Sacramento Scene

New Funding Brings Optimism to Ag Ed/Career Tech Education

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

We are facing the final days of the regular legislative session in Sacramento and for the first time in several years, Ag Education and Career Technical Education programs have some hope for optimism and growth. With funding for the new CTE Incentive Grant designated for the next three years, and with the work being done on student certification and curriculum development through other regional grants, these truly are exciting times for our profession.

Opportunities for you to improve your local program and to help shape the future delivery of statewide Ag Education will abound—I hope you take advantage of these opportunities and help make the Ag Ed model even better!

Incentive Grant

I know that many of you have questions regarding the administration and funding mechanism for the CTE Incentive Grant, and hopefully by now some of those questions have been answered. We have been working closely with the California Department of Education and the Department of Finance on key strategies to implement the program, and I really believe that there is a genuine interest in making this program successful.

There seems to be a growing realization that districts must be held accountable for properly implementing effective CTE programs, and the Ag Incentive Grant has been used as a model to study to try to make that happen. For our Ag programs, this accountability won’t be anything new—but we expect that the learning curve for some districts will be rather steep.

Bottom line—these monies need to be utilized in a way that provides more access for more programs for more students, not used for more bloated bureaucracy.

New Funds

As we move forward, keep in mind that the state budget also contained over $11 billion in new funds for K–12 education and an additional $1 billion for community colleges. As a result, your district has more resources to use for discretionary purposes than it has had in recent memory.

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Fair Time Is Fun Time
By Clay Freeman, State CATA Treasurer

Twenty-one days ‘til weigh-ins. If this one gains 2.6 lbs. a day, it will make it. If we can hold that one to 0.4 lbs. a day, it will make it. Pen 3 needs more protein. Pen 4 needs more fat. Pen 5 is just right.

The last few weeks before fair can be enough to drive you out of the profession or at least explain why Ag teachers could greatly benefit from a moderate amount of psychiatric treatment. The first week of school while the English teachers are rested and relaxed, just back from zip-lining in Costa Rica.

Here are some tips that might help you to stay out of white jackets and padded rooms.

Plan Ahead
As with most aspects of this job, if you plan ahead, you will save yourself a lot of headaches.

Start by making contact with breeders at least six months before you will want to select animals to ensure that availability will meet your needs.

I know that you probably won’t have actual lists of exhibitors, and more importantly, their deposits collected; however, you should have an idea based on historical numbers. The breeder will greatly appreciate the heads up even if you give an approximate range.

Talk to your students early and often. Many details will need to be worked out, especially if you have students who do not come from a livestock background. Housing, selection, feed management, marketing, and goals for the project are all issues that need to be discussed with the student and parents well in advance of purchasing the project.

Know where your money is coming from. Most fairs in California are in the summer or early fall and around the end of June, right about the time you need feed, wormer, antibiotics and a new snare (because your new one from last year just disappeared)

Both finance secretaries and administrators can be a bit scarce.

My advice is before the end of the school year, you should get all the purchase orders you will need for the summer processed. If you have POs in hand for feed and medication needs, you will be able handle most of the catastrophes you will encounter during the dog days of summer.

Monitor Health and Progress Consistently
The students are responsible for the success or failure of their projects, but you are responsible for the success or failure of the students. It is vital that we as Ag teachers give our students all of the tools necessary to succeed.

That starts with teaching them how to manage the health of their projects. Teach them what normal looks like so that they will recognize abnormal behavior and conditions.

Practices like establishing a base line temperature and evaluating eating habits and fecal conditions early while animals are healthy will make it much

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Sacramento Scene

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We know that a large portion of these new monies will be used for salaries and benefits, but we hope that you and your program are positioned to ensure that some of these general fund monies are used to support Ag Education as well. Make sure your Ag Advisory Committee members are informed of your program needs, and work with your administration to seek investments that will pay dividends for your program and students.

FFA Membership
In other positive news, FFA membership is now closing in on the 80,000 member mark—an indication that your programs are truly meeting the needs of an ever-expanding number of students. We have seen record registrations for Greenhand Conferences as well as the National FFA trip, and expect that the State FFA Conference in April will have record-breaking levels of participation as well.

This growth and excitement is a direct reflection of both the quality and diversity of programs throughout the state, and we should be proud of these accomplishments.

This growth does have one very challenging consequence—a shortage of ag teachers to meet this increased demand. We currently have many unfilled positions throughout the state, and the short-term numbers in our teacher preparation programs will not be sufficient to fill these and future positions.

Why should you care? Because the program most impacted by this shortage may someday be your own.

I hope you are encouraging bright, dedicated students in your program to consider Ag Education as a career choice—and then helping them grow as individuals so that they are fully prepared to be successful teachers. It’s not just enough to identify the potential teachers; we need to provide direction and encouragement throughout their journey. If Ag Education is to fully prosper, we must address this shortage—our future is sitting in your classroom!

CATA Office Relocated
Some final notes—the CATA office has now been fully relocated to the FFA Center in Galt, and we are settling in the newly renovated offices here at the center.

Katie Otto will be stepping into the Development Director position vacated by Amy Madison, who returned to a full-time teaching position this fall. Katie will continue to oversee the financial oversight of the California FFA organization for the near future, while we will be hiring a financial assistant to help out in the office.

Zane and his Greenhand Conference crew are ready and excited to begin those conferences, and the State FFA officers are hitting the ground running.

