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May 2008

## Central Region News

By George Sellu

We are pleased to bring you news about happenings in the Central Region. The Central Region has enjoyed the success of our students, student teachers and advisors and we are proud to report a net growth in the FFA chapters in our region. We are experiencing numeric growth in students and family members. We would like to congratulate the following teachers on the birth of their babies; Matt Baffuno (boy), Stacy Ingalls (boy), Sabrina Olivias-Henry (girl), Jessalee Goerhing (girl), Sherry Johns (girl), Krista Vannest (boy), Megan Dyk (girl).

We continue to have fantastic collaboration from the community colleges in the region with Cosumnes River helping with the state degree ceremony in the north, Modesto Junior College hosting the regional parliamentary procedure contest, Merced College hosting the State Degree ceremony in the south and Delta College gearing up to host both the fall region meeting and the north State Degree ceremony next spring. We would not be able to do all of the FFA events in the our region without the close collaboration of our community college agriculture staff. We would like to thank the community college instructors for their unflinching support. We also look forward to working with Brandi Asmus, the new full-time agriculture instructor at Woodland College as we prepare for the fall activities.

### Success

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to our advisors

and community partners who have worked hard to mentor and support 433 state degree and 33 regional proficiency award recipients this year. Congratulations to Woodland, Turlock, Galt and Ripon, for hosting very successful steak & oyster and/or crab feeds to help support their chapters.

### Chapter updates

*Newman FFA* was approved for the Proposition 1-D grant and is anxiously awaiting the arrival of those funds. Site development has begun for their new 2 acre school farm on the school campus. The program is growing with current numbers around 375 members and three advisors. Students and advisors are gearing up to purchase their livestock for the Stanislaus County Fair and are looking forward to having members showing in almost all livestock species this year.

*Delta High School* teachers and students are excited about the completion of their campus-wide construction project. The agriculture department now has two new classrooms that are equipped to teach both life and physical sciences. Their wood and welding shops have also been remodeled and equipped. Teachers are excited about the opportunities that the improved facilities will provide for their students.

*Merced College* is busy this year with activities across the board. The Merced College Ag Ambassadors have been energized by their recent trip to the National Ag Ambassador Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. They are currently planning sectional FFA events and recruitment presenta-

tions. Merced College's mechanized agriculture and diesel equipment technology programs are enjoying a surge in enrollment as opportunities for student internships with a number of equipment and truck dealerships continue to flourish. In addition, there will be over a dozen \$500 scholarships awarded to students entering the program next fall. The plant science, landscape and horticulture programs have been having weekly plant sales and this has really increased the exposure to both programs. We would also like to welcome Bryan Tassej who has been hired as an adjunct instructor for the land program. He has already garnered support from the tree partners program.

### Jobs

The Central Region is one of the best places for agriculture teachers to work in California. We strongly encourage student teachers to apply for jobs in our region. Despite the budget cuts, a lot of FFA chapters in our region are expanding. So don't be left out. Look up jobs on [calaged.org](http://calaged.org) or [Edjoin.org](http://Edjoin.org). You will enjoy the collegial relationship with other teachers and mentors.

### Summer Conference

We would like to encourage you to register early for summer conference. Conference attendance for 2007 was high and hopefully we can continue the strong participation this year. The theme for this year's banquet hosted by the Central Region is *2008 CATA Born To Be Wild Biker Ball*. A wonderful time awaits you. Please contact Jake Dunn or Krista Vannest if you have any questions about the banquet.

## South Coast Region News

By Kellie Hargett

### Monterey Bay Section

*Soledad FFA* is in the process of finishing their hog facilities, dealing with the budget crisis and the FFA chapter is doing fabulous. Hog Facility donations: Home Depot - speed block (500) and mortar, Gonzales Young Farmers and Career Educational Training - labor. They are very grateful!

*Salinas FFA* just finished a successful and fun FFA week. Their school farm is finally up and running again, full of animals!

