participating in numerous activities and events throughout the upcoming years. Please "like" UC Davis Collegiate FFA and have your students see what we are doing!

#### SCTA 2009

Student California Teachers Association (SCTA) consists of college students pursuing careers as educators. SCTA provides opportunities to address the broader aspects of education, such as technological advances, governmental policies and issues, social issues and philosophical controversies. UC Davis activated the SCTA in 2009. The officers are:

- ✓ President: *Sarah Warren* from Winters, Agricultural and Environmental Ed;
- ✓ Vice President: *Michelle Trueblood* from Lincoln, Community and Regional Development ;
- ✓ Secretary: *Katie Conley* from Santa Rosa, Animal Science;
- ✓ Treasurer: *Haley Schorr* from San Jose, Human Development;
- ✓ Reporter: *Jessica Simpson* from Gazelle, Animal Science and Management;
- ✓ Membership: *Jamie Fussell* from Vacaville, Agricultural  
(Continued on page 5)

## Officers' Corner

### Increasing Standards Doesn't Make Them Smarter

(Continued from page 3)

*Race to the Top* and *No Child Left Behind* should also include those who have no aspirations to go on to college but still require the skills to be a productive citizen in our society. Plans must be put in place to have a positive effect on **ALL** students and not just the upper 10 percent who **might** be going on to pursue a four-year degree.

There is no better way to do this than to start at the grassroots level and work with the local boards of education and advisory committees... no one knows the education requirements of their students better than these two groups. Check with your local school

board members and you might just find they are more in favor on your thoughts than against them.

Although general education requirements have increased in my 28 years of teaching, students don't read any better than they did when I first began way back in 1983. I don't have scientific studies to back up my claims... all I have to do is learn who my students are and recognize their abilities.

#### Basic Skills Still in Use

Our students don't necessarily need to be trained on the cutting-edge of technology... they need to be provided with basic training that can be built upon by an employer. Many of the basic job skills taught, oh

so many years ago are still in practice today and provide a viable gateway to employment.

Students must also come to the realization that they aren't going to make six figures just by showing up to work that first day; they aren't going to have a corner office; and they might not get two weeks of paid vacation. They should also be trained as to the social aspects of the workforce... it is difficult to find a job where they can use only one hand because the other one is being used to hold up their pants and that not all employees/customers appreciate skull tattoos on forearms and a dumbbell pierced through a tongue. ☹

# Teacher Educator News

## UC Davis Happenings

(Continued from page 4)  
and Environmental Ed.

The SCTA will be participating in community service activities, volunteering at schools, and learning about the structure of education. It is an outstanding opportunity for future teachers to become university leaders.

### Friends of Agricultural Student Teachers (FAST) 2010

The Friends of Agriculture Student Teachers (FAST) is a group of individuals interested in mentoring student teachers and financially supporting student teachers throughout the student teaching year. They held their first fund-raising event at Rominger West Winery to offset the cost of the CATA Conference in June. It was a successful event and FAST will be holding a similar event next year in November.

### Student Teachers 2010-2011

Three student teachers are having fun and truly enjoying their experiences at local high schools. The student teachers spend one academic year at the high school, participating from the first day of school until the last day of the school year, engaging students, encouraging FFA participation, and supporting and promoting SAEs for all students.

✓ **Javier Gutierrez** is student teaching at Pioneer High School in Agriculture Government and Economics under the direction of *Holly Whitworth*. He is a graduate of Winters High School and was a part of the Winters Agriculture Department and participated in the FFA. He was involved in leadership activities and conferences, as well as, showing at the local county fair. He is also earning his BCLD. He is a business major from Santa Clara University.

✓ **Michael McIntosh** is a graduate of Palmdale High School.



UC Davis Student Teachers 2010-2011

While in high school, he was actively involved in the FFA, serving as an officer, participating in the Greenhand Team, Land Judging, Job Interview, and showing at the county fair. *Shawna Simmons-Clark* was his inspiration for becoming an agricultural teacher. Michael is doing his student teaching at Winters High School with *Kent Benson*. He graduated from Sacramento State University as a history major.

✓ **Luz Mendoza** is a graduate of Roosevelt High School in Fresno. She came to UC Davis as a freshman majoring in international agricultural development. After graduation, she volunteered at Polytechnic Duncan High School with *Ted Kimbler* for one year prior to applying to the credential program. She continued to learn about agricultural education and then decided that she wanted to give high school students some of the opportunities that she didn't have. Luz is student teaching at Dixon High School in Agriculture Biology under the tutelage of *John Ramos*. Luz is also earning her BCLD. We are thankful for the out-

standing cooperating teachers and mentors to the student teachers.

### UC Davis to Lead Project to Improve Agriculture in Vietnam and Cambodia

*Cary Trexler*, associate professor in the School of Education and the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, received a three-year \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Horticulture Collaborative Research and Support Program to enhance vegetable production by small farmers in Cambodia and Vietnam.

In partnership with colleagues in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Trexler will use the grant to address some of the greatest challenges facing farmers in Cambodia and Vietnam to grow vegetables safely and cost effectively.

This is a public health problem because only 8-9 percent of vegetables grown in Vietnam meet government-mandated food safety standards. In Cambodia, which is one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia, farmers are unable to grow enough fresh vegetables, so the country imports

about 45 percent of fresh vegetables and most from Vietnam.

"Our goal is to empower small farmers, 59 percent of whom are women, with education and training for sustainable vegetable production that limits post-harvest losses, increases food safety, increases market access and increases income. To help change the current system requires an interdisciplinary approach and requires people from historically isolated fields to work collaboratively to solve pressing problems," said Trexler.

Faculty from two Vietnamese and one Cambodian university will join the UC Davis team to research social, environmental and production-related concerns.

