Sacramento Scene

Need to Redouble Efforts to Protect Ag Incentive Grant

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

As the biennial session of the state legislature draws to a close, it offers an opportunity to reflect on the progress made in solving the many important issues facing California, as well as an opportunity to glance forward to prepare for the new legislative season that begins in January.

For many in our profession who battled so valiantly in preserving vital resources necessary for providing services to students in our programs, this past year is one we would likely love to forget. The battle to save Agricultural Education Incentive Grant funding was exhausting, and it would be nice to think that we can now close the book on that unpleasant experience. Unfortunately, that’s not likely to be the case.

Assault on Ag Incentive Grant

As we have visited legislative offices and talked with other policy leaders in the Capitol, it seems likely that we can expect another full-blown assault on Ag Incentive Grant funding by the Governor and his education advisors.

It would appear that their motivation for this ongoing battle is purely philosophical—they don’t believe that any funds should be targeted for specific purposes in education, unless mandated by federal law.

It doesn’t matter if the programs affected are high-quality, dynamic and successful, or if they are vital to the continued economic vitality of our state. It just doesn’t matter—and they just don’t care.

Year of Discovery

This philosophical entrenchment has made it difficult to bring any common-sense or reality-based arguments to bear on the issue of continued funding for the Agricultural Education Incentive Grant. We were successful this year because so many legislators were exposed to the real world impacts that our programs have on real, live students—as well as the incredible stories told by parents, graduates and others impacted by Ag Education.

For many legislators, this was a year of discovery regarding Ag Education and the important (Continued on page 2)
California FFA Foundation: Serving Selflessly for the Future of the California FFA

By Mike Albiani, CATA President

Long before I decided to work toward becoming a state CATA officer, I was fortunate to be nominated to serve on the board of the California FFA Foundation. At the time of my appointment, the Foundation was busy managing the investments and gathering sponsors for the many State Finals contests and Proficiency awards. It was very rewarding working with the other members to award our students with the recognition that they deserve.

Soon after I began to serve, members of the Foundation decided to begin the fundraising effort to build a home for the California Association FFA by building the State FFA Center. The momentum began with the donation of the property where the Center is now. The Denier family made the State FFA Center a reality with their donation and the Foundation pushed forward by working out financing through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was an exciting time to be a Foundation member, planning, meeting, then finally the construction of the Center took center stage.

Initial Push

The first Gala was a huge success and the Foundation was able to ride the positive vibe of the event, which permitted the Foundation to secure initial donations allowing us to begin to meet the financial obligations of the building, making the FFA Center the viable force in agriculture education for which it was intended.

Soon the reality of meeting the yearly payment was the main focus of the Foundation and many of the members dug deep into personal relationships with agriculture businesses to make sure that the payment was made each and every year.

Need to Redouble Efforts to Protect Ag Incentive Grant

(Continued from page 1)

Redouble Efforts

The support we generated this past year within the Legislature was impressive, but we will need to redouble our efforts if the Governor and members of his administration remain intent on eliminating Ag Education funding in the future.

For those of you who reached out to legislators and sent the extra mile to establish those connections, you know first-hand what a difference it makes when Ag Education becomes up-close and personal in the lives of our elected officials.

For those of you who weren’t willing to get out of your comfort zone to engage in those experiences, you squandered a great opportunity to build support for what you do for students.

Engage Representatives

As we move forward, all of us will need to actively engage our elected representatives and build even more support for our programs and students. Given the philosophical mindset of this administration, it may be our only hope of continuing our important work with the resources necessary to do the job.

As you begin to plan for the upcoming year, please take some time to include reaching out to key supporters, alumni and others who can help deliver the message to our elected representatives. The Governor and his advisors may choose to remain blind to the value of well-prepared leaders for California’s agriculture industry, but the rest of us cannot. Too much is at stake here to sit this battle out. We hope we can count on everyone to do their part!

Ag Ed 2030

On a more positive note, the hard work by many of you on the Ag Ed 2030 effort has been impressive. Each of the subcommittees has been hard at work working to improve the way that our profession performs in the areas of mentoring, curriculum, funding, and SAEP (Supervised Agricultural Experience Program) development.