All in all, a very positive year for Ag Education, and we look forward to making Ag Education more efficient, productive and better in the future. Hope your new school year is off to a great start! ☀

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**Teacher Educator News**

**CSU Chico Update**

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

**College of Agriculture Continues to Grow**

The College of Agriculture welcomed its largest incoming class ever this fall, with 308 first-time freshmen and transfer students enrolling in agriculture programs at Chico State. Three hundred eight students! That’s the size of the entire College of Agriculture just more than a decade ago!

But it’s not just the size of the college that’s changing. Professor Mike Spies has crunched the numbers and found some interesting statistics that reflect shifting demographics, not just in our college, but throughout agriculture.

- Enrollment in agriculture programs at Chico State has doubled in the last seven years to 890 enrolled students, with growth across the board in all of our majors. In the College of Agriculture this fall, 43 percent of our students are majoring in animal science; 30 percent in ag business; 16 percent in crops, horticulture and land resource management; and 11 percent in agriscience and education.
- The gender breakdown for the college has remained steady in the last five years with about 65:35 female to male ratio. Within majors, that ratio varies widely, with women making up 81 percent of the animal science majors, but just 26 percent of the crops, horticulture and land resource management option.
- There has been a dramatic change in the racial and ethnic diversity of our incoming student population. Since 2011, the percentage of Hispanic students in the incoming class more than doubled to 36 percent in 2015.

• Our students are also coming from a greater diversity of both traditional and nontraditional

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**Officers’ Corner**

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Fair Time Is Fun Time

easier to notice subtle changes in behavior that can be treated before the health of the animal deteriorates to the point of no return.

Don’t be afraid to call a vet when the animal’s condition is beyond your ability to treat. Make sure that before you need the help of a veterinarian, you already have a relationship established. Most vets are more than willing to help, but they don’t like surprises.

Weight charts can help to monitor progress toward a desired target weight as well as alert you to potential health issues early. Students should know what their animal’s weight should be each week.

The animals should be weighed each time by the same person and at the same time of day. Students also should know what their animal’s average daily gain is and if it is trending up or down.

Although making weight is very important, just making weight should not be the only goal. Quality, market-ready livestock that are at a weight appropriate for their respective frame size should be what we strive for.

This requires individual attention and a customized feed plan for each animal and educating the students about nutrition so that they understand the effect and proper use of feed supplements. Many schools are housing projects in groups on school farms, but you can still accomplish the same desired outcomes while feeding in groups if the animals are penned by stage of growth and condition and not by relationship of the students.

Establish a Chain of Command

If you want to handle every single issue at the fair, disregard the following.

OK, for the rest of you, if you want to maintain sanity during the fair, you need to establish a solid chain of command. He or her consulting with another exhibitor or a barn chairperson can handle most of the issues that a given exhibitor has.

For this to be effective, everyone needs to understand and respect the student leaders ahead of them in the chain. Have your barn chairperson, under your guidance, manage daily tasks early on like feed schedules or weighing sessions so that everyone knows who is in charge when you aren’t around.

In our chapter, there are three levels of leadership:

- Level 1 is an exhibitor more experienced than you are.
- Level 2 is the barn chairperson.
- Level 3 is the advisor.

Before the fair, have a meeting to discuss what issues will be handled at what level. Doing this has helped us to not only have a less stressful fair, but it also has become a tool to teach leadership in our program.

If you have a student who excels in SAEs, but isn’t interested in becoming a leader in other aspects of your program, this can be another alternative to teach them leadership skills.

Be Their Coach

From the start of the project to the end, you need to be the one they turn to. I understand that many of us are put in situations where we are supervising species with which we have limited or even no experience.

Nevertheless, once fair time is over, we want them to trust you and see you as the coach and mentor, so don’t “farm out” your coaching responsibilities on SAEs. If you need help, get help—but that means seeking out people who can teach you to be the expert that your students need you to be.

Remember, when your student has a real problem, do you want him/her to confide in you, or the fitter who may or may not be trained to handle the problem?

The other issue with having outside helpers working directly with your students is that they might not fully understand the goals you have for the projects. They are going to be driven by winning and may not understand that we are using the project to teach a lot more, like leadership, cooperation, humility, and grace.

Remember, there can be only one Grand Champion, so if that is your only goal, your students are probably going to leave the fair disappointed.

In the end, the fair should be fun. It is an honored tradition in our culture and a way to celebrate a long summer of hard work. Our students should leave with a heart filled with pride in their accomplishments and a head filled with knowledge from lessons learned. It is our job to guide them toward that end.
Welcome Our New Faculty
Kishore Joseph has been with the College of Agriculture since January. He earned his Ph.D. in agricultural and applied economics from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where his work focused on commodity futures markets. Professor Joseph’s research and professional interests include agricultural marketing, agribusiness management, commodity price analysis, futures markets, and risk management.

Jude Bayham is our newest professor in agricultural business. He’s a locally grown product, having grown up in Chico and earned his bachelor’s degree in economics from Chico State. He went on to earn a master’s from the University of Idaho and a Ph.D. in economics from Washington State University. Professor Bayham’s research has focused on topics related to agricultural supports and the biofuels industry, as well as the economics of wildfires.

Michael Chao joined our faculty in animal science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he just completed his Ph.D. in meat science and muscle biology. Professor Chao holds a bachelor’s in animal science and a master’s in ruminant nutrition, both from the University of California, Davis. His research interest is to develop niche meat processing techniques to serve the needs of domestic ethnic and international markets, and he looks forward to building a nationally recognized meat science program at Chico State.