An important aspect of the project includes building a model participatory action network that links farmers together to ensure they work collaboratively to overcome common challenges. This will be accomplished through Farmer Field Schools and farmer-led research with cooperation with the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Vegetable Center in Taiwan.

For the last seven years, Trexler has worked with universities throughout Vietnam helping them to develop innovative teaching strategies and reform their curricula. In 2007-08, he was a Fulbright Scholar at the Agriculture and Forestry University in Ho Chi Minh City. He has also helped to establish Advance Programs in three universities from the Mekong Delta to the Mountainous regions, which were sponsored by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training.

Trexler has also consulted for the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training on (Continued on page 6)

# Teacher Educator News

## California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

By Ann De Lay, Assistant Professor

“Without a struggle, there can be no progress.” — Frederick Douglass

Education goes through its ups and downs. Even in the darkest of times, there is great light. The updates which follow are beams shining through, reminding the profession and the public there is much to be celebrated in education today. Read and be affirmed that agricultural education is a phenomenal career with which to be affiliated.

### Welcoming ‘New’ Faces

Dr. Ben Swan has returned to the department to fill a tenure track position in agricultural education. Dr. Swan taught at Ripon High School before completing his Ph.D. at Ohio State University. He spent the past four years teaching agricultural education coursework and supervising student teachers at the University of Idaho. Dr. Swan is teaching the Laboratory Methods and Technology courses, supervising student teachers and advising the Alpha Tau Alpha.

Dr. Glen Casey also returned to the department, half-time, for the balance of his faculty early retirement program. Dr. Casey was the associate dean in the College of Education for the past four years. He is working to prepare the department for upcoming accreditation reviews.

### Curricular Enhancements

The department received an Oreggia Family Foundation Grant to add video-conferencing equipment to the classroom (10-100). The goal of the upgrade was to provide distance-learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

The project was finished in early September and is currently being utilized. Many



classes have used the technology to connect with guest lecturers in industry. The clubs housed in the department have also used the equipment to communicate with a variety of leaders, thereby strengthening the experiences afforded members.

The Agricultural Communications program received a donation of 25 Kodak Playsport digital video cameras from Western Growers and AdFarm. Students have begun to use the cameras to capture video footage to edit and produce educational and promotional pieces featuring growers and businesses as part of the “Know A California Farmer” campaign.

The new equipment has provided currency to the program as much of the public goes to the Internet first to seek information. Check out the website to view student work and meet those choosing to feed the

world: <http://knowacaliforniafarmer.com/>

### Cal Poly on Facebook!

Social networking is a force drawing our world together. Cal Poly recognizes the importance of social networking to building and maintaining connections between the university, alumni and the public. Those with Facebook accounts can catch the latest news around Ag Circle by friending Cal Poly in the following ways:

- ✓ Cal Poly, SLO – Agricultural Education and Communication Department;
- ✓ Cal Poly ACT;
- ✓ Cal Poly Ag Ambassadors;
- ✓ Cal Poly SLO-Alpha Tau Alpha
- ✓ Cal Poly CFFA;
- ✓ I Love Farmers... They Feed My Soul;
- ✓ Latinos in Agriculture (LIA) – Cal Poly.

### Student Leaders

The Cal Poly “Learn by Doing” philosophy is alive and well in the department. This year’s Ag Ambassador officer team welcomed 75 energetic students to the organization. They have gone full speed ahead through their program of activities by transporting an informational booth to the National FFA Convention, organizing a university-wide ambassador social, and have already begun planning their winter and spring quarter activities.

The Cal Poly Collegiate FFA (CFFA) has shown record growth in welcoming 84 students to the first meeting of the school year. Events such as the San Luis Obispo County Giant Pumpkin Contest and Farm in the City Night afforded the club visibility in the community of San Luis Obispo.

Members of CFFA also have served as judges for sectional FFA events and have even organized fundraisers like Chicken Drop Bingo to further support the efforts of FFA chapters in the San Luis Obispo Section.

The Agriculture Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) have also witnessed growth. They had over 50 students attend their first meeting of the year and have maintained steady interest and participation in their activities. The group prepared a digital short for entry in the Give a Farmer a High Five competition.

The video may be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3dWJbgwvEo>

Four students will compete in the California Department of Food and Agriculture state collegiate discussion meet and 13 students will attend the ACT National Professional Development Conference in Columbus, OH in February.

The Cal Poly Alpha Tau Alpha (ATA) recently inducted 26 new members into the organization, the largest class to date. Club officers hosted an evening with three new teachers, providing members the opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities they face in their jobs each day. In late November, Jack O’Connell spoke to the group about is-

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## UC Davis Happenings

(Continued from page 5)

ondary teacher professional standards and university accreditation and for the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization on secondary teacher management issues in Vietnam.

### UC Davis Field Day, March 4-5, 2011

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Information regarding the Field Day can be found at <http://www.aes.ucdavis.edu/NewsEvents/Events/fieldday> or by contacting:

- ✓ Field Day Student Coordinator: Kathryn Salfen ([kesalfen@ucdavis.edu](mailto:kesalfen@ucdavis.edu))
- ✓ Student Recruitment Coordinator: Korie Robinson ([krobinson@ucdavis.edu](mailto:krobinson@ucdavis.edu)) ☼

# Teacher Educator News

## California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

(Continued from page 6)

sues and trends pertaining to public education in California. Members felt encouraged by his comments and confident in their choice to enter the agriculture teaching profession.