If you aren’t familiar with the work of these committees, I would strongly encourage you to get involved in the process—Ag Education will continue to grow and thrive only if our profession is well-prepared to deal with an ever-changing future. I certainly admire and appreciate all that has been accomplished so far, and hope that every CATA member will take advantage of this opportunity to help shape our future.

New Program Manager

Also, I would like to congratulate and welcome Dr. Lloyd McCabe as he takes the reins as Program Manager in Ag Education and Home Economics for the California Department of Education. I am confident that Lloyd will provide essential leadership to all of us and that he will not be hesitant to challenge us to perform at even higher levels in the future.

Please take a few moments to welcome Dr. McCabe as you see him at FFA and CATA events this year. He values your input and is committed to our students, our programs, and our profession. Congratulations, Lloyd!

Thank You

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for making it possible for my wife Cathy and I to go on our long-delayed “dream” vacation to Alaska. Due to your generosity, we were able to stay for six days in a floating cabin in Simpson Bay, catch fresh halibut and rockfish every day, and simply enjoy the most fantastic scenery on the planet. It was an incredible experience. Thanks to all of you for helping make it happen!

Hope your school year is off to a great start!
Sacramento Education Update

A Perspective from the Ivory Tower

Dr. Lloyd McCabe, State Supervisor of Agriculture Education, California Department of Education

I have mentioned on numerous occasions 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 10:45 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 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 would have probably failed all those behavioral tests — not because I couldn’t navigate through the maze, mind you; I just don’t like dairy byproducts!

Assuming Reins

By now, most of you realize that I have assumed the reins of agriculture education. I congratulate Bob Heuvel on his stellar 28 years of service to the department and wish him and his wife the best during his retirement years. I am excited and somewhat apprehensive about taking over a discipline that has achieved such remarkable success with students, teachers and programs over the years.

I no doubt will make my fair share of mistakes in the weeks and months to come as your new leader. However, I am confident that state staff and CATA will keep me focused on the right “decision-making path” as I encounter the various challenges that will confront our profession.

Funding Challenge

Speaking about challenges, during the course of the 2013–14 school year, California agriculture educators witnessed extraordinary times with the passage of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and potential loss of the Agricultural Incentive Grant Program.

My compliments to your CATA Executive Director and the hundreds of agriculture teachers who fought hard to get the Agriculture Incentive Grant Program reinstated in the state educational budget.

Student Success

Which brings me to my words of wisdom for today. If agriculture education and other Career Technical Education (CTE) disciplines are to flourish during the era of LCFF, then they will need to demonstrate to their local communities, boards of education, and school administrators that they are indispensable to student success.

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, Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), and leadership development (FFA).

Key Strategies

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. 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:

- 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!

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 to really know your parents, academic 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 (Continued on page 4)

California FFA Foundation: Serving Selflessly for the Future of the California FFA

(Continued from page 2)

New Blood, New Ideas

As the Center became more established, many of the original members began to retire and new blood joined the Foundation with new ideas and began to expand the board membership to include a cross-section of California agriculture by both diversification of geographic location and a wide variety of agricultural backgrounds.

The new team was energized and came aboard with a passion for the FFA and a background of fundraising and foundation membership. Amy Madison was hired to work for the Foundation on a permanent basis, and as a group, the Foundation members engage agribusinesses and charitable foundations like never before.

Long-Term Commitment

The current Foundation board is not only committed to securing long-term security of the FFA Center, but is determined to make the benefit of participation in the leadership development events a reality for all members regardless of their economic status or their geographic location. We are actively discussing expanding Greenhand and MFE/ALA (Made for Excellence/Advanced Leadership Academy) conferences to benefit the underserved. A goal of conference sponsorship is to reduce the cost of attendance, which will benefit all students and our chapters.

Never have I been so excited to be both a member of the California FFA Foundation Board or to represent agriculture teachers as one of your spokespersons on the board. The members of the board are working through a strategic planning process to evaluate where we have been and where we plan to go in order to enhance the experience for as many California FFA members as possible.

As teachers of agriculture, we need to meet the efforts being put forth by each and every member of the Foundation board by supporting their efforts to both secure donations from all corners of California and to provide more services to all. By working tirelessly on our behalf the members of the California FFA Foundation are truly serving selflessly for the benefit of the California FFA.
(Continued from page 3)
the classroom. But, “in an era of LCFF, when all decision making in your district is local in nature, it’s not what you know that counts... but who you know!”

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 recognition through these awards at the section, region, state, and national levels, students feel great, parents become proud, administrators smile, board members are pleased, and you and your program look good in the eyes of 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 education discipline 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?

Celebrate and publish your student and program success stories! Finally, 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. After all, 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 that 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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Teacher Educator News

CSU, Chico Update
By Sarah DeForest, Director of Advancement, College of Agriculture

Dean Fox Retires; Daley Serves as Interim Dean

After nearly eight years of leadership in the College of Agriculture, Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox retired in June. Since Fox joined CSU, Chico in 2006, enrollment in the College of Agriculture doubled and the college added two degree programs—a bachelor’s degree in animal science in 2009 and an online master’s in agriculture education in 2012. Fox received a Common Threads North award during a luncheon at UC Davis in April in recognition of her contributions to agricultural education in Northern California.

A nationwide search is underway to find a permanent replacement to serve as dean of the College of Agriculture. Meanwhile, Professor Dave Daley has stepped up to fill the role of interim dean. Daley joined the faculty of the College of Agriculture in 1992. During his tenure, he has served as animal science professor, advisor, beef unit supervisor, program coordinator, farm administrator, and associate dean.

College of Agriculture Continues to Grow

An unprecedented eight years of solid enrollment growth in the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture continues in 2014 with fall enrollment hitting more than 790 students, up 10 percent from last fall. In addition to the growth in students, we are pleased to have added two new full-time, tenure-track faculty in the past year and plan to add three more before this time next year.

Dr. Kasey DeAtley, a 2005 CSU, Chico graduate in animal science, officially rejoined the College of Agriculture last January as a professor of animal science. DeAtley completed her Ph.D. in 2012 at New Mexico State University in animal science with an emphasis in reproductive physiology and beef cattle genetics.

She also earned her master’s degree in animal science at New Mexico State University in 2009. DeAtley teaches Agricultural Experimental Research, Directed Work Experience, Rangeland Resource Management, and also co-advises the Young Cattlemen’s Association.

Dr. Hossein Zakeri is new to the College of Agriculture this fall, coming to us from the University of Missouri, where he was a post-doctoral researcher studying nitrogen use efficiency and the drought tolerance of soybeans. Zakeri grew up on a farm in eastern Isfahan in Iran and attended an intensive agricultural high school that was similar in size to our University Farm.

He received his B.S. in agronomy and crop breeding from the Isfahan University of Technology, M.S. in crop physiology from Tarbiat Modares University, and Ph.D. in crop physiology/cropping systems from the University of Saskatchewan. Zakeri enjoys teaching above everything else, and at CSU, Chico this fall he is teaching Introduction to Plant Science and Production of Annual Crops.

A new professor of agricultural business will join the College of Agriculture in January, and we are currently conducting two tenure-track searches to fill new positions in animal science and agricultural business next fall.

First Ag Ed Master’s Class Graduates

The graduates of the first class with the new master’s in agricultural education program received their degrees during the College of Agriculture commencement ceremony held in Laxson Auditorium on May 17, 2014. Fourteen candidates received their master’s degrees while 164 undergraduates received their bachelor’s degrees.

Students in the agriculture 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 CSU, Chico. Faculty at CSU, Chico and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona received a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant 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. The new option should be available next fall with admissions accepted after January 2015. For more information on the master’s in agricultural education, contact Dr. Mollie Aschenbrener at maschenbrener@csuchico.edu or visit the program’s website at www.csuchico.edu/ag-masters.

College of Agriculture Welcomes First Bell Family Presidential Scholars

After receiving a $2 million gift from Dan Giustina just over a year ago to establish the Bell Family Presidential Scholarship Endowment, the College of Agriculture welcomed its first two Bell Family Presidential Scholars in August.

Jase Northup, an animal science major from Los Molinos, and Holly Hockett, an agricultural education major from Auburn, will each receive $5,000 per year for four years in recognition of their outstanding academic achievement and contributions to agriculture.

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Nutrients for Life Foundation Updates Application Process

The Nutrients for Life Foundation has updated the Helping Communities Grow application. The updated application includes:

Focus on fertilizer and soil nutrients: FFA chapters are challenged to investigate and discover the critical role fertilizer plays in improving plant health for an abundant, affordable, and safe food supply. With this gained knowledge, they are to go beyond the classroom and educate their community on the benefits fertilizer and soil nutrients play in food production.

Due to a change in funding, the award amounts have been adjusted.

In each state and in the at-large category, monetary awards of $3,000, $2,000, and $1,000 will be awarded to the first-, second- and third-place chapter programs, respectively. Up to 12 chapters per state and 12 chapters in the at-large category will receive a participation award for $250.

The foundation no longer refers to the three steps in the application process as letter of recommendation, community partners and final application, but rather step 1, step 2 and step 3.

Judging Rubric: The judging rubric is based upon a 50-point system.

Important Dates and Deadlines
Online application will be available on October 1, 2014
Step 1: Due November 14, 2014
Step 2: Due January 30, 2015
Step 3: California: Due May 9, 2015.
https://www.nutrientsforlife.org/helpingcommunitiesgrow

Teacher Educator News

CSU, Chico Update

(Continued from page 3)
High School, Lindsay Swickard is working at Elsie Allen High School in Santa Rosa, and Jake Wheeler is teaching at Sutter High School.

In addition to the newly credentialed teachers, five students are interning. Trevor Airola is interning at Princeton High School, Hayley Lawson is in Modesto at Gregori High School, Heidi Mickelson is at Petaluma High School, Russell Pitter is at Tulelake High School, and Katie Tennessen is at Los Molinos High School.

Thank you to all of those who were instrumental in helping these teachers prepare for a long career in the agricultural education profession.

Upcoming Events at CSU, Chico

October 10–19 ..... The Chico Experience Week
October 11–12 ...... Sierra Oro Farm Trail Passport Weekend
October 25 .......... Chico Preview Day
January 24 .......... Swine Education Day
January 30 .......... Chico State Ag Alumni Reunion at Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale
February 4 .......... Colusa Alumni Breakfast
February 7 .......... Sheep and Goat Education Day
February 14 .......... CSU, Chico Invitational Parliamentary Procedure Contest
March 14 .......... CSU, Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day
June 8 .......... Superior Ag Golf Classic

Time for Your Annual Checkup

By Mary Riley, Southern Region Reporter,
Sonora High School - LaHabra

Over the past few years, we have been diligently working as an association to develop what the future of ag education will look like. What can we expect to see in 2030? I think before we look too much into our future, we need to evaluate our practices of today and give ourselves our own vision test.

Motivation
Are we cheating ourselves? Our program? Our students? As a department, we were motivated to give ourselves a self-checkup after the unthinkable occurred in our department right before the start of school.

My teaching partner lost all his computer files for his shop classes and looked to his ag ed family to help kick-start his year with sample syllabi, safety tests and simple projects. Resources poured in from all over the state and his feeling of dread returning to school diminished, but it was this evaluation of these resources that made it apparent, we all need a self-checkup.

Perfect’ Example
He forwarded me a syllabus and upon opening it, I thought, “This one will be a good.”

As I scrolled down, I found the grading scale and my eyes opened wide when I saw the words “Extra Credit” next to FFA. It also failed to define what an SAE project is and how students would obtain this third circle of the ag education model.

Self-Checkup
As a department, we found in some areas we were just as guilty. Is our program promoting all three circles of the ag education model? Would our FFA events be justifiable to our administra-

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If you are aware of any others who may be interested in this type of membership, call (916) 714-2970 or email cata@calagteachers.org so we may send pertinent information.
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<td>Cell (661) 809-6191</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.thezenith.com">www.thezenith.com</a></td>
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<td>Bill Mattos</td>
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<tr>
<td>William “Bill” Ballesteros</td>
<td>President</td>
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Finding New and Alternative Ways to Engage and Recruit the Non-Traditional Agriculture Student

By JessaLee Goehring, Secondary Division Chair-Elect, Lodi High School

One of the keys to success in any agriculture program is grabbing the students’ attention for possible recruitment. Recruiting is what our programs thrive and grow on; recruitment can take us from single- to multiple-person departments, but what do we do once we recruit to keep all students engaged and retained?

Students walking in the door from a “traditional” agriculture production background or those with siblings who graduated from our program do the recruitment work for us. It’s those non-traditional students, the ones with seemingly no direct connection to agriculture who are waiting for us to realize their potential.

What do we do when our non-traditional agriculture students have interest in the program, but aren’t sure how to apply that interest within our three-ring model?

**Knowing Student Body**

Throughout my years as an agriculture teacher, I have tried to gather answers to these questions by observing other agriculture teachers’ recruitment and engagement techniques, and asking numerous questions along the way. With my curiosity, endless questioning and note taking, I have been able to apply it to our program. While reflecting on some of the “tried and true” recruitment methods we’ve all relied on, I realized that our greatest opportunities for success in growing our programs may actually stem from our smallest efforts.

I have found knowing your student body population, and working together within the school with all staff and clubs/groups is one of the most vital components to growing your program and exceeding the norm. While I know that not every school has the same program or school schedule, there may be similarities that can be applied to your program to help engage and recruit all students—traditional and non-traditional alike.

**Study Group**

One way I have tried to work within the school is becoming a supervising teacher in the Intervention Study Group. This study group happens three days a week during 1st period SSR every morning. This is on the teacher’s preparatory period, which means the only students present are tutors and tutees.

A majority, if not all, of my tutors are agriculture students who partner one on one with students who needed the extra, guided help to stay on track. They are able to work with them in my classroom, helping them to study, work on homework they didn’t understand, and learn organizational skills.

This last school year, three students from my Intervention group joined an agriculture class, and one of them joined our agriculture academy this year. I was able to work with students who didn’t have an interest in agriculture but after some encouragement and interaction with agriculture students, they found a place they could thrive in. Now that they have joined our program, our goal is to engage them, and help them find their niche.

**Other Examples**

Other opportunities for non-traditional student recruitment have been:

- **Third Grade Field Day:** Attended as third graders and could not wait to join as a freshman because they wanted to show an animal knowing they could keep one at the school farm. Our fair participation numbers increase steadily each year.

- **Grape and Commodity Murals:** Bring friends in to help at lunch and after school and they want to be a part of the fun. The lunch stops become regular and they now eat lunch every day in the ag classrooms.

- **FFA Week:** Including the entire student body in celebrating National FFA Week. Students can vote for the teacher or staff member they want to kiss the pig, participate in dress-up days, enjoy a lunch BBQ sponsored by the Ag Boosters and end the week with a school rally.

- **Taking Real Leadership:** Our agriculture students participate and recruit students from all over campus to participate in developing their leadership potential on campus. The focus of TRL is to be inclusive of all students, provide opportunities to network/socialize, and provide positive outlets for student engagement.

- **Farm to School:** Including other clubs to be a part of growing food for the school cafeteria. For example, the Garden Club and Environmental Club will help to work with our FFA in meeting the needs of the school, raising awareness, and obtaining hands-on learning in agriculture production.

**Positive Impact**

These ideas may not result in huge numbers of recruitment; however, it does illustrate the opportunities we have to make a positive impact on those students hesitating to be recognized. The non-traditional students who joined our program have been able to excel in the three circles of our program and have taken huge steps in leadership development and their future in agriculture.

**Best Invite**

One case in particular: Our chapter president participated in Taking Real Leadership last year. She had a student in her group who had transferred from another school and was a new sophomore. Our chapter president encouraged him to join FFA and come have lunch in the ag classrooms to get a “feel” for it.

Well, that one invite to have lunch in the ag classroom has turned out to be the best invite he could have asked for. He quickly switched into ag biology and is now a chapter and sectional officer. He also participates on a judging team, speaking contest and takes advantage of every opportunity provided to him through SAE, FFA and the classroom. He is just getting started!

I would say these simple ideas work and can make a difference; all we need to do is redefine what our ag students look like, and apply it to your program.

---

**Time for Your Annual Checkup**

(Continued from page 6)

**Questions and parents as leadership activities? Are we pushing every student to complete an SAE that truly reflects the agriculture industry? Are we holding our shop and floral classes to the same standards as our other classes? In addition, has a lack of regional supervisor’s evaluation led to us cheating the system?**

**Tough Questions**

Our department’s checkup revealed we needed to redefine the department expectations in each area of the ag education model as our program continues to grow and work toward serving all students. We were able to ask these and more tough questions to improve our department’s vision for today as well as our future.

Take the challenge to making your department’s Vision 2030 a model you will start living by today as well as into the future.
CATA Honors 2014 Agricultural Education Award Winners

Outstanding 2-3 Person Secondary Program – St. Helena High School: Randy Mendes, Judy Aschwanden, and Sarah Herdell.

Outstanding Large Secondary Program and Outstanding Secondary Agricultural Education Program State Winner – Atwater High School: Natalie Borba, Shelby West, Beth Williams, Jackie Ioimo, Dan Flatt and Dave Gossman (not pictured: Sam Meredith).

Teacher of Excellence Award Winners: Emily Keverline, Kern Valley High School; Carole Lindsey, Norco High School; Matt Patton, Elk Grove High School; Emmett Schultz, Golden West High School; Kristin Skehan, Madera South High School; Amy Erman, Elk Grove High School; Eric Dyer, Woodland Senior High School; Anna Bates, San Luis Obispo High School; Matt Baffunno, Gustine High School; Judy Aschwanden, St. Helena High School.

Outstanding Young Teacher - Tim Reid, Bear River High School, Grass Valley

Outstanding Single-Person Secondary Program – Riverbank High School: Isaac Robles


Del Petersen, 2014 CATA Hall of Fame Inductee, with Clemente Ayon (right).
Agricultural Education...The Triathlon of Teaching

By Darol Fishman, Post-Secondary Division Chair, Merced College

Five years ago, I decided to participate in my first triathlon... that swim/bike/run sport. Tell people you do triathlons and their immediate question is “Do you go to Hawaii?” Well, the fact is no and that you have to qualify to go to Kona. In order to qualify, you have to be pretty fast. In order to be pretty fast, you must train and training takes time and many of us ag teachers don’t have that kind of time.

So how do our programs and triathlons tie together? They each take disciplines tied closely together to make the whole thing work. In a triathlon event, we must first swim, which can be the most challenging for most. Then we must ride a bicycle, which is the longest distance of the three disciplines. Finally there’s the run, which can just tear things up no matter how well you’ve done in the first two. Don’t complete any one sport and you get a DNF after your name in the results... “DID NOT FINISH.”

Our profession is very much like this sport. We have three distinct circles that, when paired together, form a program that allows us to get our students to the finish line and prepare them for life. Let any one of those circles... classroom, FFA, or SAE... get out of your program, and your students get cheated on those life/career skills.

I’ve categorized the following disciplines to match the three circles in our programs. You might put them in different orders or different comparisons, but the goal is the same... reach that finish line.

Classroom

THE BIKE... is your classroom since it’s the longest of the events. You have one year or approximately 180 days to build the foundation of success for your students. Although the other two events might happen all year, there are breaks in the action which allow you to take a break from them. The school year happens whether you choose it to or not.

You must be prepared everyday to make sure your lessons are prepared and have something meaningful to present to your students. If FFA went away or SAE disappeared, you would still have the long distance of the classroom to get through. You get paid to teach... period! FFA stipends and extended contracts are optional.

**FFA Calendar**

THE RUN... is your FFA activity calendar. These events develop the leadership and team building abilities in your students. Why the run? It’s a sprint from event to event, or it can be the marathon of a judging team season.

Opening up the year, you prep for the Opening/Closing Ceremonies contest, which has to be done quickly because some come very early in the school year. Then it’s the middle distance race to get all those applications ready by January. Finally, there’s the marathon of working with your Ag Mechanics team from January to that first weekend in May. It is a long, grueling event which will sap your energy, challenge your patience, and make you hurt like none of the other events.

The problem is you are running multiple races with many of the events overlapping. The mental game comes into play with balancing time and effort to get to the finish of each activity (run) you get your students involved with. You reach the point of giving in, thinking it’s not worth the fight/effort. The mind must override the body to keep you going to get to that finish line.

**SAE Program**

THE SWIM... is your SAE program and how you get your students involved. We are not all experts in many of the projects. Many of us just try to keep treading to keep our heads above the water. No big secret...I’m not an animal expert and when I was the Dairy Advisor at Exeter and the Swine Advisor at Le Grand, I had my hands full. I did the job and did the minimum required because I was uncomfortable in this environment. Ag Mechanics Projects... NO PROBLEM! Throw the pigs my way... PROBLEM.

In triathlon we are allowed to swim with a wetsuit for warmth and buoyancy so I found my wetsuits in this area...those members of the local community and in the industry with much more knowledge than I. Swine selection? Me?!?! Good luck with that, but we had some experts out there who could, and did, help to keep me afloat.

**Transition**

The fourth aspect of triathlon is the transition...the period of time after one event and before the next. After the swim...strip off the wetsuit, get on the bike shoes and helmet, load up with some food, and you’re off. After the bike... out of the bike gear, throw on your running shoes, grab your water bottle and you’re off. In Ag Education, you must make transition time to get from one event to another. One must recharge and refocus on another totally different activity while keeping other things going. It’s a difficult balancing act that must be practiced but I’m not sure it’s ever perfected.

**Favorite Motto**

One of my favorite mottos: “Unless you’re puking, passed or dead... KEEP MOVING!” I question the first one, as I’ve seen athletes doing that and still be on the move. No other education discipline can be compared in such a way! You are the triathletes of the education world and no one can argue any different. Go out and earn your trip to Hawaii!

Reinventing the Project Competition Wheel

By Lindsay Devaurs, Secondary Division Secretary, Bakersfield-Highland FFA

Like so many of our students, my freshman year was when I drank the FFA Kool-Aid and didn’t look back. After our sectional Big Contest, I was hungry for more. My agriculture teacher, Ralph Mendes, encouraged me, or should I say told me, that I was going to do the project competition with my horse, Tareana. I had no idea WHAT I was doing and what Project Competition was, but to be able to incorporate FFA and my horse? I was in.

I look back at pictures of me while I was doing my presentation to two very kind gentlemen, who listened to me talk about my horse (and talk and talk and talk...) and asked me questions. I laugh at the freshman member — the faded black jeans that were a little too short, the horrendous pony tail that makes me wonder why my mom never told me that I probably shouldn’t do that, and the faded, borrowed FFA jacket that was a little too big.

I remember Mr. Mendes told me I had earned a silver award and I was going to be recognized at the sectional banquet. “A silver award? That’s like second place!” I was so excited! (If only I knew...)

My sophomore year, I was disappointed to learn that the Kern-Inyo FFA section wasn’t going to have a project competition for that year, or the year after.

**Recognition Crucial**

Because of my personal experience and how the contest continued to engage me in the FFA during such a crucial year, I firmly believe that losing an... (Continued on page 14)
Want To Be Leaders

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, Department of Education

It is the middle of August as I prepare this article and many of you are starting your new school year. It is a time of change. Here at the California Department of Education, it is also a time of change. Bob Heuvel has retired. Jean Landeen will retire at the end of August. At the moment I am the acting manager of our unit. Long before the Golden Slate goes to print, Lloyd McCabe will be in place as the manager of our unit and the State FFA Advisor. Change will continue as we hope to be interviewing for Jean’s replacement in October. There will likely be another opening on the state staff in a few years. Who should accept those leadership roles?

Developing Leaders

Some of you know that I am a John C. Maxwell fan. In his book, Developing the Leaders Around You, he discusses his process of hiring people to join his team.

I do not remember the chapter for those who want to read his words, but as he is going through a list of things to consider, he discusses what he calls “Evident Gifts.” While doing this, he discusses four types of “Want To Be Leaders.” They are:

- Never Be Leaders;
- Could Be Leaders;
- Should Be Leaders;
- Must Be Leaders.

I do not recall his explanations for each of the four types of “Want to be Leaders.” This is my perspective.

Explanation of Types

First the “Never Be Leaders.” We all know people who have many talents; however, one of them is not leading others. They may be doing a great job in the classroom and doing good things for their students. Not everyone is cut out to fill a leadership role.

Next, there are the “Could Be Leaders.” These are the people who have talent. People can see potential in them. For whatever reason, they just do not seem to demonstrate the qualities of a leader. It could be that they lack the desire or self-discipline to fill that role. These people can do a great job in the classroom and may someday reach their potential as a leader.

The next group is the “Should Be Leaders.” These are the people that we observe early on, who have the raw talent needed to become a leader. What they need most is mentoring to help them maximize their opportunities to develop their leadership ability. As a profession, we need to nurture these people to help them prepare for future opportunities to lead the profession.

The final group is the “Must Be Leaders.” When we meet one of these people, we know they have what it takes. All they need is opportunity. Think of Ken Harris when the agriculture teaching profession asked him to create the position of CATA Executive Director. I can only assume that the leaders in our profession saw Ken as a “Must Be Leader.”

When Ken joined the state staff, the profession needed another “Must Be Leader.” They identified Jim Aschwanden. I was working with him at the time.

I do not know what type of “Want to be Leader” they saw me as, but when he left Galt High School mid-year to take over CATA, I tried to fill a void. In the fall of 2006, Jim and others encouraged me to apply for the position on the State Staff. I was happy with what I was doing at Galt High School. He and others convinced me to look at the opportunity.

Leader Development Activities

The past few years, many in the profession have discussed the need to develop the leaders among us. When I was a young teacher, the Lake Sequoia Conference filled that need. The AGED 2030 group has identified the need to reinstate a “Lake Sequoia-like” activity. There are people trying to identify the resources to move forward with activities to develop the leaders among us.

In the meantime, we need to identify the “Could Be, Should Be and Must Be Leaders” among us and get them involved in the activities that will assist them to prepare for future opportunities to lead the profession.

Let Them Know

One of the phrases that John C. Maxwell is noted for is, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Let those “Must Be Leaders” among us know that you see them as a leader in our profession. Let them know that we need them. If they know you care, they just might step forward.

Reinventing the Project Competition Wheel

(Continued from page 13) activity such as this is a huge disservice to FFA members. So many of our students are looking for a place to be successful, and I believe recognizing them for their SAE knowledge is crucial to allowing everyone to find their niche in our organization.

Craig Davidson and I established a local project competition at Highland High School when we started working together three years ago. We knew we needed to better incorporate SAE into our grading, and this seemed the best way to keep our students honest.

It is a near-impossible task to find judges to individually meet with over 330 members at their SAE location—so few people can volunteer that many days, and taking that many learners out of school, even for 2 hours, seemed a sure way to build resentment toward our program. We eventually concluded we should do a science fair-type project competition—much like how I displayed information when I did project competition years ago.

Appreciate What Students Do

Our model isn’t perfect; judges don’t interview students. We haven’t found a solution, and I know this is an important skill for our members to learn. However, the amount of individuals we recognize and the breadth and depth of the projects our students participate in has really allowed us, as teachers, to appreciate what they do.

It’s so easy to get caught up in focusing on fair projects as the only SAE projects to worry about, but you’d be surprised how many cool projects your students are doing and what a credit they are to your program! It’s also a great thing to invite administrators, counselors and other teachers to a room showcasing our students’ hard work. For those individuals to be involved in something so positive is a true testament to the three circles model we believe in.

One of our counselors shared that it added even more credibility to our program.

Honoring Many Skills

Perhaps the best part of reinventing the project competition wheel has been the number of students we have recognized at our spring awards banquet, and have thus brought into our program. Not everyone is going to earn their State Degree or compete in a judging team, but each to earn their State Degree or competition—much like how I displayed information when I did project competition years ago.

We eventu-
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Mike Retallick
AgOnline Teacher of the Year, 2014
Outstanding Early Career Agricultural Educator, North Central Region of the American Association for Agricultural Education, 2012

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<td>June 25</td>
<td>Governing Board Summer Retreat</td>
<td>San Luis Obispo</td>
</tr>
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