Garrett Liles is another Chico native who earned his bachelor’s at Chico State with a special major in soil ecology. With a master’s in soil and watershed sciences from University of Washington, Seattle, and a Ph.D. from UC Davis, Professor Liles joined the faculty as a professor of soils. Professor Liles comes to us most recently from the Delta Stewardship Council, where he focused on restoration, adaptive management, infrastructure and water issues.

While we welcome these new faculty members, we wish a happy retirement to Professor Mitch Johns, who retired at the end of the spring semester after serving 17 years as professor of soil science in the College of Agriculture. Professor Johns is one of the kindest people you will ever meet, and we will miss his thoughtful, respectful presence among our faculty and in the classroom.

Dean Search Continues
Professor Dave Daley continues to serve as our extraordinarily capable and talented interim dean while we conduct our second nationwide search for a dean to replace Jennifer Ryder Fox, who retired in 2014.

On-campus interviews will likely be conducted this semester with the goal of bringing a new leader on board in 2016. We are grateful for Dave’s service to the College of Agriculture as dean. He also continues to teach, advise students, and manage the University Farm while simultaneously serving as first vice president of the California Cattlemen’s Association.

Bell Family Presidential Scholarship Program Grows to Six Students
The first two Bell Family Presidential Scholars, Holly Hackett and Jase Northrup, made it through their freshman year at Chico State and helped us welcome four new first-time freshmen to this prestigious scholarship program. Brigitte Braud from Core-Butte Charter School, Austin Douze from Yreka High School, Cole Lauchland from Lodi High School, and Brooke Vogt from McKinleyville High School each received the $20,000 scholarship to attend Chico State.

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

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

Lowe Honored as Distinguished Alumna
Superior Region FFA Supervisor Jeanette Lowe received the highest honor that the College of Agriculture gives to its alumni during a banquet in the Bell Memorial Union on April 10, 2015.

Lowe was named the 2015 Distinguished Alumna for the College of Agriculture in recognition for her excellence in the field of agriculture education, mentorship of students, and contributions to the College of Agriculture.

Lowe graduated in 1985 with a degree in agricultural business. She taught at Hamilton High School for 13 years before joining the state Department of Education as consultant in 2000.

Credenital Enrollment on Rise
This year, 15 student teachers entered the credential program.

The fall class included Katie Tenneson, who will continue her appointment at Los Molinos High School; Madison Weigel, who was hired at Denair High School; Cody Walker, hired at Ponderosa High School; Trevor Airola, who will continue on at Princeton High School; and Laura Barnes, who was recently hired at West Valley High School.

The spring class included Sierra June Meyers, who accepted a position at Yuba City High School; Jenny Kaslin, who will be a new teacher at Gridley High School; Devin Munro at Red Bluff High School; Maigen Matteucci at Surprise Valley High School; Anne Havens at Delta Chapter High School in Tracy; Heidi Mickelson at Petaluma; Holli Jacobsen, who accepted a teaching position at St. Regis High School in Montana; Jessie Brown, the new teacher at South Lindhurst in Olivehurst; Russell Pitter and Hayley Lawson.

2015–2016 is a banner year for CSU Chico with 22 students entering and completing the program. Our fall class includes Paige Fulmer, Cynthia Roy, Brianna Ellis, Whitney Medley and Kate Doop.

The spring class is a big one, including Courtney Wright, Courtney Dayhoff, Elva Castillo, Jennifer Ryder Fox, Distinguished Alumna.
California Beef Council Offers Information to Counter Misperceptions

By Jill Scofield, Director of Producer Relations, California Beef Council

At the California Beef Council (CBC)—the promotion and education arm of California’s beef industry—we see all manner of efforts to call into question the ranching community’s environmental impact, encourage consumers to remove dairy and meat from their diets, and vilify everything to do with livestock production. As an agricultural educator, you’ve no doubt seen your fair share of similar efforts—and you probably find them just as frustrating as we do.

For any of us involved in agriculture whether it be production, education, or communications presenting an even greater challenge is that more than 98 percent of the American population has little or no direct connection to production agriculture. This underscores the importance of our agricultural community joining together to fight misperceptions, and share information and resources.

As champions of California’s beef industry, that partnership, camaraderie and sharing of information is what we’d like to offer agricultural educators throughout the state.

The CBC a Resource for You

The CBC has been around since 1954, when Dwight D. Eisenhower was President of the United States, Goodwin Knight was Governor of California, and for the first time in America’s history, there were more tractors than mules on U.S. farms and ranches. During that year, the CBC was created, becoming the first state beef council to be established at a time when beef demand and consumption were of major concern to cattlemen and beef producers throughout the state and undoubtedly the country.

Funded by the $1-per-head Beef Checkoff that is assessed each time cattle exchange ownership in California, the CBC today continues in its mission of growing beef demand with a variety of programs and partnerships designed to promote, educate consumers and influence about, and shed light on the truth behind all things beef.

For example, our partnerships with retailers, foodservice distributors and restaurants, popular brands and other commodities (think Crock Pot and California avocados) are part of our efforts to keep beef top-of-mind throughout the state and through a variety of channels. The campaigns we launch each year also include significant online and digital presence, providing consumers with information on a variety of aspects about the beef community everything from recipes to raising cattle. And with an in-house Registered Dietitian and Nutritionist on board, sharing beef’s nutrition profile also is an important component of our communication and education efforts.

All of this is done on behalf of and with the guidance of the people who work so hard, every day, to produce delicious, nutritious beef. The CBC is guided by a board of 42 council members, who represent all sectors of the beef industry. The CBC staff of five works closely with the council and producers to ensure programs reflect both the input and needs of today’s cattlemen and cattlewomen.