### Student Teachers

This academic year, 13 students will earn their Single Subject - Agriculture and Agriculture Specialist credentials at Cal Poly. The fall student teachers included: *Adam Bullard* (Exeter), *Richard Darrach* (Hilmar), *Georgia Edmonson* (Santa Maria), *Anne Katuin* (Ann Sobrato), *Caitlin Lawrence* (Hughson), *Ashley Rupp* (Linden), *Courtney Serafin* (Hughson) and *Brandon Wiebe* (Wasco). Spring student teachers include: *Amie Mertz*, *Ellie Michel*, *Stacey Norton*, *Nicole Silveira* and *Vanessa Tobin*.

Preparing the next generation of agriculture teachers requires a team of dedicated professionals, on the university campus and on high school campuses across the state. A big thank you is extended to the cooperating teachers who have devoted their time, attention and expertise to this group.

### Agriculture

#### Communications

Students enrolled in the Ag Communications emphasis have invested considerable effort updating the image of the *Ag Circle Magazine*. The sleek new cover, logo and layout are evidence of the skills and knowledge students gain from their coursework and implement as a result of the opportunity to produce a publication of this magnitude.

#### Master's Degree Program

Candidates interested in applying for the master's degree program may do so any quarter except for summer. The Master of Science degree with a specialization in Agriculture Education has been replaced with the new degree of Master of Agricultural Education



Cal Poly Student teachers

(MAE). Check the department webpage in late March for a list of courses to be offered late spring 2011. <http://aged.calpoly.edu/masterdegree.html>

#### Congratulations to Kevy Souza!

Agriculture science student *Kevy Souza* was selected as a National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassador and will spend the year speaking about a variety of agricultural topics at high schools and universities across the country. Interested schools may request a presentation on an industry-related topic by contacting *Marty Tatman* at: [mtatman@ffa.org](mailto:mtatman@ffa.org).

#### Meat Processing Center

The 14,500-square-foot facility is scheduled for completion in October 2011. The meat industry has provided the majority of the funding for this facility. The facility will educate young professionals for

the food industry, afford opportunities for research on safety issues and provide a site to communicate with consumers. The meat processing industry will also be able to work with Cal Poly in this "one-stop shop" for product innovation and packaging development.

#### Searching for a new President for Cal Poly

*Dr. Robert Glidden* has provided campus leadership as the interim president for Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. President emeritus for Ohio University, *Dr. Glidden* has had a successful tenure in administration. The search continues for the next president as three finalists have been named and the interview process moves forward.

#### Teach Ag Day

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo's Teach Ag Day will be held Friday, February 18, 2011. The event will focus on the agricul-

tural education profession and the steps to becoming a highly qualified agriculture teacher. Think about the students you serve, identify several who you believe NEED to consider teaching agriculture and personally invite them to attend.

The profession will not grow itself. We must directly encourage our students to consider teaching agriculture. For more information, contact *Ann De Lay* at [adelay@calpoly.edu](mailto:adelay@calpoly.edu).

#### Technology Park

Cal Poly has been working hard to attract technological companies to the central coast in an effort to build industry opportunities for faculty and students. The latest installment in this effort can be located just beyond the dairy. Technology Park offers 25,000 square feet of office space devoted for rental to high-tech companies settling in the area.

#### Area 52

Visitors to Cal Poly soon notice their path through the center of campus is impeded by a large green fence marked AREA 52. Work began during fall 2010 on the new Cal Poly Center for Science and is set to continue until summer 2013.

The center will house the physics, chemistry and soil science departments. The project will include 200,000 square feet of state-of-the-art teaching, research, laboratory, study and office space, and the completed center will feature privately funded research spaces for Western Coatings Technology Center and Environmental Biotechnology Institute.

For more information, visit the top secret project site at: <http://www.area52calpoly.com/>

**Other Dates to Consider**  
✓ **Cal Poly Cooperating Teacher Workshop** - February 18, 2011.

✓ **Western Bonanza Jr. Live-stock Show** - February 18-20, 2011. For more information: <http://www.westernbonanza.calpoly.edu/>. ☼



# News and Views

## Meet California FFA Advisor Legend Ralph Loya

Ralph Loya, Retired Agriculture Teacher

Reedley College (1976–2005), Hanford High School (1966–1976), North Salinas High School (1965–1966)

Ralph coached 10 state championship teams and three national championships. He was and remains highly competitive today in all livestock species at fairs and expositions while assisting the staff at Reedley College. He had over 40 State FFA Degrees, 10 American Farmer Degrees, five State Officers, and two National Officers

*(Golden Slate): What is student achievement?*

(Ralph Loya): When a student finds what he/she is passionate about, sets goals and realizes personal growth.

*What is winning?*

Winning is a pre set goal that requires a commitment to hard work, become and remain dedicated with a “stick to it” attitude. Winning is the visualization of seeing your end result.

*How do you motivate students?*

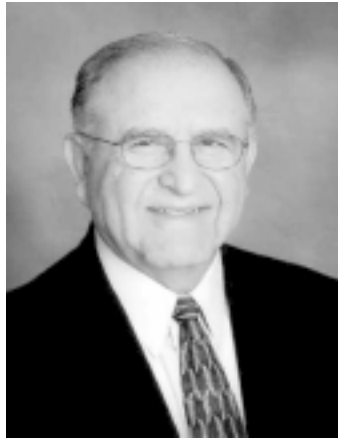
I seek individual opportunities to offer a genuine compliment.

*Who or how do you ask for help?*

Be a good listener from those you admire the most for their success. What are they doing to succeed and will it help you improve.

*What is a coach?*

All coaches whether they realized it or not are teachers. Their primary responsibilities



Ralph Loya

are to pass on their knowledge, promote skill development and bring out the best and develop confidence in students.

*How do you coach?*

You coach by praising, giving encouragement and recognition for their achievement. You should teach them how it

will feel to win by visualization and seeing it clearly and in great detail in your minds eye.