*Gonzales FFA* is keeping busy with livestock for the Salinas Valley Fair, the vet science class will be hatching out ducklings within a week, FFA week was a success with a mud football game at the farm and an 80s dance at the end of the week. There are multiple metal and wood projects on their way to completion for the Salinas Valley Farm.

*Everett Alvarez FFA* completed a very active National FFA Week with a pancake breakfast, an open house, Staff Appreciation Day, and an extended lunch rally. They are in their recruitment phase and will be visiting the middle schools shortly. They will have Prop 1-D funds for their Ag Center Building and are very excited to actually be getting their own facilities.

As far as SAE's, a small greenhouse is currently being built and Janelle Smith has thousands of plants ordered for her students to start their horticulture projects. Currently there are 35 animals for the Salinas Valley Fair.

*King City FFA* is working diligently to complete the final phase of their new livestock facility by having the ag mechanics students build the panels and gates with the help of two community members. Animals for the Salinas Valley Fair have been

purchased. There will be 6 steers, 13 hogs, and 16 sheep as well as chickens and rabbits exhibited at the local fair this year.

*Watsonville FFA* - Twenty years and ten days ago, back to the future, Watsonville presented the "King of Hearts." It was a wholesome enchantment for all those to enjoy, "Would you be my Valentine?" The social event of the year - the evening was a *success!* The mood was set with balloons galore and tunes of love, for all those who risked the chance to dance by DJ Rhythms. They came one by one, two by two, even in groups. They lined up in droves, twisting and turning, filtering through the pillars of love. Once they checked-in, they didn't check-out, that is until the end. The time had come and the cheers turned into jeers. But WAIT! Wait one more minute, wait one more song, they didn't want it to end. There was no amend. I had to do it. I kicked them all out, they cleared up the mess. I was ready to go home - after mid-night.

*Greenfield FFA* has been busy lately with the floral class, pulling off a Valentines Day student auction and fundraiser, auctioning off students and selling roses, balloon bouquets and valentine baskets. Additionally, they just finished FFA week which involved activities such as tug-o-war and turkey bowling. They have added one more member to their chapter with the birth of Ag teacher Ali Ryan's son on January 13.

*Soquel FFA* and the SC orchid society held an amazing show and sale. Soquel FFA just finished helping with a cystic fibrosis fundraising and awareness event. Also, collected just shy of 6,000 lbs of food for Second Harvest. Dog agility, turf management, and floral market programs are all going well despite the rain.

*North Salinas FFA* started off

the spring semester by welcoming Hector Jimenez as their Cal Poly teacher intern. They are also expanding their class offerings. Tom Jones now has an O.H. class. An animal/crop production class will be starting in the fall semester. The department was given \$10,000 to build up the ag mechanics program and facilities. Hector is awaiting the arrival of his spring chickens and miniature heifers, as his spring SAE responsibilities. North Salinas is moving forward and God help us to achieve our planned program improved goals. Wasabi!!!

### Los Angeles Section

*Canoga Park FFA* has received a \$500,000 grant from Lowe's for the entire school, the bulk of which will be going to their ag program. The plans right now are to build a rabbit barn, a greenhouse, purchase a new vehicle, build and landscape an outdoor classroom, and fix drainage problems in their livestock facilities. In looking towards next year, they may have a position open to hire an ag mechanics teacher.

### Ventura Section

*Camarillo FFA* has applied for two 40' x 60' greenhouses and a new swine unit through the Prop 1-D grant and are anxious to hear the results. In addition they had two Kubota tractors donated by a local supporter of their program.

*Carpentaria FFA* is having a security system put in after having some recent problems. They have gained one acre of land and are going to use it for pasture, row crops, and an orchard. Their novice tractor team took 1<sup>st</sup> in Fillmore.

*Fillmore FFA* is rebuilding their school farm. They hosted the tractor contest on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and had some new lambs born.

*Ventura FFA* - More recognition from school administration, the principal requested officers to do opening and closing ceremony at freshman

orientation. Internships are available for floral students.

*Santa Paula FFA* continues to provide opportunities for achievement by attending numerous field days, submitting proficiency award applications, encouraging school wide participation in National FFA Week, and three of their students competed in the Fillmore FFA Tractor Driving Contest in the advanced division

Santa Paula has also purchased 40 laptops for a mobile wireless laptop lab with a mobile cart, LCD projector, printer, and a Smart Board Airliner. The ag department received the second round of the Specialized Incentive Grant funds. The onsite review by Greg Beard was very successful.

**Santa Clara Section**

*Sobrato FFA* is expanding their school farm with specialized grant money. They are building a new greenhouse and a shade house. They are getting ag geology UC approved.

*Morgan Hill Live Oak FFA* - Congrats to Erin Larrus on the birth of her baby boy Brayden Lee Larrus. They have been busy working on getting their school farm updated for Business Community Day. They held a donkey basketball fundraiser in April and they are looking forward to spring and getting ready for market animals.

*Gilroy FFA* just purchased a Ford Excursion with the help of the FFA Boosters and ROP money. They are also gearing up to start a new floral program for the next school year. They have purchased an 8’x10’ floral cooler and tons of supplies to run the class.

*Hollister FFA* just received a \$900,000 donation from the Martin Rajkovich Heritage Agriculture Heritage Foundation. Money will be

added to the CTE Grant to complete the new agriculture barn project. They have been busy with FFA activities which include - FFA week tub races, Barn Dance, Novice Parliamentary Procedure Practice, Farm Days, Recruitment, Donkey Basketball, Banquet.

**San Luis Obispo Section**

*Atascadero FFA* is busy getting the livestock, horse, and welding teams ready for judging season. They also took four speakers to the regional finals in King City and had 10 students exhibit at Cow Palace in April.

*Cambria FFA* is recovering the green house and hoping that it will stop raining long enough to go out and use it! Also received 2 proficiency awards and will have their first 2 state degrees this year.

*Paso Robles Ag Department* rocks! They just culminated National FFA week with their awesome annual petting zoo, having over 250 local preschoolers and kindergartners spend a day of fun with hands-on activities at the school farm supervised by FFA students! The floral students are making monthly arrangements and scurried to get roses to all those sweethearts out there! Community service is making cards and monthly visits to a local retirement home. The grapevine pruning team chased down the state championship in Fresno! Nine welding students participated in the regional SKILLS USA contest in February, with 8 medaling, and 5 moving on to the state contest. The welding shop has a new iron worker! Beef and heifer projects are underway, and other species will soon start up! Lisa Hopkins is having a baby girl... everyone has survived multiple

Department rocks more!

*San Luis Obispo FFA* has been busy! They are excited to say they took their first trip to Turlock High School in their new suburban! Cat Country radio station broadcasted live from their FFA week BBQ with all proceeds going to St. Jude’s Children Hospital. Oh yeah, Anna is Bates pregnant with a boy and is due on July 5<sup>th</sup>.

*Morro Bay FFA* snuck in a drive thru BBQ in between rain storms with 540 dinners and 145 racks and ribs, FFA week was a lot of fun with team factor, movie night, farm olympics and kiss a cow, they are excited that this year all incoming freshman will be rushed to the high school to see the different majors they have the opportunity to show them what the Ag department and FFA have to offer.

*Shandon FFA* has been busy with many projects including installing a new lawn with a new 4 station irrigation system and the ag mechanics classes have been tearing down a covered building that the county has donated, spring cleaning, and preparing for the annual local project competition. They just finished up a whirl wind of National FFA week which included their yearly Ag Awareness day for kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> graders, a staff appreciation lunch, FFA meeting, and the ever so competitive Barn Yard Olympics.

*Templeton FFA* is very excited to have their student teacher Robin Schooder with them this semester. She is doing an excellent job. Gearing up for the busy spring schedule with many FFA activities and recruitment functions planned with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Including Ag Info Day, donkey basketball, drive thru BBQ, 8<sup>th</sup> grade orientation, and their annual project auction.

**Santa Barbara Section**

*Righetti FFA* has 25 State FFA Degree recipients, they hosted 8<sup>th</sup> graders, they had 4<sup>th</sup> high team – tree

**Proposed Curricular Code Changes**  
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[calagteachers.org/proposed\\_curricular\\_code\\_changes.htm](http://calagteachers.org/proposed_curricular_code_changes.htm)

bouts with the flu...cold and flu medicine rocks! Paso Robles Ag

pruning first finals. Classes, student numbers and chapter involvement are all going well.

*Nipomo FFA* had lots of success with sectional public speaking contest: 10 students went on to regionals representing each contest. Successful FFA dance, with students from Arroyo Grande and Pioneer Valley in attendance.

*Arroyo Grande FFA* - All is good!

*Lompoc FFA* is adding ROP advanced ag mechanics class. Pushing, pushing, and pushing to add a 4th teacher. Renovating the green house (tearing it down to the frame and rebuilding ) we are all waiting for Katie's addition to our department!

*Santa Maria FFA* is pleased to have Dawn Thomas as their student teacher. Their Ag Mechanics classes attended the Tulare Farm Show. The ROP class did a Valentines Day arrangement fundraiser. Their Ag Leadership class submitted a proclamation to the City of Santa Maria to declare National FFA week and activities followed throughout the week.

*Pioneer Valley FFA* - Things are going very well. New shade house and potting area is under construction. Valentines Day ribbon rose sale for OH did great. National FFA week rally and steer roping.

*Santa Ynez FFA* - The roof blew off the green house, so the watering system is now automatic from above. Securing animals for fair and getting ready for all the spring activities.

## San Joaquin Region News

By Shay Williams-Hopper  
and Cindy Brown

Life Beyond Ag Teaching - "Get A Life" is a quote we're all familiar with and then there is "All work and no play makes a dull man (or woman of course)."

You know that it is not a sin to have a life beyond your ag teach-

ing job right? Ag teaching is often a *life style* we know and live and it is embraced by hundreds of ag teachers throughout this state, but you are also aware that the "burn out" rate in teaching is really high *especially* for ag teachers. So what's the solution to the dreaded "burnitis outus" disease?

The key to longevity, your sense of humor's health, your overall mental health and possibly an antioxidant for negativity is, you guessed it - *Get a Life Beyond Ag Teaching!* It's almost like having *fun for you*, not just your students. It's not a novel idea, but it is a *smart* idea and it gives you something else to talk about, new experiences to share with your peers, not to mention your family members (who also get a little burned out), as well as anecdotes and lessons that you can share with your ag students. All in all it would make you a more interesting and happy person.

Here are a few of those happy people in the San Joaquin Region who have lives outside of their careers:

Did you know that Bill Davis from Golden West owns a wine and espresso bar called Monets in Exeter? It is right across the street from the Wildflower restaurant also owned by Bill and his wife.

How about Marybeth Hearn of Lemoore who has raised 38 guide dog pups and is the proud "mom" of 22 graduates from the seeing eye dog program?

Danell Daniel of Granite Hills HS who is a primo horse trainer and top team roper and was 3rd in heading and 4th in

heeling in the *state* this year - heehaw!

Shay Williams-Hopper of Tulare fame owns and farms 130 acres of citrus with her husband - sounds like fun!

Then there is Chris McCraw who is a maniac bass fisherman with his son.

Frank Tebeau from College of the Sequoias raises Boer goats with a total to date of 30 does - Go Frank! Kim Pittliano, Frank's cohort at COS raises and shows Paint horses. Her Reserve Champion "Norman" kicks buns in the show ring.

Our own fearless leader Ken Harris is a sheep and beef rancher, a gardener and mountain lion tamer.

The ag mechanics king Dan Crookham of Exeter is a Bronco enthusiast and cyclist. He has better looking legs than 80% of the female ag teachers!

Last but far from least is Todd Coons who astonished us all by placing 6th in the *nation* in wake boarding. "Get some wake" Todd! This is a real visual, Todd in a wet suit.

Okay, so you get the point right? Take a look at what a great job you are doing ag teaching and try applying some of that energy to yourself. Have some fun and build some memories! You are worth every minute and so are your students!

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