Fact Check: Beef 101

You can probably guess some of the common misperceptions about beef production and animal agriculture that make us cringe at the CBC, but there are some that seem to come up more frequently than others.

Two of the issues that we most often hear questions about are regarding beef’s nutrition and the environment.

When it comes to beef nutrition, it’s no secret that beef is one of the most powerful nutrients in the food chain.

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Two of the issues that we most often hear questions about are regarding beef’s nutrition and the environment.

When it comes to beef nutrition, it’s no secret that beef is one of the most powerful nutrients in the food chain. It is a high-quality protein that provides 10 essential nutrients for optimal health. In fact, a 3-ounce serving is an excellent source (providing 20 percent or more of the recommended daily value) of protein, zinc, selenium, niacin, vitamin B6 and vitamin B12, and on average, is about 170 calories per serving. It is also a good source (providing 10 percent or more of the recommended daily value) of phosphorus, iron, riboflavin and choline.

One argument often heard particularly from those making a push for “Meatless Mondays” in school districts around the state is that there are many plant-based sources of protein. While this is true, many of these alternatives are not complete proteins, meaning they don’t contain an adequate portion of all nine of the essential amino acids necessary for our dietary needs. Beef, as you might have already guessed, is a complete protein.

It’s also interesting to note that 66 percent of beef cuts sold at retail are considered lean after being cooked and trimmed. What’s more, there is a growing body of evidence that shows that beef can actually help satisfy your hunger and maintain a healthy weight.

For example, research published in the American Clinical Journal of Nutrition suggests that eating a higher protein breakfast, such as one including a high-quality protein like beef, boosts satiety and reduces hunger more than a typical ready-to-eat breakfast that is lower in protein all good reasons to keep beef in a healthy diet.

When it comes to the environment, you know all too well that every conversation about (Continued on page 6)
(Continued from page 5) this topic lately has centered on the drought. (At the time of this writing, we were well into our fourth summer of drought. Let’s hope by the time you’re reading this, the promised El Nino effect is bringing much-needed rain to all of California.)

Even though no sector of agriculture has been immune to the increased scrutiny of the amount of water required to produce food, some commodities, like beef, were a favorite target in the height of summertime media stories about the drought. What often was missing from these conversations, however, was the reality that farmers and ranchers have been working for generations to conserve water resources every day, not just in recent years, with the understanding that water is a precious resource.

Taking into account all water needed to bring beef from the pasture to a consumer’s plate—including water for cattle to drink, water used in irrigation of pasture land, growing crops that cattle eat, harvesting and processing beef, water used for refrigeration units at the grocery store or at a restaurant to keep food cold, for transportation as well as in cooking, and even the water taken into account for food waste—it takes 617 gallons of water per one pound of boneless beef consumed, according to a recent beef industry sustainability life cycle assessment that was funded by the Beef Checkoff.

What’s more, the water cycle also plays an important role, meaning that much of the water used in beef production percolates into aquifers, runs down streams into lakes and oceans, evaporates and returns as precipitation, and cattle pastures provide land to filter this water and return it to the ecosystem.

Helping consumers, other educators, and sometimes even school administrators understand some of these important truths can be helpful in separating fact from fiction when it comes to beef (and livestock) production.

How Can We Help?

In addition to these topics, you probably also hear a variety of other questions regarding beef production. Keep in mind that the CBC and the Beef Checkoff have a number of valuable resources that may be helpful in your role as an agricultural educator.

Here is just a sampling of some of the tools available for you. Please contact us at any time if there are any questions we can answer, myths about beef we can help dispel in your community, or materials or resources we can provide for your classroom or program.

Masters of Beef Advocacy, 2.0: This Beef Checkoff-funded program is a self-directed online training program designed to equip beef producers and industry allies with the information they need to be everyday advocates for the beef industry. A great resource for you and your students, the program is also available on DVD.

Beef Quality Assurance (BQA): BQA is a national program that provides guidelines for beef cattle production, and helps raise consumer confidence by offering proper management techniques and a commitment to quality within every segment of the beef industry. Certification is available online or through in-person training, and is typically $25 per person, but opportunities for no-cost certification do come up on occasion.

Online Resources: There also are a variety of helpful websites and online resources that share industry information or provide helpful information for consumers and educators alike.

Beefitswhatsfordinner.com - collection of beef recipes, cooking methods, demo videos and nutrition resources. Beefnutrition.org - all facts regarding beef’s nutrition, plus research and studies regarding beef’s role in a healthy diet. FactsAboutBeef.com - numerous articles and resources to help dispute myths about the beef industry and help answer common consumer questions. MyBeefCheckoff.org – information regarding the Beef Checkoff. Calbeef.org - California Beef Council website. Handouts and Materials: Finally, the CBC has a wide array of helpful handouts and materials, from classroom resources and lesson plans pertaining to beef education, to cuts charts and beef preparation resources, and brochures and handouts on everything in between.

If you’d like to receive any of these resources, simply reach out to us at (916- 925-2333 or jill@calbeef.org. We look forward to working with you!
FFA Poster Ad
(Helping Communities Grow)
News and Views

Dudes... Where Are You?!
By Erin Gorter, South Coast Region President, Program Director, CCPT, South Coast Region Agricultural Education Consortium

Do not train boys to learning by force and harshness, but lead them by what amuses them, so that they may better discover the bent of their minds.
—Plato

No one can deny there is a distinct difference in the way young boys and girls act; we see it every day in our classrooms and even at home. Growing up, I often thought my two brothers exhibited some pretty alien-like behaviors when it came to doing homework. They often waited until the last minute and would refuse to ask for help. How did they live like that?!

My husband and I are both taking distance courses online and the pattern is consistent. He likes to wait to start his homework at about 8 p.m. the night it is due (and when I say “start,” I mean turn on the computer and browse the Internet until about 10 p.m. and then scramble to meet the 11:59 p.m. submission deadline) while I prefer to have mine done way ahead of time.

At the end of the day, we are both getting it done though, so who cares? The problem is, it is differences like these that could be the fundamental reasons our profession is not meeting the needs of all learners, specifically our males, and this could be the contributing factor to our lack of male agriculture students and teachers.

The numbers do not lie. In 2004, there were only 270 female teachers and 401 males. As of last year’s R2 Report, our students are being served by 421 female teachers and 338 male teachers. And everyone wants to know why. Why are males not even enrolling in classes to become agriculture teachers? Where are they?

The Deterrents
DeLay, Swan, Gorter & Ayon (2015) attempted to reveal the deterrents for males entering the profession of agricultural education and they discovered three underlying themes:

- Low pay;
- Additional hoops required to obtain a credential; and
- The “rah-rah” leadership component of the FFA.

One teacher said: “I feel what turned me off when I first got into agriculture education was it was more about the rah-rah pom-poms FFA and it was almost like the scope of the direction was away from the roots of agriculture and occupational/industry experience, preparing kids to go to work... I feel it’s moving towards training little politicians.”

This leads me to one question: Are we turning these male students off to the FFA and a potential career in agricultural education from the very moment they set foot in our classrooms their 9th grade year?

And as a member of our profession, I look around and see so many females in leadership positions because boys will not step up, even at the post-secondary level. I have found it hard to get boys to run for office, sign up for a conference, or join a CDE team.

These same sentiments are echoed outside of California and across all levels and disciplines in education: where are the boys?

In an 87-year-old organization, where females have been involved for only 46 of those years as members, girls certainly did take FFA over quickly. I am not so sure that is such a good thing.

In an Education Policy Brief for the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (2008), Shaun P. Johnson says, “… it is important for male teachers to be stable academic role models for disaffected boys in order to counter negative attitudes towards schooling, which lead to higher dropout rates and poor achievement.”

We need more male agriculture teachers.

The Science
Dr. Leonard Sax, a physician and psychologist, has written two books that you may find interesting in helping understand the psyche of our male students. In his work Boys Adrift, Sax investigates the causes for the lack of motivation in our young men today and breaks it down into five main causes:

1) Video Games,
2) Teaching Methods,
3) Prescription Drugs,
4) Endocrine Disruptors, and
5) Devaluation of Masculinity.

While all five suggested causes are interesting, two speak to me the greatest: teaching methods and devaluation of masculinity.

Our K-12 curriculum is pretty brutal today. Kindergarten is no longer a place to play and develop basic social and learning skills. Instead, our curriculum forces students to learn reading and math, which is great...for our girls.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2007), girls thrive in today’s kindergarten classroom because developmentally they are about 18 months ahead of the boys when it comes to the portion of the brain dealing with language.

Dr. Sax points out teaching these skills to boys at age 5 is the same as trying to teach a three and a half year old girl how to read, and that does not sound like a super fun task to me. And, if I were a boy, I would be frustrated and frustration would eventually lead to disengagement and a disengaged 5-year-old is probably not going to look upon school very highly for the next 13 years of his life, and probably will not return to school as a teacher.

As for the potentially touchy subject of masculinity, Dr. Sax refers to the all-boy Georgetown Preparatory School in Bethesda, Maryland and its definition of what it means to be a man: “... being a man means using your strength in the service of others.”

I like this definition because it allows any one of our male students the opportunity to be a man. In Sax’s book Why Gender Matters, he discusses even the most aggressive boys have the

We need you all to reach out to the males by providing opportunities for them to use their strength in the service of others and affirm the knight.

(Continued on page 9)
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Promote Agriculture

News and Views

Dudes... Where Are You?!

(Continued from page 8)
ability to do good. “Julie Collins, a counselor at a high school I[Sax] visited, explains it this way: ‘You can’t turn a bully into a flower child. But you can turn a bully into a knight.’ Her motto: Affirm the knight.”

And I have to ask myself: Did I affirm the knight in my classroom, or did I try to turn those students into something else? Are we, as agriculture teachers and FFA advisors working with those rough-around-the-edges boys to help them make an impact, or do we seek out the types of male students who are already polished? We must strive to provide many opportunities to engage ALL boys.

Our Problem to Fix

In reference to Ralph Mendes’ article “Why Don’t Young Men Choose Ag Education as a Profession?” from last January’s Golden Slate, I do think it is our behavior as teachers and advisors contributing to this phenomenon.

But I also think there is some science behind it that cannot be ignored and we can actually use to help engage our boys in agriculture education as both leaders and teachers.

These are just my thoughts, but I think these may be some minor steps in the right direction in terms of increasing male engagement in high school agriculture programs, which could lead to an increase in male agriculture teacher candidates:

• Offer professional development to our current teachers on how to specifically adjust instruction to adapt to the unique needs of male learners. We differentiate instruction for all types of learners, but have we looked at gender as one of those differences?

• Offer an agriculture teacher recruitment conference and/or leadership development conference that is/are for boys only. There is considerable research showing boys are more focused and readily able to step up when girls are taken out of the equation. (Truth be told, a similar approach with our female students would also benefit them as well). Think Boys State and Girls State. I have a steady stream of books being delivered to my house on the topic. I would highly encourage some of you to read Boys Adrift and Why Gender Matters by Dr. Leonard Sax. Pay close attention to the references to enduring cultures and how our society has no official transition for our males from boyhood to manhood. It is interesting stuff.

Also, the success of non-coeducational schools such as the Georgetown Preparatory School and the research that shows boys perform better academically and socially in these types of settings is quite fascinating. Boys and girls are very different and not just for the obvious reasons.

How many of you became an agriculture teacher because you had a great agriculture teacher and a great experience in FFA? We need to understand this when dealing with students in the classroom and we need to be cognizant of it as we plan FFA events that are amusing and valuable to all members of all genders.

We need you all to reach out to the males by providing opportunities for them to use their strength in the service of others and affirm the knight.

Pj LoCoco Retirement Celebration

Please mark your calendars for December 19, 2015 and plan to attend Pj LoCoco’s retirement celebration. The event will be held at the SRJC Shone Farm Dutton Ag Pavilion starting at 5 p.m. Table sponsorships and individual tickets will be available for the event.

For further information, please call (707) 527-4653.

Our Corporate Members are listed with a brief description of their products on the next few pages.

We encourage your patronage of our Corporate Members, as they have shown a commitment to supporting agricultural education in California.

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You have to have a strong network

News and Views

Balancing Act

By Cory Molloy, Kerman High School

You can look across almost any CATA meeting these days and see a “future FFA member” in the arms of a hard-working, multitasking ag teaching mom. Of course, the statement can be said for our male counterparts as well, but I have always felt more comfortable writing to what I know, so I ask a little indulgence as I address you as one of those moms.

My story is a unique (and dramatic) one. I had been teaching for 7½ years when my husband and I brought our four kiddos home. We welcomed a sibling group of four children into our lives at ages 7, 4, 2, and 21 months.

Needless to say, that rocked our boat a bit. Nothing can truly prepare you to be a parent, but going from zero to four overnight tested us in ways we didn’t know even existed.

I love my career. I had put all I am into it for more than seven years. Now I was a mom of four on top of it. At the beginning, when only the oldest was in school and the other three were in daycare, my classroom phone started ringing with more personal calls than business calls. My husband was still working full-time 45 minutes from home, so when the Littles needed something, I needed to attend to it.

My sick time was already depleted from my short maternity leave, so I leaned heavily on the support of my department and other peers on campus to cover classes while I ran to take care of my new children. To add to the chaos, we were still technologically foster parents, so I had to deal with weekly visits with their birth parents.

I was lucky to have such supportive administration as I went through this transition. I even packed my vehicle differently to make sure I had four changes of clothes, one for each child, everywhere we went. Every single aspect of my life changed and even my students had a difficult time learning to share me.

The thought crossed my mind several times in that first year, “What have I done?” I even had moments of wondering if this is truly what I wanted.

I credit my survival, mentally and professionally, to my dear husband, with a lot of help from our friends, as our family was scattered across the state.

At that time, I had been working with one of my teaching partners for the majority of my career. He kept me grounded at work and offered as much support as he could from his perspective as a parent and Ag teacher. In fact, he and his wife are both Ag teachers and have three children of their own.

I am surprised, after having a front row to my crazy; we still work together to this day.

While my story is unique, the result of needing to learn to balance kids in a demanding profession remains the same. I have been feeling the need to share ideas on the subject with our younger teachers as they embark on their journeys or start to consider the possibility of how to do both successfully.

Common Threads

At the February 2015 Mentor Teacher Conference, I took some time to chat with a few of my peers who I have great respect for and asked what their secrets were to being a successful Ag teacher and mom.

Every one of them shared one answer: “You have to have a strong network.”

Whether it is family, friends or supportive community, you need to surround yourself with people who respect what you are trying to do personally, as well as professionally.

While being blessed with an amazing and understanding spouse is a huge bonus, I chatted with one truly amazing woman among us who raised her three charming cherubs as a single, Ag teaching mom.

Huh?! Single parents amaze me enough, but a single parent AND a successful Ag teacher? I’m tired just thinking about that one! Another theme mentioned by the group was how important it is to set your priorities and keep them clear, not only in your own mind but to your students, their parents, and your teaching partners as well.

All things in life have a season. That is where the balance comes in. In our profession, certain times of the year are busier than others.

We have judging teams, fair, leadership conferences, and a variety of other responsibilities that demand our attention.

Then we also have times when our children, and their interests and activities, are where we want to be and to be parents who are present. It also helps when your children find they share your passions and eventually become your students.

So many of us have, and will have, the opportunity to make up that time which might have been lost in their younger years when our children compete on our teams, show with us in our livestock units, and learn to lead those chapters we have grown to love so much.

Now we are able to spend more time with them than they probably even want. What a blessing it is to have them along with us for the ride!

A Shift in Our Focus

My peers and I have been teaching 15 years or more and we reflected on the recent changes we have noticed in the CATA. Even just 10 years ago, it was virtually unheard of for a child to be at summer conference or in a professional meeting.

We now have events such as the family barbecue, the children’s games, and even areas set aside for nursing mothers. Our professional family is growing in its understanding and acceptance that more young women are becoming Ag teachers, and with that trend comes children.

An interesting statistic was mentioned at the Mentoring Conference. Seventy-five percent of the teachers in our profession have been teaching less than 15 years. These are often the years in life when one starts a family.

In a recent edition of the GOLDEN STATE, Ralph Mendes addressed the trend of more women than men entering the ag teaching profession. He addressed the possibility “it is what it is” and it may not change.

This may be true. We may continue to see more and more women, many who are or will be mothers, join our ranks. As an Ag teaching mother, I appreciate the open-mindedness of this professional organization to truly behave as a family and welcome our children as part of us.

I believe it is more than possible to be a successful Ag teacher and mother. As one who is making both roles work, the support system within our profession has been critical to my persistence. I have seen this organization do beautiful things for the family, both figuratively and literally. Whether you are an ag teaching mom or an ag teaching dad, do not ever feel one role has to suffer for the success of the other. We get it! We are all in this together for the long haul.

One last thing… I started this article for the May 2015 issue. I finished it in September. If that does not punctuate my point, I am not sure what can.
Dream Big — Develop Vision for Future of Agriculture Program

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, Department of Education

If you are aware of the current state of funding for Career Technical Education, you know that there is a significant amount of money available to our programs. To start with, districts have been allocated more money under the Local Control Funding Formula than last year.

Many of our programs will benefit from resources available through the California Career Pathways Trust Funding. California Partnership Academies, Specialized Secondary Programs and the Agricultural Career Technical Education Incentive Grant were all included in the budget without a huge battle.

This year, $250 million will be allocated to districts for what is called the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant. Is your program in a position to invest these resources to improve opportunities for your students?

Formula-Based Process

Though most of us in agricultural education would like to have seen an application for each program in a high school to have access to these funds, the process used will likely be based on some kind of formula.

Over the years, the Golden Slate has published many articles related to the need for strong agriculture advisory committees, connecting with the community, and reaching out to people of influence. Many of you have made much progress in this regard. Others have been content to stand on the sidelines and hope for the best.

For those programs that have connected to the community, administration and board, this should be a year that will pay dividends.

Share a plan with your administration to invest in the future of your program before they even know how much money the school will receive.

Those five-year equipment purchase plans that your regional supervisor has pushed you to keep current will come in handy. If your five-year plan is not current, be certain to address that at your fall meeting of the agriculture advisory committee.

Vision

As you revise and update your five-year plan, look beyond replacing old computers or vehicles and have your committee develop a vision for the future of the agriculture program.

Ask the question, what if? The teachers involved in the Agriculture Education Vision 2030 efforts have thought about a better way to support teachers. Has your program identified efforts that can provide new opportunities to engage students in your program?

What if?

Many at the capitol fought to make these resources available to our programs. Hopefully, these resources will be used to invest in the future of our programs. If we do not use these resources wisely, why would they give us more?

Dream big, have a plan, what if?
News and Views

Strictly Ag Mechanics…

By Mark Perkins, Willows High School

Perhaps you will recall the title of my writings? I used it several years ago when I was teaching at another school. Things change such that now I teach chemistry but have had to teach math and world history along the way. So “Strictly Ag Mechanics” no longer applies, but it is where my heart is.

Last spring I put this letter together in regards to my wood shop classes here at Willows High School and I think it is good for all of us teaching in the “shop areas” to think about safety in terms of the larger picture of school culture. I passed this along to the other shop teachers and to my administration in response to a “safety walk through” by our district insurance company and our Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) visit.

Safety training is very important as we begin the new school year! These are some areas that may get overlooked or give only superficial treatment.

To Whom It May Concern:
High quality and safe shops don’t just happen!

Naturally I have some thoughts in regard to the safety inspection held in January and the recent WASC visit. I felt the visits were informative and it is reassuring to know that the shops on this campus are on the right track for safety and quality. This was actually the first time I was included in the “safety walk through” since being employed at Willows High School. (WASC people loved the shops)

However informative the safety inspection was, it only dealt with one area of safety and that is the environment in which we (teachers & students) work. At best it was quick and to the point but dealt with only one of the three important parts of the overall safety program that is in our control as teachers. It would be very rare that, in the case of my shop for example, that a student accident would result from clamps on the wall falling off the wall or from a table being less than 19” from the circuit breaker panels, as noted in the safety inspection.

Therefore there are larger areas of concern regarding safety that we all need to be aware of and these are: personal safety and instructional safety, along with environmental safety. These make up the overall comprehensive safety program at any site.

I believe that our shops need constant “safety inspections” and I do this every day as part of my teaching routine. Some days it’s a quick cursory inspection, but other days it may take hours over several periods, even days, to fix safety hazards. Most environmental safety issues should be inspected and maintained by the District on a routine basis. Shop teachers being only the “first line of defense” are often distracted by the nature of the teaching job.

January 8th’s inspection caught some things in the wood shop, and of the six items noted in the report, the storage of the bar clamps and flammables should be stored in a flammable storage cabinet should likely read, “Oil base paints…” but most importantly, the brevity of the inspection leads me to believe that priorities regarding student safety are not clearly understood.

Personal safety and instructional safety are by far more immediate concerns to lessening the possibilities of student accidents, than results of annual safety inspections that only look at environmental safety concerns.

Students’ understanding of safety and application of their common sense play the larger role in the overall effectiveness of the safety program. For me, this involves the largest share of teacher supervisory time and stress. The second notable area of teacher effort and teacher stress is the keeping of every student safely on task for the entire period! Shops are not like any other classroom on campus! Students off task and with, “oops I forgot” excuses can end up with dire consequences!

Personal safety, instructional safety and thus overall program quality are then affected greatly by three very important factors:

The number of students enrolled in each class.

It is a likely (daily) scenario that every student could be working on a different project, in a different location.

Shop teachers are often required to focus on one or a few students at a time.

Shop teachers are often in locations of the facility not able to see all students.

The physical size of the facility makes (my) classes over 15 (don’t laugh at me; based on square footage, 15 is the number. Per class is the concession) crowded, finding both projects and students in conflicting proximity to each other and the tools. Too many to adequately supervise is a real concern.

The maturity level of the students in each class.

Shops must never be thought of as places to put students “because we have nowhere else to put them.” Discretion in selecting students is paramount.

Students that are an obvious misfit really need to be placed somewhere else. The consequences of misbehavior and inattentiveness in shop classes are not the same as any other class.

The levels of these students in each class (first year, second year, etc.).

In my shop, I never get away from teaching beginning woodworking. Beginners, especially in the second semester, often never receive the full amount of instruction and attention afforded to the students from the start of the school year. Currently, students will be found doing book work, safety test materials, beginning wood working projects, intermediate and advanced projects, all at the same time.

First year students need their own unique class periods based on the requirements of the consistency in the teaching of fundamentals to be used in later levels.

It is quite common for student schedule changes to happen at almost any time, thus putting students at a disadvantage both in safety and wood working instruction.

Second year and beyond students often then don’t get the instruction they need and the chance to develop skills learned in previous years in the wood shop. Wood Tech I for first year students, Wood Tech II and/or Wood Tech II-III course sequence would make more sense than mixing of all levels of students in each class.

Look for the Aggie Annex online at www.calagteachercrs.org/GoldenSlate.html
2015 Agricultural Education Award Winners

Outstanding Single Person Secondary Program — Healdsburg High School:
Wesley Hunt

Outstanding Young Teacher — Natalie Borba, Atwater High School. Presenting the award is CATA President Mike Albiani.

Outstanding Teacher — Don Wilson Memorial Award: Cindy Rohde, Pierce High School, and Ken Dias, Clovis East High School

Outstanding Teacher — Don Wilson Memorial Award: Cindy Rohde, Pierce High School, and Ken Dias, Clovis East High School

Ken Harris (left), 2015 CATA Hall of Fame Inductee, with CATA President Mike Albiani.

Outstanding Single Person Secondary Program — Healdsburg High School:
Wesley Hunt
2015 Agricultural Education Award Winners

Outstanding Large Secondary Program — Hanford High School: With CATA President Mike Albiani are (from left): Lilly Pimentel, Jean Myers, Jared Castle, Amanda Shoffner, Sam Rodriguez (not pictured: Brian Combes and Laura Henson).

Outstanding 2-3 Person Secondary Program and Outstanding Secondary Agricultural Education Program State Winner — San Luis Obispo High School: Anna Bates and Jodi Evans.

Teacher of Excellence Award Winners (from left): Janice Lohse, Hamilton High School; Kelly Larson, Hughson High School; Elizabeth Ammon, Lassen High School; Buz Arnold, Mariposa High School; Bill Kelly, Bakersfield College; Sam Meredith, Atwater High School; Shay Williams-Hopper, Tulare High School; Steve Gambril, Clovis East High School; Kelly Tulloch, Mountain Empire; Ray Browne, Dinuba High School. CATA also honored Elizabeth Knapp-Williams with a special Teacher of Excellence presentation to her family on her behalf.
2015-2016 Calendar of Activities

September 26 ................................................................. North Coast Region Meeting ................................................................. Eureka
September 25–26 ......................................................... South Coast Region Meeting ................................................................. Hilton, Costa Mesa
October 11 ................................................................. South Coast Region Meeting ................................................................. Hollister
October 26–31 .............................................................. National FFA Convention ................................................................. Louisville, Kentucky
November 6 ................................................................. Superior Region Meeting ................................................................. Oroville
November 7 ................................................................. Cotton State Finals ................................................................. CSU, Fresno
November 13–14 ......................................................... San Joaquin Region Meeting ................................................................. Tenaya Lodge
November 19–20 ............................................................ New Professionals Conference ................................................................. Fresno
November 17–21 ............................................................ NAAE Conference ................................................................. New Orleans, LA
November 21 ................................................................. Central Region Meeting ................................................................. UC Davis
December 1–3 .............................................................. CATA Leadership Conference ................................................................. Wonder Valley
December 3–5 .............................................................. Community College Midwinter Institute ................................................................. Omni Hotel, San Diego
January 7–8 ................................................................. Student Teacher Conclave ................................................................. Galt
January 14–15 ............................................................... Winter Governing Board ................................................................. Galt
January 23 ................................................................. Natural Resources State Finals ................................................................. Reedley
February 1–2 ............................................................... Mentoring Conference ................................................................. Fresno
February 6 ................................................................. Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree & Vine Pruning ................................................................. CSU Fresno
February 22 ................................................................. South Coast Region Meeting ................................................................. San Luis Obispo HS
February 27 ................................................................. Central Region Meeting ................................................................. Merced
February 27 ................................................................. San Joaquin Region Meeting ................................................................. Tulare
March 12 ................................................................. Superior Region Meeting ................................................................. Chico
April 2 ................................................................. North Coast Region Meeting ................................................................. Santa Rosa
April 9 ................................................................. Southern Region Meeting ................................................................. Cal Poly Pomona
April 23 ................................................................. CSU Fresno Field Day ................................................................. Fresno
April 23–26 ................................................................. State FFA Leadership Conference ................................................................. Fresno
April 26–29 ................................................................. NAAE Region I Meeting ................................................................. Hampton Inn, Coeur d’Alene, ID
May 7 ................................................................. State FFA Judging Finals ................................................................. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19 ................................................................. Executive Committee Meeting ................................................................. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19 ................................................................. Pre-Conference Governing Board ................................................................. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19–23 ................................................................. CATA Summer Conference ................................................................. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23 ................................................................. Governing Board Summer Retreat ................................................................. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo