Contact State Legislators Now to Make Case for Ag Education

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

As the first half of the biennial legislative session winds to a close in Sacramento, the pace and enthusiasm around the Capitol really begins to wane as both members and staffers look forward to the fall adjournment. No more cramming for committee hearings, fewer lobbyists and constituents requesting “a few minutes of their time,” and the prospect of a few months of R&R before the final half of the session begins in January — it makes for a nice interlude.

This is typically a time when legislators focus on “renewing their relationships” with supporters and others (i.e., fundraising), as well as engaging in more local activities in preparation for next year’s election season. From the middle of September until the Christmas holidays, this is the best time to connect with your state representatives — and this upcoming break may be the most important one for the future of agricultural education in the last several decades.

Future of Incentive Grant

Why? Because processes are in place within the political arena that may very well determine the future of the Agricultural Education Incentive Grant. As most of you recall, Governor Jerry Brown, in signing this year’s state budget, noted that he was including Incentive Grant funding for the 2013-14 fiscal year, but would be instructing “members of his administration” to conduct an “investigation” to determine whether to continue funding agricultural education in subsequent budget years.

One would assume that a rational approach to conducting such an “investigation” would include a thoughtful, deliberative process designed to examine the net effect of agricultural education on the students involved, the communities served by these programs, and its impact on the agricultural industry, one of the stalwarts of our state’s economy.

Educational Model

Certainly we could expect site visits by key education policy leaders within the administration interested in an educational model that:

1) produces more post-secondary attendance from our high schools than the “college prep” (Continued on page 2)
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track does;
2) is a nationally-recognized model of excellence that is now being duplicated in a growing number of states;
3) has more than 1,285 courses that are UC/CSU-approved for admission into California’s university systems;
4) has produced thousands of business and industry leaders who credit ag education for motivating them and developing their leadership potential; and
5) has been a well-documented leader in integrating hands-on learning with rigorous academic content for several decades — long before the recent advent of chic “linked” imitators.

Heck, you might even expect to see the Governor involved, given his direct reference to ag education in his budget-signing message…. ‘Investigation’

So, how is this “investigation” being conducted? Two mid-level staff members from the Department of Finance, (an agency not normally involved in educational policy development, curriculum, or instruction) are to visit one or maybe two ag programs within close proximity to Sacramento to “investigate” and report to the Governor their recommendation regarding the future of agricultural education in California. That’s it — the “investigation” in its entirety.

No legislative or policy input sought, no thought-ful public policy forum, no opportunity for input from students, parents, education leaders, or others outside of a cursory visit by two staff-ers with no direct ties to the program they are “investigating.” Never mind the other 300 agricultural education programs serving 76,000 students statewide (51% of whom are Hispanic) — the “investigation” is now complete.

What Can We Do?

Okay, what can we do about any of this?

As I stated at Summer Conference, I believe our only hope for a sustainable future is to make ag education “come alive” by personalizing the experiences of our students, graduates, parents and others with state legislators and policy leaders in a way that simply overwhelms the shortcomings of our political “system.” Sending business suits into Capitol offices isn’t going to save the day — we need a new strategy and course of action.

We simply have to take our message, told by thousands of students speaking from the heart about their own personal experiences in our programs, directly to those who can have an impact on the Governor and others like him with little or no real-world understanding of this remarkable educational delivery model called agricultural education. They need to hear all the voices — from past graduates, parents, business and community leaders, anyone who has a compelling message about the benefits of this program. Yes, that means you, your students, and members of your community have a lot of work to do!

Talking Points

Starting right now, we need every member of the CATA to take an active role in informing and motivating supporters of ag education to contact legislators, the Governor, and other policy leaders regarding this issue. The speaking points are simple:

✔ These programs are incredibly effective at reaching students in ways that are unique and important. (Be courageous — actually invite them to visit your program to meet the students involved, and then insist that it happen!)

✔ Without this funding, schools will not be motivated to provide these programs any longer. Schools have always focused on what is required, measured, or specifically funded. Local control is a fine concept, but the state mandates for graduation and testing still exist and do not include ag education. Over time, these programs will disappear if schools have no incentive to maintain them. The Incentive Grant is not a categorical entitlement program — it incentivizes districts to maintain quality standards and then lets local districts determine how to use the funds they receive at the local level.

✔ Given the continuing importance of agriculture to the state’s economy and its future vitality as a world agricultural wonder, it is essential that these programs be maintained within our public schools. Eliminating ag education funding in the nation’s leading ag state is illogical and shortsighted. Given their past performance, these programs should be fully supported and encouraged, not eliminated.
**Officers’ Corner**

**Beginnings**
By Cindy Rohde, CATA President

Ever notice how the very best smells happen at the beginning of the day? Like early harvest mornings when you pull into a wheat field to service the machines and the rising sun pulls the dew out of the new stubble, lifting up the heavenly smell of fresh chaff and dust. Or, when you first walk into an old shop after a warm summer night and the wonderful smell of gear oil and diesel hangs heavy in the still air. You just can’t help but think how could it ever get better than this and how could you have a bad day when it begins that way!

**Still Exciting**

There’s always something special about beginnings, so full of excitement and hope and challenges to be met. This August was my 25th beginning for school, and I still felt as excited as I did on that long ago first day when I didn’t have much to go on but a lot of faith and a lot more hard work. All these years later, I know there will be meetings and paperwork and such, but still all I can see is the chance to teach the kids I love the things I love and the rest seems such a small price to pay. That’s the nature of being an ag teacher I guess. I hope the beginning of your school year was also full of excitement and hope. I wish you all the very best year ever. On behalf of your state officer team and Jim and Kerry, I would like to let you know that we stand ready to help you in any way we can to make that best-ever year happen and to keep our profession strong. Your colleagues on the Vision 2030 leadership team continue the diligent work of turning your vision for our profession into reality and I hope you will always feel free to give input and a helping hand.

**Getting Involved**

Please consider making a new beginning of leadership this year by getting involved at the section, region, or state level as an officer or committee member. I think you will find that the benefits of service are as rewarding to you as they are to our organization. You know, there is one more great smell that comes at the beginning. It happens when you walk into school on the first day. The classroom smells like absolute clean and fresh floor wax and the shops still hold the smell of metal and engines, of faint welding smoke and the dust particles that dance on the morning light.

As you take it all in, you know the kids you love will be there soon. And, you just can’t help but think how it could ever get better than this…. Have a wonderful year.

**Teacher Educator News**

**CSU, Chico Update**
By Sarah DeForest, Director of Advancement, College of Agriculture, California State University, Chico

**Enrollment Still on the Rise**
The theme of rising enrollment in the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture continues for the seventh straight year. Fall enrollment is around 720 students, approximately double where we were seven years ago. We are pleased to be attracting and graduating a larger number of talented students into the agriculture field than ever before.

Much of the credit for our success is due to our secondary agriculture teachers, who inspire students with a passion and purpose for agriculture that we are incredibly happy to inherit as they move from high school and community college into a bachelor’s degree program.

**Ag Receives Largest Scholarship Endowment in University History**
The College of Agriculture was honored to receive a $2 million gift in August to establish the Bell Family Presidential Scholarship Endowment. Dan Giustina, a businessman and philanthropist from Eugene, Oregon, made the gift to Chico State to honor his late friends Tom and Dorothy Bell and Tom’s sisters, Claudine Bell and Helen Head.

With this endowment, we will be able to attract some of the highest caliber students in the state to study agriculture at CSU, Chico and retain them through graduation.

This year we are launching the search for the first two Bell Family Presidential Scholars, who will

(Continued from page 2)

**Contact State Legislators Now to Make Case for Ag Education**

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**Contact Representatives Now**

As outlined earlier in this column, the time to access your local representatives is NOW! They are in your home district, and they will respond to you and your students — especially if you involve parents, community members, and others in requesting their time and attention.

They need to do our part to engage in this effort. Your programs are the stories your students have to tell — those stories and those students need to be what they recall when they return to Sacramento in January.

I hope to see most of you this fall at regional meetings. In the meantime, don’t hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions.

Hope your school year is off to a good start. Keep doing the great things you do for kids — just do your students and communities a favor by sharing those great things with others. If you do, we’ll win this battle.
Teacher Educator News

A Time of Transition at Fresno State

By Rosco Vaughn and Steven Rocca, California State University, Fresno

Fall semester has begun and with it came many new faces and changes at Fresno State. We are excited about our new crop of outstanding agricultural education students. We have 38 new freshmen and transfer students who joined our ag education program on their journey to attain a college degree. At your fall regional meetings you may see some new faces as well. We have 13 of our student teachers placed in the Central Valley with six full-time candidates completing their credential program this fall and seven in the initial part-time phase of their field experience.

If you walk the halls at Fresno State, you will see even more new faces. The 2013 fall semester opened with approximately 22,710 students, exceeding enrollment projections. A record number of 3,339 freshmen, along with 2,225 upper division transfer students, began taking classes this fall, along with more than 700 new graduate/credential students.

The Department of Animal Sciences and Agricultural Education has an all-time high enrollment of more than 600 majors for this academic year.

New President

If you venture to the fourth floor of the new library building you will find a new resident in our president’s office. Dr. Joseph Castro is the new president at Fresno State, replacing John Welty, who retired in July 2013. Originally from Hanford, Dr. Castro is the first valley native to serve as president of our institution.

In addition to Dr. Castro, Dr. Andrew Hoff has been named interim provost and vice president for academic affairs and Dr. Sandra Witte has been named interim dean of graduate studies.

Dr. Witte will also continue to serve part-time as our associate dean of the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology.

All together there are 48 new faculty members joining our campus community this fall.

Personnel Changes

Some of the other interesting personnel changes in our college include John Bushoven, serving as interim chair of the Plant Science Department and Athanasios Alexandrou, serving as interim chair of the Industrial Technology Department.

Andrew Lawson of the Plant Science Department is serving as interim associate dean for the College of Science and Math-

(Continued on page 5)

CSU, Chico Update

(Continued from page 3)

enter CSU, Chico in the fall of 2014. The four-year, $5,000-per-year scholarship recipients will be chosen from the College of Agriculture recruitment scholarship pool.

The Bell Family Presidential Scholarship will be based upon academic merit, requiring a 3.5 high school GPA and a 1,200 SAT or 27 ACT score. Leadership, community involvement, and commitment to agriculture will also be considered.

Please encourage your students to apply for this and other College of Agriculture recruitment scholarships using the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture Recruitment Scholarship Application on our website, www.csuchico.edu/ag, or by calling (530) 898-4262.

College of Agriculture Seeks New Faculty

In response to five years of double-digit growth in agriculture enrollment, the provost of CSU, Chico has approved a hiring plan that will add three new tenure-track faculty in the College of Agriculture. Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox and the college’s faculty have launched a search process to begin recruiting professors in agricultural business, animal science, and crop science.

The new faculty will bring expertise in marketing, animal physiology, Western U.S. production practices, and agronomy to help meet existing student demand for new classes and sections while anticipating future needs. We hope to be able to introduce the new faculty at the 2014 CATA Summer Conference.

Master’s in Ag Education Program Enters Second Year

The first 18 graduates of the Master of Agricultural Education program will complete their coursework in December. Students in the ag education master’s program at CSU, Chico take courses online from professors across the nation through the AG*IDEA consortium, as well as courses designed and taught through Chico State.

Faculty at CSU, Chico and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona received a USDA grant last fall to expand the master’s program to include an option in leadership and communication for professionals throughout the agriculture community. Dr. Mollie Aschenbrener at CSU, Chico and Dr. Kimberly Miller at Cal Poly Pomona are in the process of identifying content and coursework for the new option that will meet industry needs.

For more information on the Master of Agricultural Education, contact Dr. Mollie Aschenbrener at maschenbrener@csuchico.edu or visit the program’s website at www.csuchico.edu/ag-masters.

100% Job Placement for New Teachers

Chico State’s newest student teachers are all employed for 2013-2014. Colleen Bartlett is at Lodi High School, Shelby West has accepted a position at Atwater High School, Daniel Fishman is at Le Grande High School, Meaghan Garrison was hired at South Lindhurst, John Gladman is teaching at Liberty Ranch, Kimi Jo Olsen was hired at Lower Lake High School, Suzanne Rable is working at Liberty Ranch, and Derek Silva was hired by Galt High School.

Thank you to all of those who were instrumental in helping these young teachers prepare for a long career in the agricultural education profession. We look forward to many more years of collaboration with our high school partners.

Upcoming Events at CSU, Chico

October 4–13 ......................................................... The Chico Experience Week
October 12 ........................................................... Hall of Honor Reception
October 12–13 .................................................... Sierra Oro Farm Trail Passport Weekend
October 18 ............................................................ Chico Preview Day
January 31 .......................................................... Chico State Ag Alumni Reunion
February 2 ............................................................ Swine Education Day
February 5 ............................................................ Colusa Alumni Breakfast
February 8 ............................................................ Sheep and Goat Education Day
February 14 .......................................................... Chico Invitational Parliamentary Procedure Contest
March 1 ............................................................. CSU, Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day
June 9 ............................................................... Superior Ag Golf Classic
Look in the Mirror

By Janice Lohse, Superior Region President, Hamilton Union High School

As another school year starts for many of us, some teachers are excited for their first classroom entirely their own. Others print the course outline from the year before, and others gripe because school is already back in session. I challenge all of you to take a look in the mirror as the school year begins. Do you see the teacher you want to be? Does your community and school district see you as that amazing teacher you think you are?

Critiquing Yourself

Looking in the mirror and critiquing yourself as a teacher or advisor will take courage for some. There is always one parent who complains, one teacher in your district who thinks ag teachers don't work, and a department that doesn't communicate among the teachers.

When you look in the mirror, find a positive attribute that you bring to your students and one that you can set as a goal to improve upon this year. In agricultural education, we have the three circles to base our programs on: classroom, FFA, and SAEs. When you see this three-ring model, it should be a balance between all three.

We can all name those teachers who are good at one of these, but how many teachers can we name who are excellent in all? Does your agricultural program have a balance or are some circles appearing larger than others? Just picture our three-ring diagram as the three legs to a stool. How good is it if one doesn't exist?

Excellence

Some might ask what excellence is. Excellence is defined as a talent or quality which is good and so surpasses ordinary standards. I would like to say I fit this category everyday, but that would be a lie.

Excellence is different in each student and each agricultural department. Do you teach every student and give him or her all the same opportunities to succeed? I would like to say that in the classroom circle students are given the same opportunities. But looking at FFA and SAEs, that isn’t easy to say yes to.

Yes, every student could sign up to be on a field day team or attend an FFA meeting, but how could we find the time to be successful in all three?

Teacher Educator News

A Time of Transition at Fresno State

(Continued from page 3)

In the Animal Sciences and Agricultural Education Department, we have made some great additions to our faculty. They include Richard Harris, Judy Henson and Gayle O’Bannon as full-time lecturers this fall. Josh Hasty is coaching the Meats Team again along with John Henson, and Brad Mendes and John Cordeiro will be coaching our Livestock Team.

New Looks

The new Farm Market facility has attracted more customers to our campus to purchase our student-produced farm products. Sales are at an all time high, which will hopefully allow for additional improvements to this new facility.

The Jordan Research Building construction site has been cleared and this facility will occupy the space where the old feed mill was located.

The university water tower has been repainted with new logos, and the football team, which to date has won its first two games, is sporting some new looks with uniforms that include different combinations of red, white, and black with blue and some green trim.

The green V and other green wristbands, etc. were included for our Ag Night game against Cal Poly to demonstrate the University’s connection with our Valley’s agriculture industry. Our condolences to the Mustangs as our Bulldogs were victorious in a hard-fought battle by both teams.

Modesto Course

One last exciting thing to mention occurring this fall is actually happening in Modesto. Fresno State ag education faculty member Dr. Steven Rocca has been awarded a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant partnering with Modesto Junior College and ag education instructor Don Borges. Dr. Rocca and Don will be working together on an agricultural education early field experience course.

Students from Modesto Junior College have the opportunity to take the course and receive a stipend paying their tuition. After the completion of the project, they will be eligible for scholarships to attend Fresno State and major in agricultural education. The project will also include recruitment and transfer advising by Fresno State staff and our student ambassadors at Modesto Junior College.

We hope that this project will lead to an even stronger partnership between Fresno State and our colleagues at Modesto J.C. and help put their students on the path to careers in agricultural education.
Healthy Lifestyle Grade Check
By Krista Vannest, Secondary Division Chair, Pitman High School

I often hear the question, “How can we balance our lives as an ag teacher?” I certainly don’t have the magic wand that makes everything work out all the time, but a few years ago I met with my doctor and he gave me a very usable “Report Card” to help me work on my balancing act. It may not be perfect for everyone, but I thought I would share it and hope it helps someone else feel centered. One really fabulous side effect of doing well on this report card was that I lost weight and started healthy habits for my family.

There are seven areas that you earn a grade for, just like seven periods in a day. Each of these must be addressed and in good standing for this to have positive effects. One example my doctor used was that this is a process, like riding a bike, and sometimes you may weave side to side and get a little off track, but keep trying to ride your bike down the center of the path.

1. Diet
This can mean different things to different people. Depends on your goals. Mine was to eat healthier and keep within the recommended 2,000-calorie diet. I focused on five servings a day of fruits and vegetables. Sounds easy, but it can be hard. Having one serving with each meal is only three, so I have to consciously choose to add another serving and snack that qualify.

Best advice from my doctor was to turn anything into a salad for lunch. Brilliant, because instead of a tri tip sandwich I had a tri tip salad. Took care of my inner carnivore and earned a good “grade.”

By the way, lettuce on your hamburger doesn’t qualify as a full serving.

2. Exercise
This is a challenge because it’s five days a week of 30 minutes or more to earn an “A.” My goal was to be healthy; we are missing out on daily exercise and stress is building up in every corner of our body and mind.

Finding this time in an ag teacher’s schedule is not easy, but I started with 10 minutes and increased to the 30 gradually. I chose to get up a little earlier and I walk and jog intervals. I picked a measured route so I don’t have to watch the clock.

The early morning is such a peaceful time for me because my family is still sleeping, it’s brisk or cold outside and I get some time to work through issues in my mind and focus on the day.

Wednesdays are yoga days and I have a great video. Bad weather brings out the Tony Horton 10-minute trainer...’cmon you have time for a 10-minute workout. When I have skipped exercise, or slept in over the summer, I feel the sluggishness creep in, and I don’t like it.

3. Sleep
There is a wealth of research indicating that sleep is a key factor in fat retention and stress on the body. The minimum requirement for an “A” here is 7 to 9 hours...no less!

If your body is not getting required rest, it needs extra calories to have in reserves to keep the body going. Your body will crave more calories to keep all systems going. If you don’t eat the calories, then it must hold on to reserves or fat storage. If you are getting a proper amount of sleep, your body has a chance to rest and recharge and handle the challenges of the day.

Some of my doctor’s most athletic and calorie-conscious patients were unable to lose those stubborn 10–15 pounds until they adopted the sleep component. I believe this to be true because I have seen it work on me.

4. Relationship
This could be with a spouse, friend, family, co-worker, doesn’t matter, but our close relationships are key factors to our health. If we don’t spend time
Healthy Lifestyle Grade Check

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enjoying these relationships and fostering positive interactions, it affects our health and stress.

Make the time for date night, adult interaction, friend time, whatever works for you. My husband and I make an effort to have “just us” time, my “Wine Wednesdays” are a religious commitment I don’t give up without a fight. I do have the best doctor, because he told me right off that he did not want me to cut out wine; in fact, he prescribed it!

5. Financial Health

Why are finances included in a health report card? Stress is a key factor in every category listed and if you are not financially stable, it affects every aspect. You cannot sleep, you fight with your significant other, you eat to feel better, make excuses not to exercise…hello snowball effect!

To earn an “A” here you need to be covering your bills and living within your means. It may take a while to fix your financial grade, but you can earn high marks for making smart choices. Remember, it’s a process, ongoing and progress is rewarded. You can even give yourself extra credit for saving and making smart investments.

6. Spirituality

What does this mean? Not so much as I mean a religious connection, but many people find that an avenue for working on their spirituality.

My doctor explained to me that it’s more about you doing things that make other’s lives better without specific reward or gain for yourself.

Our industry provides opportunities for this more than any other line of work. We see young people, in need of someone to care, make a nice comment or lend a hand. As an ag teacher I know you already do this; you just didn’t know you deserved credit for it.

Make a mental note and give yourself an “A” when you do that special little thing your heart/gut tells you is right. The opportunities are there every day.

7. Self-Time

With all these other things to work on, and everyone demanding our time, it’s near impossible to think of yourself. Particularly for those teachers who are parents too. You might feel the guilt doing something just for you, but you have to care for yourself before you can care for others. You cannot keep emptying your tank and expect to do more, with less.

Each of you is different, so your “self” grade will be specific to you. A few of my “self” things are that I get manicures, pedicures and facials regularly. I love TV and the DVR makes it possible for me to take 45 minutes and watch one of my shows. Sometimes I combine my TV with relationship time and my kids or husband cuddle with me and watch.

Report Card

Fill out your report card for today, tuck it away and do a grade check in a month.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Grade Today</th>
<th>1 Month Later</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Diet</td>
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<td>2. Exercise</td>
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<td>6. Spirituality</td>
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<td>7. Self-Time</td>
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You will find, as you implement your “Health Report Card” into your life that you can combine several “assignments” into one. For example, making dinner together that includes servings of fruits and veggies, and sitting down to eat a meal together at the table covers relationship, diet, financial and spirituality.

Our family dinners are important to us as we took a page from the Obama family and share “roses and thorns” around the table. First, each of you share a thorn about your day, and then you share a rose. Plugging into your significant others is priceless, even when your day was pretty “thorny.”

A final note: my doctor told me to think about this report card, not for myself, but for my children (and students). Children may not always do what we say, but they will repeat our actions and behavior. Think about children of abuse; they often repeat that behavior in their own relationships. Why not set up a legacy so that our kids’ “normal” is a healthy lifestyle?

A great compliment I got was from my kids when they wanted to help with dinner one night and said, “What is our vegetable? We need something healthy with dinner.” That was a moment I knew my choices made an impact on my kids’ version of “normal.”

Take from this information what you will. I would love to hear about your report card grades and share ideas. Trust me, I have been weaving all over the “bike path” of my life at times.

Please feel free to email kvannest@turlock.k12.ca.us for my current progress report. I look forward to seeing you down the road. ✪
News and Views

Expectations of a Young Teacher

By Chuck Parker, Consultant, California Department of Education

Classes have started, we have seen the faces of our students, gauged their desire to be in our program, and realized that we have forgotten something. Frantically searching our minds, we go to the recall button. Fair entries... Greenhand Conference registration... Ag Incentive Grant application... Booster Club letter... Ag Advisory Committee invitation... back-to-school night materials... FFA meeting update... officer meeting agenda... department chair mandatory meeting... lesson plans... Everything seems to come up as checked!

Hold on. You finally, through that hectic search, might have the answer when the phone rings. Your spouse is on the other end patiently asking why you have not returned their call since they left a message over three hours ago. That is when it clicked, you knew something was missing, you forgot your spouse, AGAIN.

And to think this is just the first day of school. For ag teachers, there is no longer a "down" time when you can simply take a breath. Between lesson plans, officer meetings, parent conferences, CATA meetings, and yes, the dreaded paperwork, no time seems to be left for you.

As a profession, we have high demands on our teachers. We expect agriculture teachers to be better, more enthusiastic, and more engaging than the typical teacher. And, yes, through our desire to succeed, we, as leaders, often forget about our families.

What's Expected

Recently, when cleaning files, I ran across a simple form that, as I read it, meant so much to me. It was titled "What is Expected of a Young Agriculture Teacher." Not sure where it came from; however, the words seemed to resonate.

1. Have a belief in the philosophy behind our uniqueness.
2. Have a belief in the importance of agriculture in our society.
3. Have a desire to be the best you can be.
4. Have a realization that teaching agriculture is more than a job, it becomes a way of life.
5. Have a realization that at times you assume the role of coach, guidance counselor, confidant, disciplinarian, role model, parent, and friend.
6. Have a realization that, while you work for the district, you, answer to the school principal.
7. As an agriculture teacher you should:
   ✓ Be passionate about your job.
   ✓ Quickly learn the dos and don'ts of ag teachers.
   ✓ Take an active role in your professional organization, CATA.
   ✓ Dress appropriately.
   ✓ Be a role model in your ethics and actions.
   ✓ Seek help from within the profession. Adopt a role model from within the section or region.
   ✓ Remember your students' attitude and dress reflects on you.
   ✓ Never consume alcohol when on the job.
   ✓ Find some area in which you can have some success and work on it.
   ✓ Quickly develop a line between teacher and friend.
   ✓ Value the contribution of family to your success as a teacher.

Mentors

When I first started in the profession in August 1980, I found individuals at the high school level, in community colleges, industry partners and university staff who quickly became mentors.

These individuals were ones who were not afraid to tell me the truth, pat me on the back, and from time to time, kick me in the seat of my pants.

With less technology at that time, I waited patiently until our monthly CATA meetings when I could jump in the truck with my mentors and listen as we drove to the meetings. It was not uncommon to have a van driven by a community college teacher.

As we begin the 2013–2014 year, I challenge you to make the time to drive the van, pick up a young teacher or two, share the stories, engage in conversation, and most important, become that mentor.
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Keeping Up With Growth

By Jessica Fernandes, Operations Division Chair-Elect, Buena Park High School

From fewer than 80 students to almost 600 in eight years; the growth at Buena Park High School has been fast and furious. While we are excited about the growth and ecstatic about being able to offer the agriculture and FFA opportunities to more students, it begs the question: “How can we meet all of their needs?”

Finances

With a looming financial crisis and school district limitations, we find ourselves in a somewhat depressing situation.

Have you ever heard the saying: “We can only take the number of kids that fit in the van?” or “You can take a bus, but your department will have to pay for it.” Either way, that bus still holds only 60 students. Restrictions keep on increasing in the area of student supervision and how budget monies are spent; making our jobs even more difficult. These are just a few of the motivations behind this article.

As our growth has continued, we have also noticed that students interpret what is said about FFA points, SAEs and even classwork rules differently depending on the teacher they have in our program. The rules and requirements are the same from class to class and the same handouts are given out, with the hope that they will make it home to a parent.

Making Opportunities Available

When I began eight years ago, I had the philosophy that I needed to make as many opportunities available for students as possible. Just like many of you, that resulted in many long days and late nights. At the time it seemed that the 80 students were really benefiting from all of that extra time.

As the numbers began to climb, we were still spending the time, but fewer students seemed impacted by that time. This last summer, my teaching partners and I took the time to evaluate how we were (or were not) meeting the needs of our students.

Evaluation

Here are some facts that surfaced from our evaluation:

✓ Students with home projects were not held to the same rigorous standards as those who had a project on our facility.
✓ Students were not embarking on SAEs that would earn them degrees or potentially careers (they were just doing the minimum hours to get their grade).
✓ Only 10% of our enrollment was benefiting from leadership conferences and leadership development.
✓ Only 5% of our enrollment was benefiting from career development events.

Working Smarter

This revelation came with debate about how we couldn’t really work any harder and the realization that we needed to figure out how to work smarter. As I stated before, we gave students every opportunity for SAEs from animals to plants, to work experience on the farm when they had time.

What we realized is that despite our efforts in helping the students set goals, we needed to provide more structure, fewer choices and ultimately get parent involvement.

‘Get Your Grade’

For the first time in my tenure at BPHS we are holding “Get Your Grade” nights. Truth be told, I stole bits and pieces for these evening activities from our friends at Sonora High School. They call theirs “Back to Ag Night.”

It is a mandatory event for every student in our agriculture program. The event goes on for four nights. Students choose a night to attend, they are required to bring a parent, and the event lasts two hours. When they arrive, we give the parent a fun-filled informational packet of everything they need to know so their student can “get their grade” in our agriculture classes. The packet is also filled with handouts about leadership conferences, CDE events, and animal contracts.

It was so important to us that every student attend with a parent that this is the only way that students can get their points or hours for the month of August. If they do not attend, they will receive an F on their first progress report.

This event has created a venue to share all of the things our students can achieve with their parents all the while placing responsibility back on the parents and students to help set some achievable, purposeful goals pertaining to a viable SAE and their FFA experiences.

As I write this article, we completed our first “Get Your Grade” event last night, and we have three more to go. We estimate seeing 300 people per night. The participants get an explanation of the packet and the grade breakdown, opportunities for awards and degrees from one of the agriculture teachers, and then they are sent on an organized tour to speak to our advanced students in the areas of SAEs we would encourage them to have.

I’m happy to report that our first night seems to have been a success and we are looking forward to the other three.

Time will tell if these events will help our students truly embrace the opportunities available through agriculture courses and the FFA. What we know for sure is that we no longer have to rely on the students to communicate to their parents and that both parties are now equally responsible for the students’ success.

I hope that if you are reading this article and you have ideas to share, that you send them to me so I can share them or that you are motivated to write an article of your own. As I learned from my friends at Sonora HS — there is no reason to recreate the wheel but sometimes we need people to share what they are doing and what works so we can improve!
Earning Professional Development Units for Salary Schedule Advancement

By Bill Kellogg, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Each year teachers can advance on the salary schedule in their school district by either receiving a longevity increase (years of service), or by earning additional graduate units that will place them into the next column on the salary schedule. This applies to both high school and community college teachers. Most districts will accept academic units or professional development units for advancement on the salary schedule.

It is wise for “younger” teachers to always earn professional development units at every opportunity until they “max out” on their salary schedule.

Professional Opportunities

The ag education profession provides for several opportunities each year for teachers to earn continuing education units (CEUs) for participation in inservice and preservice-related activities.

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo coordinates the California Agricultural Education Professional Development Contract while working closely with the California Department of Education. As such, Cal Poly arranges for awarding CEUs.

For the past two years, Cal Poly has contracted with Fresno Pacific University (FPU) for awarding “semester units” at a fair and reasonable price for the teachers. FPU will again be awarding the units for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Continuing Education Units

Teachers are strongly encouraged to take advantage of earning continuing education units. Credit is available at $70 for one semester unit and $120 for two units.

Registration for credit for attending the CATA Regional Meetings/Road Shows, CATA Summer Conference, and the Agriskills Institute is completed at the time you register for the 2014 CATA Annual Summer Conference.

Registration for the Student Teacher Conclave, New Professionals Institute, and the Community College Mid-Winter Institute will be done at the site of the workshops.

Always be certain to sign in on the attendance roster at the meetings you attend, as this serves as the verification of your participation for earning credit.

Courses

The following are the professional development courses being offered this year and their unit value.

- Student Teacher Conclave: one semester unit
- New Professionals Institute: one semester unit
- CATA Regional Meetings/Road Shows: one semester unit
- CATA Summer Conference: two semester units
- CATA Agriskills Institute: one semester unit
- Community College Mid-Winter Institute: one semester unit
- Cooperating Teacher Workshop and Supervision: one semester unit

If you are serving as a Cooperating Teacher this year, regardless of what university you are working with, you can earn professional development units. Contact Bill Kellogg directly at bkellogg@calpoly.edu if you wish to earn credit for serving as a Cooperating Teacher.

Register Now

It seems like at the beginning of each school year, I receive calls from teachers needing one or more units to advance on their pay scale for the new year, either at their existing site, or at a district where they have been recently hired. Unfortunately, you cannot retroactively enroll in these units.

Be proactive now, and register for the units you can earn this year. Also, I encourage you to check your faculty bargaining contract to make certain you get the necessary approval you need to use these units for advancement.

Many districts require pre-approval of the courses before accepting them for pay scale purposes. If you have any questions about earning professional development credit, please feel free to contact me.

Best wishes for a wonderful school year.

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The Stan Rose Legacy Lives On

By Cindy Brown, Porterville High School

“I was fortunate to have an outstanding agriculture teacher, Emile La Salle, at Hanford High School, who recognized potential in me... that was the beginning,” stated Stan Rose in an interview for the Golden Slate. Over the next 35 years of ag teaching, Stan Rose found that potential in thousands of young people while building a tremendously successful Agriculture Department at Righetti High, inspiring dozens of new ag teachers, state and regional FFA officers, developing Righetti’s extraordinary swine program, becoming the “guru” of poultry judging competitions, and being a leader in his community and his CATA profession.

Sadly, Stan Rose passed away this past June on a bike ride while crossing the last two states on his “bucketlist,” to bike across every state in the United States.

Helen, Stan’s wife of 43 years, mother to his five beautiful daughters and grandmother to his five grandchildren, was Stan’s “support wagon driver” throughout all his escapades as an ag teacher and after his retirement in 2005.

Ag Teaching Honors

Most of Stan’s ag teaching accomplishments and honors are familiar to most ag teachers who have been in the business for 20 years or more: his 16 state-winning Poultry Judging teams; seven State FFA officers; terms of office in the CATA, culminating in his state presidency in 1989; the much-deserved Don Wilson Outstanding Agriculture Teacher award in 1993; and induction into the CATA Hall of Fame in 2010.

Few got a glimpse of Stan Rose, the man who, during the Vietnam War was assistant chaplain in the Army, serving at the Injury and Burn Center in Texas. He had a deep and unshakable faith in God and who according to wife Helen “drug” his FFA students to church no matter where they were on Sundays — Cow Palace, State Fair, FFA competitions, it didn’t matter; they went to church!

Stan was also a master woodworker who created wonderful gifts for his grandchildren, family members and friends. As an avid fisherman and hunter, Stan’s passion took him to Wyoming not too many years ago where, picture this, an injured Stan had to be hauled down a mountain slung over the shoulder of Al DeRose, like a side of beef.

Lifelong Friends

Al De Rose and Stan went to Hanford High School together, their dads farming next to each other, and they remained close friends throughout their long ag teaching careers and into retirement. “We traveled many miles down the road together,” stated Al. “Stan loved kids and loved teaching and life. He was one of the few people I know that never had his eyes on himself, but always on other people.”

Known as the “Big and Little Portagees,” Stan and Al, although avid fishermen, were not necessarily talented on the water. Al remembers one such trip to Bishop Lake where they accidently docked Al’s new boat on the cement 30 feet from the shore and had to be towed back to the dock by a guy in a rowboat!

Great memories of friendly, yet pretty intense competition, is what Rich Nimphius, fellow angler and bicyclist recalls: “Stan’s family, his love of agriculture, and his profession were a huge part of his life.”

In 1969, Jim English was a junior at Righetti High, when Stan came onto the scene as his new ag teacher. Jim remembers wanting to “break in” the new ag teacher, so while cleaning up at the school farm Jim continuously pelted Stan with weeds while Stan drove the tractor... their first interaction had begun. Jim still can’t believe that Stan later hired him to teach ag after he graduated from Cal Poly. Stan and Jim taught together for 27 years: “My lifetime mentor, my colleague, my friend and my family. The proverbial mold wasn’t just broken when Stan was born,” stated Jim. “God just didn’t want any duplication at all when he made Stan! Stan was one of a kind, he impacted people wherever he went, he was impressive and very special to a lot of people, I’ll think about Stan forever.”

Cancer Bike Rides

In 2007, Stan was roped into a Cancer Bike Ride Fund Raiser by his neighbor — 3,300 miles later Stan was hooked and the challenge was on...Stan’s goal? To ride across every state in the United States. With Helen at the wheel of their motor home, the trek began! A total of 30,000 miles, meeting America and her Americans, making new friends and having a great time building wonderful memories.

This year Stan, a cancer survivor himself, decided to have a 70 km bike ride to raise funds for the Prostate Cancer Research Institute on his 70th birthday. His efforts netted $10,500 for the cause. Always totally appreciative of his community’s support for young people, FFA members and their ag programs, Stan made every effort to consistently give back to his community.

Our ag family will certainly miss the guidance and friendship that Stan gave to us, as well as his “can do” attitude, drive and tenacity. A true professional, Stan successfully provided guidance to countless young ag teachers and students, carrying out that legacy that was begun by Stan’s own mentor and agricultural teacher, Emile La Salle.
2013 Agricultural Education Award Winners

Outstanding Teacher – Don Wilson Memorial Award: Cindy Brown, Porterville High School. Presenting the award is CATA Past President Jake Dunn.

Outstanding 2-3 Person Secondary Program and Outstanding Secondary Agricultural Education Program State Winner – Galt High School: Dane White, Cheryl Reece and Carl Wright.

Outstanding Single Person Secondary Program – Avenal High School

2013 CATA Hall of Fame Inductees: Glen Casey and Bill Loveridge.

Teacher of Excellence Award Winners: Darrell Hirschler, Tulelake High School; Rosco Vaughn, CSU Fresno, JessaLee Goehring, Lodi High School; Julie Beechinor, Frontier High School; Jodi Evans, San Luis Obispo High School; Jason Bretz, Los Banos High School; Clay Freeman, Foothill High School; Montique Reid, Hilmar High School; Jake Dunn, Petaluma High School; Sam Rodriguez, Hanford High School.
2013 Winners

1st.......Hughson FFA ............................................................$5,000
2nd .....Norco FFA .................................................................$3,000
3rd......Manteca-East Union FFA ........................................$1,000
The other participants received.............................................$500

Over the past three years the Foundation has sponsored California FFA chapter involvement using the lessons to raise awareness of agriculture and nutrients throughout the community.

This past year Hughson FFA partnered with the Garden Club and local agriculture industry leaders for “Walking Field Trips” with elementary students, a harvest feast with peers to try new vegetables from the garden, and “Hughson Ag Day” to create agricultural awareness in regards to the role nutrients play in nourishing our world.

Norco FFA, in cooperation with community sponsors, the graphic arts class, the language arts class, the horticulture and the mechanics class, built and supplied 10 garden carts that were distributed to elementary classrooms with the “Nourishing the Planet in the 21st Century” curriculum. As a result, more than 300 students participated in hands-on soil science lessons learning the role nutrients play in food production.

Manteca-East Union FFA created an interactive poster that depicted the importance of fertilizer, the different nutrients in food, and connections to the food we eat. Through four events, the FFA members presented the poster and taught more than 4,000 youth how to plant a seed properly.

How to Participate

To participate in the sponsored program “Helping Communities Grow,” a chapter need only decide what it will be doing, submit a Letter of Intent, provide a progress report (Community Involvement Plan) and submit a Final Application, the report detailing what was done. Reports are scored in May with the recognition of the winners and participants made at the California Agricultural Teachers’ Association Conference in June.

Submit Online

This year, all Helping Communities Grow projects will be submitted solely online at www.nutrientsforlife.org. The digital application was available on September 1, 2013, at which time applicants may begin working on their application to submit in accordance with their three state-specific deadlines.

Important Dates

Application distribution: August 25, 2013
Digital application available on website: September 1, 2013
Letter of Intent: November 13, 2013
Community Involvement Plan: January, 31, 2014
Final Application: California – Due Friday, May 9, 2014

For questions regarding the Helping Communities Grow program in California, contact Jean Landeen, ag literacy coordinator, jlandeen@ cde.ca.gov.

For contacts with fertilizer representatives who would love to talk with your students, contact Rick Phillips, the western region contact for Nutrients for Life Foundation, at rick.phillips@simplot.com.

Nutrients for Life Foundation
Helping Communities Grow!

Nutrients for Life Foundation promotes education about the essential nutrients needed by plants, animals and humans. To that end, the Foundation developed lessons directed at three different levels — elementary, middle school and high school. The lessons reflect the national science standards while emphasizing the importance and use of nutrients through agriculture production. The Curriculum Guides, along with many free teaching resources, can be accessed at www.nutrientsforlife.org. Select “order teaching resources” from the “For Teachers” drop-down menu.

Outstanding Young Teacher – Erin Thompson, Templeton High School
Outstanding Large Secondary Program – Hanford High School: Connie Soares, Jared Castle, Laura Henson, Brian Combs, Lilly Pimentel, Sam Rodriguez, Rochelle Mederos.
Foundation for Ag in Classroom Unit Combines Chemistry, Agriculture

By Haley Clement, Liberty Ranch High School

Fun, Rigorous, Relevant — These words describe the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom unit “Chemistry, Fertilizer, and the Environment,” distributed in June at the CATA Summer Conference. These lessons can be incorporated into all agriculture chemistry classes across the state. By now, most of us are “converted” and believe agriculture chemistry is a perfect combination of science and agriculture. While this is evident by the increase of ag chemistry classes popping up across the state, many teachers are unsure where to turn to for resources, especially in the areas of food science, dairy science, and plant and soil science. To ease the anxiety, Agriculture in the Classroom has written one unit of instruction.

Pilot Study

Last spring, I taught the lessons in the unit as a part of the pilot study. It was immediately apparent that Ag in the Classroom has combined chemistry and agriculture in one rigorous and applicable unit. It was fun too! The students enjoyed each lesson and expressed this in a post-study survey.

Dynamic Lessons

The unit contains five lessons that are both rich in content and centered around agriculture.

Lesson one explores the world of solutions and teaches students about diluting a solution to find optimum parts per million concentrations. It details how knowledge of dilutions is important in understanding fertilizer concentrations.

Lesson two requires students to use their new knowledge about solutions to create their own “fertilizer.” They calculate the correct solute-solvent ratio to create the optimum solutions for their “plant.”

Lesson three explores different compounds found in an agriculture ecosystem and allows the students to build miniature models using gum drops!

Lesson four, students learn about soil pH and how it affects the availability of plant nutrients. Students determine how their own soil pH should be modified through the application of soil amendments.

In the final lesson, students analyze soil samples, test nitrate levels by using nitrate test kits and discover the potential dangers of nitrate leaching. In summary, these lessons are not just agriculture and not just chemistry. They are both! Isn’t that what we’ve been trying to emphasize? Through these lessons, students are not only introduced to agriculture and chemistry standards, but are connected with issues, problems and situations in the real world while performing hands-on activities.

So, let’s pull those lessons off the shelf and work them into your curriculum today!
START CREATING YOUR GRAND MEMORIES

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FREE CLINICS PRESENTED BY NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED EXPERTS

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DATES AND LOCATIONS WILL BE ANNOUNCED SOON.
Check out our Facebook page for the latest details:
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1-800-729-5787
2013–2014 Calendar of Activities

October 13 .............................................................. South Coast Region Meeting .......................................................... Hollister
October 30–November 2 ........................................ National FFA Convention ......................................................... Louisville, Kentucky
November 9 ............................................................. Cotton State Finals ............................................................... CSU - Fresno
November 16 ........................................................... San Joaquin Region Meeting .............................................. Bass Lake
November 16 ........................................................... Superior Region Meeting .................................................... Anderson
November 21–22 .................................................... New Professionals Conference ............................................ Fresno
November 23 ........................................................... Central Region Meeting ...................................................... Modesto
December 3–7 .......................................................... NAAE Conference ............................................................. Las Vegas
December 5–7 .......................................................... Community College Midwinter Institute ................................ Modesto
January 16–17 ........................................................ Student Teacher Conclave ................................................... Modesto
January 25 .............................................................. Natural Resources State Finals ........................................... Reedley
February 1 ............................................................. Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree & Vine Pruning ................ CSU - Fresno
February 22 ........................................................... Central Region Meeting .................................................... Stockton
February 22 ........................................................... San Joaquin Region Meeting .............................................. Lemoore
February 24 ........................................................... South Coast Region Meeting ............................................ San Luis Obispo
March 1 .............................................................. Superior Region Meeting ..................................................... Chico
March 22 .............................................................. North Coast Region Meeting .............................................. Ukiah
April 5 .............................................................. Southern Region Meeting ..................................................... Cal Poly, Pomona
April 12 .............................................................. CSU - Fresno Field Day ....................................................... CSU - Fresno
April 12–15 ........................................................ State FFA Leadership Conference ........................................ Fresno
April 16–19 .......................................................... NAAE Region I Meeting ....................................................... Honolulu, HI
May 3 .............................................................. State FFA Judging Finals ....................................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 22 .............................................................. Executive Committee Meeting ................................................. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 22–26 .......................................................... Pre-Conference Governing Board ....................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 22–26 .......................................................... CATA Summer Conference .................................................. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 26 .............................................................. Governing Board Summer Retreat ....................................... San Luis Obispo