*Why didn't you ever quit or stop?*

I have a sincere sense of pride for the teaching profession. I always knew there were students that needed my support, encouragement and to motivate them to succeed in life. I had great teachers and coaches that helped me to develop the ambition and attitude to succeed to become an agriculture teacher.

*What is passion?*

Passion is doing something you love to do, you are in the right place, and it's always the right time and you are doing it all for the right reasons. Passion can also be defined as having a strong desire to achieve.

*How do you acquire passion?*

Once you find what you love to do and it inspires you, then

that becomes your passion. Do what you love to do. If you ask yourself, “What would I do with my life if I knew I couldn't fail.”

*How do you get students committed?*

Everyone wants to win. The question is, “are you willing to commit to a successful plan?” Do you as the instructor have the commitment and the past winning reputation to give them the confidence that all their hard work will pay off?

*Advice to FFA advisors?*

Be a good role model both in and out of the classroom. Seek out advice from successful advisors.

Enjoy your work and make it fun and develop the attitude that “Today I get to teach and do they really pay me for this job.” Show students that you really care and you want them to succeed. What will your legacy be? ❁

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- ✓The chapter that submits member lists of the greatest number of people who have purchased California Ag Plates in **proportion** to their chapter FFA membership will win \$1,000.
- ✓The chapter that submits member lists of the second most people who have purchased California Ag Plates in **proportion** to their chapter FFA membership will win \$500.
- ✓There will be 10 random draws of people who have ordered a California Ag

Plate. The member whose list includes that person will receive \$100. The member's chapter will receive \$200.

- ✓The contest will end on Feb-

ruary 1, 2011. ❁

Contact *Hugh Mooney* to request forms or for additional information at (916) 319-0488 or [hmooney@cde.ca.gov](mailto:hmooney@cde.ca.gov).



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## Being Their 'Most Memorable Teacher'

By Steven Rocca, Assistant Professor, Post-Secondary Division Vice President

This past fall I was given the opportunity to teach our Agricultural Education Orientation course at Fresno State. This course serves as an introductory experience for students who are considering a career in agricultural education. Like all new teaching assignments, I was a little nervous about teaching a course for the first time. There would be lectures to prep for, presentations to develop and lots of unfamiliar assignments to grade. In fact, there were 11 short essay assignments that my students were expected to complete in order to receive credit in the course, which fulfills the early field experience requirement for our credential program.

### First Assignment

The semester began and it wasn't long before my students starting submitting their papers. The first assignment asked each student to reflect back on their educational experiences and write about their most memorable teacher, one who had influenced their decision to consider teaching. After collecting my students' papers, I found some time to sit down and began the process of grading them and providing feedback.

Typically, I don't look forward to reading through a big stack of papers; however, I would soon discover that this was no ordinary assignment. Once I began reading my students' work, I found a great deal of enjoyment, inspiration and optimism in what I read. My students would share their stories of the educators who have shaped their lives and guided their career aspirations.

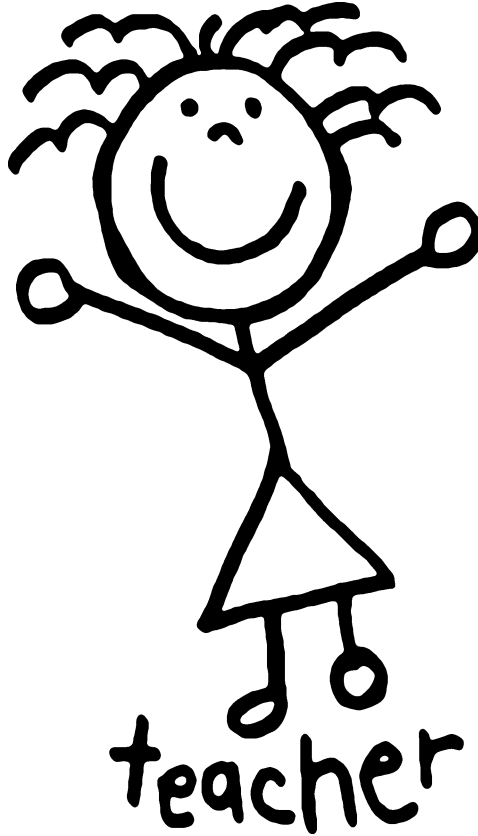
I was so moved by the essays I read, I felt that I should share my experience with you. Here are a few examples of the inspirational stories that my students contributed and allowed me to share with you.

### Inspirational Stories

"My most influential teacher would have to be my high school agricultural teacher, Mr. Doug Sehnert. I have known Doug since I was in sixth grade and started raising pigs in the 4-H program. His wife was in charge of the Swine group. He was always helping me with my project since he lived only a minute down the street and a mentorship was formed. He continued to help me with all of my endeavors throughout high school. I took many classes from him in high school through the FFA program, but learned the most in those hours I would spend building and repairing things with Doug around the school farm... His dedication to his students showed daily in everything he did, but he is my most memorable teacher because behind the scenes he raised three daughters and took care of his wife while virtually living at the high school. For that reason I aspire to lead my life in his footsteps and continue my life with that much discipline."

—Kevin McGuire, former student of Mr. Doug Sehnert, Fallbrook High School.

"Mr. Wenstrand is my role model of a great Ag teacher. His dedication to his students and FFA program along with his passion for agriculture are something I aspire to have as a teacher as well. He was not only my teacher, but also my friend



and I am thankful I was able to learn from him. Mr. Wenstrand is the reason I want to be an Ag teacher and he has set a great example of what an agriculturist and teacher should be. I hope I can one day influence a student's life in a positive way just like he has influenced mine."

—Kassandra Dewey, former student of Mr. Matt Wenstrand, Caruthers High School.

"Mrs. Beams, or Ms. Lewis as I knew her, was my high school agriculture teacher at Live Oak High School in Morgan Hill, CA. I only had two years with Mrs. Beams since I transferred to Live Oak after going to an all-girl private school for my first two years of high school. Coming from my other high school, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life... I had lost sight of the idea of becoming a teacher and had no direction besides the fact that I wanted to be in agriculture. Being in Mrs. Beam's class, I had started to entertain the idea of becoming a teacher once more. Her class was always fun and laid back, but very informative and structured at the same time. She assigned fun projects and never gave us busy work. The work she gave us never seemed like work, but rather something that I enjoyed and wanted to do. She made me think that there should be more teachers out there like her and that I could possibly be one of those people to fill that position."

—Kayla Wood, former student of Mrs. Kendra Beams at Live Oak High School in Morgan Hill.

—Kayla Wood, former student of Mrs. Kendra Beams at Live Oak High School in Morgan Hill.

"At first glance you would think that Mr. Gragnani is a hard person to approach and relate to, but after you get to know him, you learn he cares a lot about his students. In fact, a lot of what he does is for the students. If you sit in his class and do not work to your full potential, then he will try his best to challenge you in whichever way is best for you and your goals. I admired Mr. Gragnani for being such a multi-tasker, a hard worker and being very knowledgeable about the agriculture field. I learned a lot from him. Whenever I had a problem I knew I could go to him for advice... I sincerely thank Mr. Gragnani for all his help and think of him as my mentor."

—Marisela Ruiz, former student of Mr. Rick Gragnani, Tranquility High School.

(Continued on page 14)

## Impromptu Speaking Contest

By Krista Vannest, John H. Pitman High School, Secondary Division Secretary

What is the FFA? Why do you wear those blue jackets? What brings you to Fresno? Haven't we all heard these questions at the fair, on an elevator, at a restaurant? That moment is a learning opportunity for the questioner, but more important, a promotional opportunity for us. We need to do a better job of preparing ourselves and our students to be ready to answer these questions and seize the opportunity to spread the message of agriculture.

In coaching the leadership and speaking CDEs, I have noticed a gap in our contest structure and I found an idea I am proposing for filling that gap. Creed speakers get so motivated and encouraged to participate; however, once they finish that contest, the next options are major undertakings to tackle.

I found that my super-excited creed speaker would look at the Prepared and Extemporaneous curricular code and quickly lose interest.

### Logical Next Step

I have a unique opportunity on my campus of teaching the Speech Communications course for our English Department (in case the NCLB police are reading this, I do hold a limited subject special authorization credential for this assignment).

This assignment has given me access to learn and use the National Forensic Curriculum. They have a contest that I stole and tweaked to fit what I think we need in the FFA; it's called Impromptu Speaking.

This contest is a logical next step for our creed speakers to continue in their speaking skill development. Students know the general areas where the topics will come from (a prelude to Extemporaneous Speaking) and have the opportunity to research and prepare before they attend the contest. However, there are no notes or resources involved.

### Off-the-Cuff Response

This contest is a completely off-the-cuff response to the topics they get in each round (prelude to Parli Pro and to an extent Job Interview). There are two competition rounds, Questions and Keywords/Quotes.

For each round students enter the room, draw three topics and select one to present. They have one minute to gather their thoughts (think Parli Pro minute) and then present their response to the judges in less than two minutes. The judges will score and rank all contestants within the round. Student scores from

both rounds are tabulated to determine the overall ranking.

I understand we don't need more work on our plate, but I want to get "more bang for my buck" when it comes to time invested in teams these days. Training students for this contest does not mean another afternoon taken from you; my suggestion is to have students drop in for a few minutes (literally), select a topic, think and deliver it to you. You offer feedback, the student goes on their way, and you get back to work.

Our section ran this contest last year with our other speaking events. It is a quick contest as the students rotate through the rooms and refine their delivery skills.

### Room to Evolve

There is room for this contest to evolve to include a third round of current events, such as Water Use or Issues Facing the Dairy Industry (this could be selected annually), that could be added once this contest gets off the ground. The purpose of this article is to introduce the contest idea to the CATA membership and get some more sections to try this contest out this year.

I am so grateful to report that I have a sponsor, which means that now I am able to submit the contest for consideration to Winter Governing Board. The membership will get a chance to take a closer look at the contest at Summer Conference and, hopefully, the probationary contest will run next year.

### Take a Look

Please consider taking a look at the Curricular Code.

E-mail me at [kvannest@turlock.k12.ca.us](mailto:kvannest@turlock.k12.ca.us) and I will forward it to you.

I would appreciate receiving some feedback and more important, try out this speaking opportunity. In the end, the work we do is all about the students and the benefits we can give them through our leadership opportunities and our time. Thanks for reading! ❁



## Being Their 'Most Memorable Teacher'

(Continued from page 13)

"Becoming an Agricultural Science Instructor has been a goal of mine ever since I stepped foot into Mr. Labrucherie's Agriculture Science I class as an incoming freshman at Madera High School... Seven years ago I chose to become an Animal Science instructor basically because I was in Mr. Labrucherie's Agriculture Science I class. My desire to teach was intensified following his seizure. He had taught so many students at Madera High and I want to follow in his footsteps and continue teaching the youth in our community about the wonderful world of agriculture. Mr. Labrucherie never stopped teaching the students of Madera County and neither will I."

—Kendra Willet, former student of Mr. Bob Labrucherie, Madera High School.

I hope these passages demonstrate the inspiration that drives my students to join our profession. Their stories reinforce my belief that we are all capable of being role models and providing that important influence that inspires students to want to teach agriculture. It really doesn't require much effort; it is just a matter of doing what is best for your students.

We do get busy with our daily routines and it leaves little time to consider the impact we have on our students, but I'd encourage you to take a moment to think about the students in your program.

Do you have a student who needs a role model in their life? It wouldn't take much for you to be their inspiration. Take an interest in them and you may find that someday you too can be someone's "Most Memorable Teacher." ❁

## Quit Taking a Ride and Take the Wheel

By Alex Flores, South Coast Regional President

I receive the Zig Ziglar newsletters on a weekly basis and it is one of the most influential reading resources I use to improve my agriculture teaching performance. Zig focuses on leadership and spiritual guidance, which helps me find new ways to improve as a professional in education, as well as to develop relationships between my students, parents, community and school. This article puts into perspective my leadership role in the CATA and agriculture education program in my section, region and state.

*“On any of life’s journeys, we have to make a choice before we begin any of life’s trip. Our options are these: we can be a passenger, or we can be the driver. It’s our choice.”*

*“People who choose to be passengers have to go where the driver is going. Passengers have no control over how fast they move ahead, no say about whether rules are observed. Then again, being a passenger has its appeal. You can just sit in the car and relax, oblivious to your final destination. You can plug in your earphones and listen to music, or you can take a nap. You can text a friend or read a book. You don’t have to pay attention to where you are, who’s in front of you, who’s behind you, or whether you’re making progress. Your journey may be pleasant enough, but if you choose to be a passenger, you’re just going along for the ride.”*

*“It’s not what happens to us but how we choose to respond to what happens that determines our next move, next path, next relationship, and next risk. If you choose to be a driver, you accept the responsibility for moving toward your goal. You pay attention and focus on getting to your destination. You make decisions on how quickly to move ahead. You avoid potholes and stray ice chests in the road. You decide when to stop and refuel. You may choose to take a detour. You make all the decisions that affect the safety of your passengers and your success in reaching the goal.”*

*The physical distance between a passenger and a driver is less than three feet; the psychological distance is enormous. Which would you choose to be?”*

— Lee Cohan

### CATA/FFA Promote Members to Be Drivers

We have all been both in the passenger and the driver’s side. Sometimes it is nice to be on the passenger side, but as agriculture teachers, I think we have a built-in autopilot that makes us want to be in the driver side for the most part.

On the flip side, our students are learning to be drivers regardless if they are officers or members. It takes time and patience to develop the necessary skills to take over when needed and to know when to step aside and be a follower or passenger.

When my term as CATA Regional President began, I was not sure how much of an impact I would have, being from a single-person department, a small school, and a small section. But then



I realized how much others have influenced me to be a strong agriculture teacher and that I have been able to be effective in all the areas of the agriculture program.

I am constantly evaluating what I need to work on and make the necessary improvements to better myself. One of my goals as Regional President of the South Coast Region was to conduct a planning meeting for our sectional and regional CATA leaders.

The goal of the meeting was to collaborate with other agriculture teachers in our region, learn about what other chapters do, review existing section by-laws and best of all — just talk “shop.”

Coming from a single-person department, I look forward to talking shop to actual agriculture teachers rather than talking to the wall in my class (don’t worry, I don’t do this often).

After several failed attempts of organizing the planning meeting, we finally conducted our meeting at our region’s COLC with great success. I am hoping to conduct another planning meeting at our Roadshow or our next Regional Meeting to follow up on what we discussed at our last meeting and continue making our organization the strongest in our state.

The same goes for our FFA members — we encourage them to take the lead so they can be successful in real-life situations and prepare them for the rigors of their future. One of my personal enjoyments is making those impacts on students who would have otherwise coasted through high school. I believe we continue to make those necessary strides in making our students better by promoting the leadership, the projects, the field trips, and most important, recognizing their achievements.

Just this past week, one of my students who is attending the University of Debuque, Iowa came to visit me. I could not believe the changes that already had occurred in his life. He is a completely different student from when he was in high school and it was only several months ago. He is in the driver’s seat and is ready to take the wheel for the journey of his life.

Whether you’re in the driver’s seat or the passenger, take turns controlling the wheel. A real driver has the remarkable ability to deal successfully with the unexpected, the unusual and the extraordinary.

Positively dealing with the unexpected by looking for solutions, not excuses, is the choice winners make. ❁



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## Do You 'Walk the Walk' or Just 'Talk the Talk'?

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, California Department of Education

Few who read this article in the *GOLDEN SLATE* will disagree with my next statement. "The three circle agricultural education model is the best education model that exists in our society." The value of our curriculum content combined with Supervised Agricultural Experience and leadership development though involvement with the FFA is unmatched by the education system. How close does your agricultural education program come to the model?

As I travel around the state conducting program reviews, it occurs to me that sometime I became one of those experienced agricultural educators. It is interesting that every teacher in the programs that I visit know what is on the Ag Incentive Grant Checklist. Most teachers share with me which areas they have identified for needed improvement.

It is refreshing to hear teachers who understand which portions of their program are strong and which are in need of growth. It is even better when they share with me recommendations that their advisory committee has made to cause program improvement.

### Needed Growth

There are four common areas of needed growth that several programs often require. **Quality Criteria 1.C., Career Paths or course sequence**

Many programs struggle with retention of students (Quality Criteria 9.E.) Those of you who have programs that meet Quality Criterion 12 know that item 12F requires that the program enrollment consist of at least 25 percent third- and fourth-year students. The state average is only about 17 percent. The absence of a logical career path or course sequence will cause student retention to be low. A course sequence that consists of Ag Biology, Floriculture, Ag Mechanics and Ag Leadership will not lead toward high retention.

### Quality Criteria 1.H., Recordkeeping taught in all classes

When I conduct a program review, I ask to see the grading policy for the department relative to record books. I will ask to see the minimum requirement for a student to get full credit for the record book portion of their grade. It is clear to me that many teachers just do not know how to correctly complete the California FFA Record Book. I was lucky; Warren Weaver was one of my high school agriculture teachers and he taught me well. To this day, I know if I need clarification, he is my go-to person. It may be time to require teachers to complete professional development related to record books.

### Quality Criteria 3.D., SAE project visits are documented by department records

It is amazing to me that many programs lack complete documentation of project visits. Especially in a time of difficult budgets, there is great value in having evidence that teachers are spending time outside of the school day to supervise student SAE projects. It is not just important that the visits occur, but that the visits are documented.

### Quality Criteria 6.C., the Agricultural Advisory Committee has assisted in the development or revision of the Program Plan

Often I read advisory committee minutes that clearly describe the reports by the teacher or teachers to the committee related to



Hugh Mooney

the many activities of students in the program. Often discussions that the committee had are included in the minutes. What I want to see are recommendations that are made by the committee. The program belongs to the community and the committee's role is to speak on behalf of the community to assure that the program meets the needs of the students.

### Programs Excel

Please do not assume as you read this article that there are not programs that excel in each of the areas that I have described above. There are many programs, both large and small, that have quality program sequences with more than 30 percent third- and fourth-year students. There are several programs that teach recordkeeping well. Many programs do an excellent job of documenting project visits. There are many programs that have strong advisory committees

and their district fully matches the agriculture incentive grant. They walk the walk.

Trash-talking is popular in society. There are many shows on television today that encourage this behavior. When I began my teaching career in 1984, I quickly learned that talk was cheap. Results are what matter.

Do you "talk the talk" or do you "walk the walk"? Are decisions made that improve opportunities for your students to achieve at higher levels or are decisions made related to what you want for yourself?

### Cal Ag Plate Program

When agriculture education is faced with a threat, we look to the agriculture industry to come to our aid. Jim Aschwanden has told us more than once that we just need to keep doing the right thing for our students and the industry will support agriculture education. When we asked them for help to support the California FFA they have delivered every time.

The latest example is the California Ag Plate program. It has been a battle for more than a decade to get this done. The industry stuck with it and last April, the Cal Ag Plate program was announced at the state FFA convention.

It has the potential to generate hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to support FFA leadership development programs. All the industry has asked of us is to help them sell 7,500 plates to get the program started.

All we need to do to make this happen is get 10 percent of our members to find one person to order a Cal Ag Plate. If it was important to us, it would have happened already. I would hate to think that the industry came through and we dropped the ball. We even have created a contest that will allow your chapter to win \$1,000 by encouraging people to invest in California FFA and California Agriculture by purchasing a Cal Ag Plate.

Do you "talk the talk" or do you "walk the walk"?

✂

## A Perspective from the Ivory Tower

Dr. Lloyd McCabe

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I have mentioned in previous writings that if you have ever visited the California Department of Education, you know that we work on the fourth floor in an environment that at times resembles a “psychosomatic rat maze.” Take today for instance — at 10:12 a.m., approximately 42 phones rang simultaneously and consultants and staff members across the division scrambled into action. Curiously enough, their reaction to the phones ringing reminds me of those “behavioral conditioning” experiments conducted by 19th century psychologists who watched how fast rats could find a piece of cheese hidden in a maze. As for me, I probably would have failed all those behavioral tests — not because I couldn’t navigate through the maze, mind you; I just don’t like dairy byproducts!

### Extraordinary Times

During the 2010–11 school year, California educators have witnessed extraordinary times and challenges to their profession, accentuated by our long-standing state budget crisis that has seen K-12 funding reduced by \$9 billion over the last three years. I wish I could reassure each and every one of you that everything will be alright. But the truth of the matter is that my generation has never seen times like these before . . . and I hope, will never see times like these ever again!

The question that looms like an 800-pound gorilla in a China shop is: “how will the state budget crisis affect education — and specifically agriculture education — now and in the near future?”

While I don’t pretend to be clairvoyant on either our economy or state fiscal problems, I do believe I can draw on my experience to give you a thoughtful perspective on where we are, where we are headed, and what we need to do in order to survive and prosper in these difficult times.

### Perspectives

**Perspective #1:** Agriculture education will survive our current educational crisis and perhaps even come out of it stronger than it is today. It is important for you to realize that agriculture education has been through “tough times before.” It survived the Great Depression of the 1930s, World War II in the 1940s, and the passage of Proposition 13 in 1979. Each one of these pernicious historic events could have led to our premature demise. But we survived these events because of one underlying fact — agriculture educators are the most resilient, hardest working, most adaptable people on the face of the planet!

**Perspective #2:** The state budget crisis is not going away anytime soon! Governor Jerry Brown will be faced with three troubling options in the coming months of his administration. Option 1 is to continue to cut all segments of the state budget, including education. Option 2 is to raise state income taxes and increase fees across the board. Option 3 is to allow the state of California to go into receivership. As you can see, none of these options is very appealing. The bottom line is this for those involved in education — prepare for

more educational cuts! Depending on your source of information, the state of California is anywhere from \$28 billion to \$150 billion in debt with no prospect of economic recovery in the foreseeable future.

**Perspective #3:** If agriculture education and other CTE disciplines are to survive these tough economic times, they will need to demonstrate to their local communities, boards of education and school administrators that they are indispensable to student success.

### Back to Roots

So, you might ask yourself this simple question: “What can I do as an agriculture teacher to become indispensable to student success?”

Answer: “Get back to your ancestral roots!” By ancestral roots, I mean the three circles of success — classroom, SAE and leadership development (FFA).

Now I know what you are all thinking?... The old man in the Ivory Tower is going to lecture us on the value of the three circles.

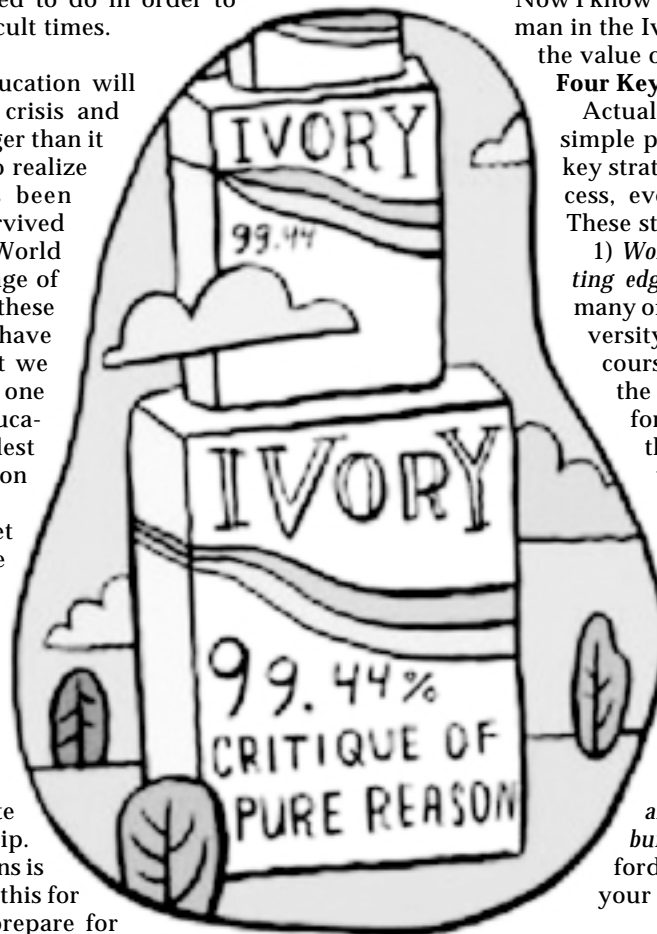
### Four Key Strategies

Actually, I am not! Instead, because I am a simple person, I am going to point out four key strategies that can help you achieve success, even in the most challenging times. These strategies include:

1) *Work hard to develop an exciting and cutting edge curricular program!* I realize that many of you have developed and teach University of California-approved agriculture courses — which I applaud. I believe in the very near future, the pioneering efforts that your profession has done in this arena will have profound educational reform implications on how we teach all students both at the state and national level.

But having that curriculum and making it come alive in the classroom are two separate issues. Your next challenge in the years to come will be to teach agricultural biology — not as another biology course, but as an innovative agriculture course!

2) *Forge parent, school, community and business support via relationship building.* This means that you can’t afford to become a “silo of isolation” on your high school campus any longer! Get  
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## A Perspective from the Ivory Tower

*(Continued from page 18)*

to know your parents, teachers, community citizens and business partners.

I know many of you have complained that you don't have the time to do regular project visits, or visit with key stakeholders because of the excessive preparation time it takes to get ready for the classroom. But in tough economic times, when everything is on the "chopping block" in your school district, it's not what you know that counts... but who you know!

3) *Help all students succeed!* From time to time, I have had agriculture student teachers at UC Davis ask me why I so passionately believe in the student recognition awards program via State FFA Degrees, Proficiency Awards and American FFA Degrees. My answer is four-fold:

- ✓ When students receive state recognition through these awards, students feel great, parents become proud, administrators smile, board members are pleased, and you and your program look good to the community.
- ✓ The student awards program can be a powerful instructional tool in helping motivate all types of students to excel in other educational experiences throughout the entire school — not just agriculture or FFA activities!
- ✓ Successful students in *any* academic or career technical disci-

pline invariably recruit other successful students into that program.

- ✓ Educational programs that succeed or are proven winners ultimately catch the attention of community citizens who are more likely to freely provide human and financial resources. Most agriculture teachers are constantly trying to build community support for their programs. A process, which can take many years to accomplish, may be achieved virtually overnight when students are succeeding through the student recognition awards program. Is it any wonder that regional supervisors constantly advocate these awards to teachers in the field?

4) *Celebrate and publish your student and program success stories!* Take the time to celebrate your student and program successes! What this means is that you need to "take a personal time-out" and "pat yourself on the back" when something good happens in your program. You deserve it! All of us know how demanding our profession is and the emotional price that teachers pay for doing their job over and beyond the call of duty!

Well, those are my four simple strategies to achieve success. I hope you take them to heart and have a successful school year. As for me... I think I hear my phone ringing, so it's back to the maze! ❁

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## Calendar of Activities 2011

January 13-14 .....	Winter Governing Board .....	Galt
January 21-22 .....	Student Teacher Conclave .....	Modesto
January 29 .....	Natural Resources State Finals .....	Reedley College
February 5 .....	Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree & Vine Pruning .....	CSU - Fresno
February 19 .....	Superior Region Meeting .....	Redding
February 26 .....	Central Region Meeting .....	Stockton
February 26 .....	San Joaquin Region Meeting .....	Madera
February 28 .....	South Coast Region Meeting .....	San Luis Obispo
March 26 .....	North Coast Region Meeting .....	Dixon
April 2 .....	Southern Region Meeting .....	Pomona
April 16 .....	CSU - Fresno Field Day .....	CSU - Fresno
April 16-19 .....	State FFA Leadership Conference .....	Fresno
April 20-23 .....	NAAE Region I Meeting .....	Fresno
May 7 .....	State FFA Judging Finals .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19 .....	Executive Committee Meeting .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19 .....	Pre-Conference Governing Board .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19-23 .....	CATA Summer Conference .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23 .....	Governing Board Summer Retreat .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23-25 .....	Agriskills Classes .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo