Hard Work Paying Off on Ag Ed Funding

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

With the exception of the highly controversial minimum wage package just signed by the Governor, it’s been a relatively quiet spring here in Sacramento. Committees are meeting, work is being done, but compared to the theatrics of the national presidential political campaign it all seems pretty humdrum in the State Capitol. Given the circus-like atmosphere on the presidential circuit, maybe that’s a good thing.

We have been busy in the Capitol working on gaining support for maintaining an adequate funding level for Career Technical Education and the CTE Incentive Grant program. As most of you know, the Governor’s budget calls for a $100 million reduction in the CTE Incentive Grant for next year, even though the requests for funding this year far exceeded resources available. The GetREAL coalition is making real headway on this issue, and we are hopeful that increased levels of funding are part of the budget deal reached between the State Legislature and the Governor in June. The reaction thus far on the legislative side has been encouraging.

We certainly appreciate Assembly Member O’Donnell taking several hours out of his day to learn more about agricultural education, and look forward to working with him and his peers to help them understand the positive impact that agriculture education has on students.

Career Technical Education

It also has been encouraging to see the positive effects of both the CTE Incentive Grant and the CTE Pathway Trust Grants on programs throughout the state.

(Continued on page 2)
I am attracted to people and programs “that get it done” — people and programs that achieve success and have the ability to influence the attitude, philosophy and characteristics of others. When it comes to organizations, I am attracted to professional sports teams and their team dynamics, coaching philosophy, etc. in how they run their teams and coach their players. I am attracted to successful businesses and leaders who have the ability to influence others toward a common goal and maximize productivity.

Most of all, I am proud to be part of a professional culture that carries a philosophy of positive influence and collaboration. In all, the various aspects I identified continue to be an influence on my life, both personally and professionally.

A common trait of productive, successful agriculture educators and agriculture programs is the ability to maximize one’s time efficiently and effectively in order to increase one’s productivity. A philosophy I encountered and implemented many years back came from reading a book that stated, “If you want to be successful, surround yourself with other successful people.” In a profession that extends beyond the “normal” parameters of a typical teacher, classroom, and education model, utilizing the success of others can directly influence your own personal and professional success.

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Appreciation: the recognition and enjoyment of the good qualities of someone or something. Synonyms include valuing, treasuring, admiration, respect, regard, esteem, high opinion. Did you know that encouraging the heart… the act(s) of true appreciation is one of the five practices of exemplary leadership? In the book *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*, authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner break down all leadership to five basic principles that include:

1. Model the Way
2. Inspire a Shared Vision
3. Challenge the Process
4. Enable Others to Act
5. Encourage the Heart

Practice No. 5, Encourage the Heart, was so important that there is a whole book and workbook dedicated to it titled, surprisingly, *Encouraging the Heart*. In a society that has a tendency to focus on “Me first” and “What can I do to get ahead?” it’s not surprising that folks need a book dedicated to learning how to reward and recognize others. The fact is that authentic appreciation seems to be a lost art these days.

**Showing Appreciation**

“Hey Floral Team… don’t forget to write the thank you note for the contest sponsor.”

“Johnny, did you write the thank you note to the award sponsor for your job interview plaque yet?”

As a profession we mandate that our students show appreciation to others who provide things on their behalf. Field day coordinators, award sponsors, contest hosts, the list goes on and on.

How often do we take the time to show appreciation to our colleagues, other teachers, industry partners, our students, and those who act for our profession and organization on a daily basis? Think about it for just a minute… when was the last time that you sent a handwritten thank you note… to anyone? When was the last time you picked up a little something special for someone just to show them that you were thinking of them and that they were appreciated?

For some the act(s) of encouraging the heart comes naturally; it’s a part of who you are… it’s in your wheel house so to speak. For others it is a skill set that needs to be practiced and learned.

**Essentials of Encouraging**

What are the basic ideas of appreciation? How can a person begin to practice the art of appreciation? As stated by Kouzes and Posner in their book, *Encouraging the Heart*, leaders do their best to encourage the heart when they practice the seven essentials of encouraging:

1. Set clear standards: “Leadership has set clear standards of what people in the organization are expected to live up to.”
2. Expect the best: “Leaders believe that no matter what their role, people can achieve high standards that have been set.”
3. Pay attention: “It’s more than just catching people doing things right, it’s also paying attention and understanding the significance of their actions.”
4. Personalize recognition: “Customize the award and recognition” specifically for the person.
5. Tell the story: “Storytelling is one of the oldest ways in the world to convey the values and ideals shared by a community.” Share the great stories about what others have done.
6. Celebrate together: “Social support is absolutely essential to our well-being and productivity. Celebrating together is one way we can get this essential support.”

7. Set the example: “Leaders set the example for others. They practice what they preach. If you want others to encourage the heart, you start by modeling it yourself.”

**Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary.**

Margaret Cousins

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

MAYA ANGELOU

**Ag Education Proficiency**

The Agriculture Education family is really proficient at about half of the seven essentials. We include 3, 5, and 7.

Areas where we could improve include 1, 2, 4, 6.

When we review essential No. 3, it may be that we get caught up in what we are doing; so busy that we catch people, but we don’t pay attention.

No. 5 probably gets caught up in the “too busy” category as well. Mentoring is something that our profession has focused on for the past several years. Storytelling is a great way to mentor… to pass on values, to encourage the heart. Next time you are sitting at a field day waiting for your team(s) to finish, share a story.

(Continued on page 4)

**The ONE Thing**

(Continued from page 2)

Curly: Do you know what the secret of life is?
Mitch: No. What?
Curly: This (He holds up one finger).
Mitch: Your finger?
Curly: One thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and everything else don’t mean sh*t.
Mitch: That’s great, but what’s the “one thing”? Curly: That’s what you’ve got to figure out.

As shared in the book, taking a “one thing” approach to your life and profession narrows your concentration and focus to that “one thing.” When you want the absolute best chance to succeed at anything you want, your approach should always be the same. Go small.

“Going small” is ignoring all the things you could do and doing what you should do. It’s recognizing that not all things matter equally and finding the things that matter most. It’s a tighter way to connect what you do with what you want. It’s realizing that extraordinary results are determined directly by how narrow you can make your focus.

Going small is a simple approach to extraordinary results and it works. Why? Because it has only one purpose—to ultimately get you to the point. When you go as small as possible, you’ll be staring at one thing. And that’s the point.

Keep in mind the book pertains to an approach regarding BIG ideas, goals and objectives; however the focus remains on the ONE thing that matters each day, week, month or year.

I enjoy reading. I enjoy listening and learning from others. With the opportunity to write this article, I leave you with my ONE book suggestion for a summer read.
Sacramento Education Update

A Perspective from the Ivory Tower: the Agriculture Program You Save May Be Your Own!

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

As most of you are aware of, I have always hated to fly! One aspect of flying that is particularly annoying to me are what other passengers do as they board their flight and during the flight. For instance, don’t you just hate passengers who:

- Carry on their luggage that won’t fit into the overhead compartments?
- Bring an entire grocery store of food and beverages (including pizza) with them to consume during the flight?
- Talk on their cell phone or operate their iPad even when the stewardess has instructed them to turn off their devices?
- Bring unruly children who scream and yell, and bounce up and down in their seats before and during the flight?
- Are loud and obnoxious?

Of course, I have several close friends, including my wife, who “thrive on” and “thoroughly enjoy” this human drama that occurs daily at major airports in California. The pain of it all!

**Teacher Shortage**

As you are no doubt aware, California is in a severe teacher shortage unlike any seen in prior years or decades. The genesis of this crisis is complex and multifaceted.

The Great Recession of 2007–10 caused many school districts in California to repeatedly “pink slip” tens of thousands of young teachers, many of whom became discouraged and decided not to re-enter the educational system when the recession ended.

The net result of this mass exodus of teachers from our public schools has created several unintended consequences. Chief among them is an acute shortage of prospective teaching candidates within our university schools of education throughout the nation.

According to EdSource (2015), California teacher preparation universities have 53% fewer students enrolled now as compared to 2008. California employs approximately 21,500 new teachers annually in all subject areas. This year, California teacher preparation universities produced slightly under 15,000 candidates, leaving a shortfall of 6,500 teachers.

**Agriculture Education**

Last year, agriculture education had more than 200 job openings throughout the state and produced approximately 60 new credentialed agriculture teachers. The vast majority of these openings were in the secondary system.

Now, teacher shortages are not new to our profession. For as long as I can remember, we have faced shortages of agriculture teachers. So, what can we do to help alleviate future shortages?

**Encouraging Ag Education Careers**

At the local level, we need agriculture teachers to encourage some of their “best and brightest” students to consider a career in agriculture education.

When I think back to my high school days, it was my agriculture teachers Jerry Davis, Bob Paasch, Dennis Hampton, and Harry Maddux who encouraged me to think about becoming an agriculture teacher.

In addition, each FFA chapter should strive to establish at least one scholarship program targeting agriculture education majors.

**Restructuring**

At the university teacher preparation level, we need to consider restructuring the agriculture education teacher preparation programs by streamlining the process and hopefully increasing the number of potential candidates completing our programs. Some thoughts on what that could look like are:

- Reduce the time that students must complete the university teacher preparation program from 5 years to 4 years;
- Allow all university teacher preparation programs to place paid interns or mentorships in lieu of student teaching;
- Waive part or all university tuition costs for prospective teaching candidates their junior and senior years.

**Bold Initiatives**

At the state level, we need bold legislative initiatives that could encourage college students to seriously consider teaching as a career. Such initiatives might include:

- Streamline the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing requirements for securing a teacher credential;
- Create a State Teachers Administration that provides low-cost auto and home loans for teachers;
- Exempt all new teachers from having to pay state income tax for 3–5 years;
- Raise the level of the minimum salary for new teachers to $70,000;
- Have state “forgive student loans” for those individuals who actually enter the teaching profession;
- Allow retired teachers to re-enter the teaching profession without risking their retirement benefits.

Of course, some of my esteemed colleagues have told me that I am a “dreamer.” But it beats the alternative of watching our profession struggle with teacher placements…

**Officers’ Corner**

The Lost Art of Appreciation

(Continued from page 3)

Essential No. 7 is one that becomes easier as it is practiced. Hand write a note to someone who deserves the appreciation; make a batch of cookies or cupcakes for the Ag teacher who coordinated the section speech contest; grab a bag of chocolates to give to the judging team contest coordinator with a note of appreciation; stop by the market and buy a vase of flowers for the ASB clerk who always processes your check on short notice.

These acts of appreciation not only show true appreciation, but they go a long way in letting folks know that they are doing a good job. It encourages their hearts... and it will also encourage yours. Appreciation and these small acts of kindness are contagious.

As we wrap up another school year, take a few minutes and show appreciation for those around you. Make it a goal to encourage the heart of at least one person on the local, regional, and state level. It will make an impact far beyond what you can imagine.
Teacher Educator News

Fresno State is Moving Forward

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

Usually in May you think about the end of the school year and make plans for the summer. At Fresno State, however, we are already thinking about the exciting times to come in 2016–17. This next year will bring new leadership, new faculty, and more opportunities for our students.

New Leadership
Actually, our new leadership is already here. This past March, the university asked our interim dean, Dr. Sandra Witte, if she would serve permanently as our dean. Fortunately, Dr. Witte agreed and “Interim” has been removed from her title.

The Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology now has its leader in place and Dr. Witte and our faculty have begun planning for the future.

New Faculty
We will have new faculty arriving soon as well. Dr. Avery Culbertson will be joining our Agricultural Education faculty in August and will begin implementing our new Agriculture Leadership Program. Dr. Culbertson is a native of New Mexico and is currently teaching at Oklahoma State University.

We are very excited about the addition of our agricultural leadership program and new course offerings. We believe it will benefit our agricultural education program and students across our entire college.

We hope to have two other new faculty joining our department come August. The Animal Science program is hiring assistant professors in the areas of Dairy Science and Poultry Science. We have had excellent candidates visit and interview so we are hopeful that we will also have two outstanding new faculty members join our department this fall.

New Research Building
In the area of research, our faculty and students will find new opportunities in the fall at our Jordan Agriculture Research Building, which is nearing completion.

The Jordan College is planning to have a ribbon-cutting ceremony in May to officially open this new facility. While this building contains mostly research laboratories, a conference room will provide space for small meetings and conferences.

New Teachers
There also will be many new faces joining the agricultural teaching profession next year. We are very proud of the 20 newly credentialed teachers we have scheduled to complete our program during the 2015–2016 academic year.

Many from this group are already employed and others are actively seeking employment. We have high expectations for this group of new professionals and look forward to having them join the agricultural education profession as full-time teachers.

Thank you to all the cooperating schools that worked with these candidates as student teachers.

Awards
As we reflect and begin to set goals for next year, we realize that our success in 2015–16 is going to be difficult to top.

Five of our JCAST students competed in the California Farm Bureau’s Collegiate Discussion Meet contest where they earned the Outstanding Collegiate Team award and Hunter Berry garnered the top individual championship.

You may remember Hunter, a past state FFA officer, and currently a sophomore Ag Business major at Fresno State. Hunter will travel to the American Farm Bureau’s Collegiate Discussion Meet contest where he will compete for the national championship against students from across the country.

Our Agricultural Communications program achieved a significant milestone this year as well. Over the last 15 years, this program has seen steady growth from just a few students to our present number of 50 students pursuing a degree in Agricultural Communication.

Donations
This last year also saw a number of significant donations and investments that will greatly benefit our programs.

The livestock judging team received a $2 million endowment provided by Marvin Myers and 70 other donors, which will fund our livestock judging program in perpetuity.

Our Bulldoggers rodeo team received financial support of $300,000 to help fund a new coach position and team expenses.

Last, but certainly not least, the University Farm Lab received $2 million in improvements, which were additional funds provided by Dr. Joe Castro, our university president.

Future Challenges
As we move forward and look toward the future, we will face some challenges. Our biggest challenge may be our university’s new enrollment limitations, which may present a problem for us as we strive to grow our agricultural teacher preparation program.

We don’t have concrete answers at this time; however, we are working on strategies to keep our enrollment numbers growing so that we can continue our upward trajectory.

With the cooperation of the new leadership in our college, we are hopeful that we will be able to overcome these challenges and continue to meet the needs of our students and the profession.

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A Career in Agricultural Communication

By Megan Silcott, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

The Agricultural Education and Communication Department at California Polytechnic State University offers two majors: agricultural science and agricultural communication. The two majors work hand-in-hand to guide students in their agricultural pursuits. Allow me to highlight the agricultural communication program and how our students are excelling in agricultural education through communication career paths. I’ll share how your students can join the ranks while competing in high school and launch their next steps through agricultural communication at Cal Poly.

For decades, students across the university could obtain a minor in agricultural communication. In 2012, Cal Poly began offering the only agricultural communication bachelor of science degree on the West Coast. Many exceptional junior colleges, community colleges and universities offer great courses with a communication focus, marketing concepts, leadership training and journalism tools. Cal Poly, however, is the only institution in California and several neighboring states that can boast offering a four-year agricultural communication degree program. Our program at Cal Poly continues to be recognized nationally through student leadership, project awards and most important, by the industry seeking our graduates.

The agricultural communication major developed out of the industry’s need for people to focus on production agriculture and enable communicators to do what’s best — tell agriculture’s story on behalf of the industry. Connecting consumers to where and how their fuel, food, fiber, flora and fauna make their way into our lives is the main goal behind an agricultural communicator. The mode and methods employed in communicating are diverse.

Agricultural Communicators Are Professionals

Agricultural communicators may exercise political influence, using member groups such as the Farm Bureau, water lawyers and professional lobbyists in fighting the good fight for private property rights, water allocation, food labeling and export market agreements.

Agricultural communicators can be found representing advertising agencies across the nation and agricultural commodity groups close to home, such as the California Almond Board. They are capable of writing professional press releases, feature and technical stories, managing marketing budgets for national promotional campaigns, and designing catalogs with a global reach.

Agricultural communicators are speech writers, event planners and directors of social media. They are skilled in connecting target markets to agriculture products and services, and have a deep appreciation and understand the value of providing scientific, credible information to all levels of consumer needs.

Path Toward Agricultural Communication

Many agricultural communicators find themselves employing educational techniques as they discover and provide information in appealing and consumer-friendly ways.

Students majoring in agricultural communication must be exposed to as many facets of agriculture as possible, and identify one area to claim with a higher level of expertise. These students may not have deep knowledge of all agriculture sectors, but with key connections to a variety of subjects, they develop a crucial network to contact for valuable information regarding agricultural issues and practices.

Agricultural communication students become professional, articulate, and capable employees who want to advance the agriculture industry.

Preparing Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow

So how can you apply bits of agricultural communication in your part of the world? Numerous career development events and awards are available for your students.

Encourage your chapter reporter to develop a communication plan for the year and implement communication tools enabling him/her to qualify for Star Reporter.

To set his/her Star Reporter application out from the rest, your chapter reporter can highlight learning how to measure the benefits of your chapter Facebook page, creating a concise e-newsletter for the boosters group, submitting video promotional projects, or sharing chapter successes with local county and state media outlets.

Enlist the help of a community professional who does freelance design work, manages an industry-related magazine, or is the communication and catch-all coordinator for the local feed and supply store to help guide, review content or maybe even coach a marketing team.

For those students with a flair for speaking, use the Creed Recitation, Prepared Public Speaking, Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Impromptu Speaking, and Job Interview contests as gateways to the exciting world of agricultural communication. Acting as the literal voice of agriculture, these students can get more practice by educating and entertaining local Kiwanis, Rotary, and Chamber of Commerce groups.

Do you have students who doodle away most of the class period? Take those creative juices and ask them to develop your chapter logos, t-shirts, and meeting fliers.

The artistic agriculture students tend to further develop and prosper when using design programs such as Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, and some even have a knack for web design. Put them to use!

What about the quiet students who always exceed your word count for agriculture issue papers? Send them our way!

The writer-type student can craft biweekly blogs for your chapter, section or region leading up to events, announcing winners via social media, writing press releases about the newly elected officer team, or send in a story to the local paper about students who returned from the most recent leadership conference.

The agricultural communication industry is just that, an industry in its own right. Professional organizations exist across the country with foci on regional crops, national breed registries, farm safety, rural health, and so much more.

From sales and customer service to leading human resource departments or international management teams, agricultural communications can be the perfect home for many students.

Who knows, maybe they’ll find themselves right back in the classroom like you and me, educating others about the agriculture industry and helping them find their niche in the industry of agriculture.
Corporate Membership

Corporate Membership 2015–2016

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.

If you are aware of any others who may be interested in this type of membership, call (209) 744-1614 or email cata@calagteachers.org so we may send pertinent information.
Corporate Membership

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Success and Failure
In my short career I have had many successes and also many failures. We tend to always look at the successes in our lives and try to forget about the failures.
I know a failure can be troublesome, be stressful and most importantly a defeat. What we tend not to realize is that the failures are what make us who we are; they make us stronger, and they make us smarter. Failures are the things that really push us to our max and to become better.
The point I am trying to make is that if we do not learn from the mistakes we have made in the past, we will continue to make the same mistake.
When I was student teaching, I was asked to hook up a trailer to a truck so that another teacher could go pick up pumpkins. I had never hooked up that kind of hitch, but I did it anyway. An hour later I received a text message stating that the trailer came unhitched on the way to the pumpkin farm and thankfully no one was injured or killed.
I dodged a bullet with that mistake. I was just coming into the profession, and I almost killed my master teacher, another teacher, and a student. Talk about a failure; I felt like an idiot for the longest time after that, but I learned from it. My master teacher taught me how to hook up that type of trailer and that mistake hasn’t happened since (knock on wood).
This story could be reality to many of the new teachers coming out, or even get the veterans out there to think back to their early days and it most likely happened to some of them.
Our profession is constantly changing, and changing for the good, but none of these changes could happen if at some point someone didn’t make a mistake.
But our blood is rich in always trying to do better for ourselves and our students, keeping our head up in the hard times and even higher in the best times; we strive to be the best at what we do.

Learning Curve
I am still a young teacher, just finishing my seventh year, and constantly learning new things about agriculture mechanics and techniques on how to teach this generation of students. It’s a constant learning curve; no matter how much I think I know, there’s always something new to learn and help become better.
As new teachers, we go through the phase of figuring how to manage day-to-day lessons, stay up-to-date with BTSA, and keep our head above water in the FFA/SAE aspect of the job. Once you master one area, there are other areas to go into and it’s a revolving circle.
Am I the best at every aspect of the job? Most definitely not!
Do I try to do well in everything? Yes I do, and that’s one thing to keep in mind, especially for the new teachers coming into the profession.
For a new teacher, do things right and do things well. You will fail at things, but that learning curve never changes and you will strive to move up through those experiences. You will and you can get through the roughest years of your career, but you will be expected to work hard, to learn, and to stay positive.
Our profession can be the hardest job you’ll ever do, but it will also be the most rewarding.
My master teacher, who is also my co-worker, holds students to high expectations; he is always pushing his students to do the best that they can do. When I was his student teacher, he pushed me harder so that I could become an agriculture teacher.
If you do not push yourself and allow yourself to stop learning, you will not be teaching 10–15 years from now. Never stop giv-

One thing that I have learned is that nothing is promised, but you need to work at everything you do today, because there may not be a tomorrow.
Keep Your Head Up

(Continued from page 11)

ing yourself, your students and your program high expectations. You may not always do as well as you want, but you will grow, become great and be very successful in your career.

**Saturdays**

Monday through Friday, we push hard to do well on Saturdays. Saturdays are important to agriculture teachers; we get to see our friends, talk about our lives, and at times vent about our frustrations.

The other aspect to Saturdays is our shows, field days and other activities that our students participate in. Many new teachers want to do one thing, and that’s make a statement on Saturdays. Our students compete and we want them to do well, and when they do well, we represent another side of our jobs that’s rewarding.

I love early Saturday mornings, the adrenaline of traveling to a field day and seeing what my students can do. Our students get to show off what they learned from us, when we are not around, to complete strangers. That is the coolest thing in the profession for me.

However, that’s not everything. Some teachers do not do Saturdays; their success is Monday through Friday. They get their reward seeing their students do well in our labs, our classrooms, and on our campuses.

That’s just one example of how diverse our profession is. We have awesome teachers in our state, but we get to choose what we want to get our rewards from. For some, it’s silver bowls, others it may be champion livestock at the fair, and so on.

The dark side to this is that sometimes we don’t see teachers on Saturday and we think they aren’t doing anything. There is more to our profession than silver bowls; agriculture education is successful because of the diversity of our programs, our teachers, and our students.

Agriculture teachers are a different breed of teachers and we can show more success from students than any other CTE program.

Don’t base your career on the amount of silver you bring home, but on the experiences you gained from teaching your students to be successful in agriculture.

**Keep Your Head Up**

We are human; we make mistakes, and we move on. We learn from our mistakes and try to teach others not to do the same. Don’t let a mistake ruin who you are. Let a mistake teach you to be better.

Keep your head up in the hard times. Remember that you are not alone.

You have friends and family in our profession; don’t be afraid to reach out when needed.

One thing that I have learned is that nothing is promised, but you need to work at everything you do today, because there may not be a tomorrow.

As you finish off your year, I hope it comes with reflection of how you managed everything in your life and realize that you are great no matter how hard this past year was. Because if there is a tomorrow, you’ll be able to do better!
Administrative Credential: WHY I Love Being an Ag Teacher

By Tim Reid, Superior Region President

My first couple of years after college, I worked for a private label food service cooperative, Markon, in the Salinas Valley. Markon is a great company: strong leadership, transparency, and deep appreciation of WHY they do what they do. Leadership made good, quick decisions, empowered others to take on leadership roles, and knew when to step back and let others lead. The other employees in the company had a passion for the work, felt like part of the team, and, above all — believed — in the mission of the company. This kind of leadership and culture was refreshing; I felt like we had a plan, a destination, and a purpose and a true WHY.

Interview Vetting

Now, I did not come into the company with this knowledge; I had no produce experience, no experience in the Salinas region, no experience in a true business environment. I was fresh out of college; most of my experience was gathered at Joe’s (Chico alumni will get that).

During the interview process, however, they identified me as a person who could get trained, become part of the team, and embrace the WHY. Markon knew that I would have to be trained on the WHY. They had a system to train and knew that if I wasn’t trained, I would not be a positive member of the team.

Headhunters

At Markon, besides the top leadership, many people usually spent only a few years at the company. There are many reasons for this: long hours, high expectations, but the biggest reason people left is because other companies head-hunted them.

Other companies respected the system and knew Markon employees knew the WHY. Other companies offered people more money (lots more money) to move. But this never surprised the Markon leadership; they didn’t get mad at those employees. They didn’t blame the other company; many times, they have close working relationships with these companies.

Companies love these employees who embraced the WHY; it felt good to be on this team. I was supported while I was there and supported when I made the call to leave because they appreciated my contribution to the company’s WHY.

School Leadership Void

When I left the private industry to go back to school, I started to learn about the education system and found very quickly there are some big voids in leadership at schools; many school leaders never could communicate the WHY. Then the teachers on the team couldn’t tell me WHY we do things.

In my early years of education, I had very little faith or respect for high school/district management and leadership. In my mind, the leaders couldn’t make it as teachers and moved up the chain to boost their career and make more money.

I often wondered why I didn’t have leaders like I had in the private industry... where the system or the culture is taught and the true WHY is supported by the whole team.

When I was hired at Bear River, I felt something was different — a strong climate of success. All the staff had a passion for the school as well the history of the school. Most staff cared about the direction of the school and had a vested interest in it getting better.

The feeling came from success and a respected leader; teachers performed at a high level in their silos, teachers/students were very involved in extracurricular activities, and we had successful test scores and good graduation/college entrance rates.

However there wasn’t a culture and no real school-wide system to explain the WHY. Different departments and programs had very successful systems, but as a team, the school was not on the same page.

New Principal

This year, we got a new principal, and it went hand-in-hand with my quest for knowledge and expectations in instructional leadership. She is not only my mentor for my credential program, but she is truly an inspiration and helps me learn more about instructional leadership every day.

She came in Day One pushing us as a team to find the WHY and as a team identify WHY we are here. This example has given me hope for instructional leaders; strong, positive, effective leaders are in education, and it’s inspirational to see a great instructional leader at work.

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Connection to Ag Teachers

So how does this affect our lives as ag teachers? Then, how does this relate to getting my administrative credential?

Well, I’m now being trained as a possible future administrator to create a shared mission/
Helping New Teachers Pick Right Position
Can Improve Retention Rates

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, Department of Education

As I write this article, the first week of April, the Ag Ed job list has just posted the 74th job. Wow! What a year it will be. Why is it that some schools are able to find teachers when they have openings while other programs struggle? Why do some programs have constant turnover while other programs keep their teachers for decades?

Part of the challenge comes when the new teacher will often take the first job that is offered them, rather than reflect on if it is the right job for them. By the “right job,” I mean does the new teacher fit with the culture of the school, administration, and the agriculture program.

As a person who worked my way through school, I know that often our new teachers are driving a car that they are not certain will get them to their interview. The thought of being paid to teach rather than paying for the privilege of student teaching is appealing. Those of you who serve as master teachers: do you discuss with student teachers how to select a job? Do you prepare them for the question at the end of the interview, “What questions do you have for us?” We need to do a better job of helping our new teachers find the right fit.

Questions on Turnover

If your program has continual turnover have you asked yourself why? Are you selecting the right people to join your program? Do you provide them support so that they can better engage their students and have fun while doing it? Do you support them in the community and with the administration? Do you develop a shared vision for the program that involves all your teachers and the advisory committee? Have you asked them what they need? When they leave, do you understand why?

I feel honored that some who are looking for a teaching job contact me for advice on where I might think they would be a good fit. Often it is not information that I provide, but questions I ask them that can help lead them to the right job that will allow them to grow as a professional.

I also have the opportunity to help programs find a new teacher who may be a good fit. I have colleagues in programs throughout the state who ask for my perspective on potential hires.

I wish I could get all of the highly sought teachers to fill open positions in the North Coast Region. That will not happen for a variety of reasons. I try to help regardless of where they want to be, because I believe that if we retain more teachers in the profession, there is a better opportunity for North Coast programs to find the teachers they need.

When I find someone who is the right fit for a program, they have had success. That is what will keep people in the profession — success. Different people measure success differently. For some it is students winning awards, for others it is having the feeling that they are making a difference in the lives of their students, and for others it is being happy. It is ideal to combine all three.

Matching Teachers to Jobs

By the time, this article goes to print, I will be fielding calls from people looking for teachers. There will be a few new teachers who have not accepted a job because they are restricted in the job search due to their inability to move to where jobs are available. We will then begin the process of identifying those in industry who may be interested in teaching and will assist them in securing a Designated Subject (DS) Credential.

Those who enter the profession through this route have additional challenges. Often they go to single-person programs or are paired with another person who is new to the profession without training. They have a preliminary Designated Subject Credential that they have been told in order to earn a clear credential they will be required to enroll in some courses.

On top of this, their district will likely require them to participate in Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA). (I will not get into my feelings related to BTSA for high school teachers.) At the same time, the community and administration will expect them to do everything that the best program in the county does. The district will have committed to providing mentoring for the teacher; however, it likely will not provide any useful mentoring.

If the person hired with a DS credential had extensive involvement in FFA, it sure helps. They know about many of the events. They know nothing about the process in both the district and the State FFA to get your students registered and travel approved.

If you have some of these teachers nearby, reach out and try to help them. If they have success, they will stay in the profession. If they become overwhelmed and question if they made the right decision, they will likely return to the industry and we will start over with someone new.

Making Progress

This teacher shortage will not likely end anytime soon. If we can improve the retention of our new teachers, we can make progress.

We need to try to help them find the right position and then provide support to help them have success. For the agricultural teaching profession to have success, we need our teachers to have success.

Those who have had the opportunity to participate in a Delta Conference may remember that small, seemingly insignificant, continuous improvement can have a lasting impact. It is time to get started.

![WE ARE HIRING!!!](https://example.com/hiring.png)
News and Views

2016 CATA Proposed Conference Agenda

Sunday, June 19
9:00 to 11:00 Executive Committee Meeting
11:00 to 2:30 Governing Board
1:30 to 3:00 Vision 2030 Committee Meeting
2:30 to 5:00 New Teacher Meeting
3:00 to 5:00 FFA Adult Board Meeting
3:15 Secondary Division Executive Committee Meeting
3:15 Post-Secondary Council Meeting
3:30 CATA Scholarship Judging
4:45 Pre-Conference Registration Meeting
5:00 to 7:00 Welcome Reception & Conference Registration - OH Unit Arboretum

Monday, June 20
7:00 to 7:45 Registration at the Performing Arts Center
8:00 Opening Session
10:00 Late Registration: Room 10-241
10:00 Regional Meetings
11:30 Alumni Luncheons
1:00 Joint Division Meeting: Vision 2030 & Student Cert.
2:30 Post-Secondary Division Meeting
Following above meeting:
* Student Activities
* Inservice

Tuesday, June 21
7:45 Curricular Code (CC) General Meeting
8:00 to 8:45 CC Meetings - Rotation #1
9:00 to 9:45 CC Meetings - Rotation #2
9:00 2016–17 Section Presidents Meeting
10:00 General Assembly
* Greetings - State FFA Officer
* Greetings - California FFA Foundation
* State CTE Director
* State Supervisor’s Report
* Community College Report
* Executive Director’s Report
10:00 Post-Secondary PCA Curriculum Meeting
12:00 Curricular Code Contest Chairs Meeting
12:00 FFA Advisory Committee Meeting
12:00 to 2:45 Farm & Idea Show
3:00 Professional Sessions-Draft
* Perkins & More!
* CTE Data Unlocked
* Livestock Fair Projects
* Job Shadowing
* Portfolio-Lifelong Career Development
* How to Engage Young Men in Leadership Development
* STOP the Invasion!
* ICEV Basics
* Medication/Feed
5:15 Softball, Horseshoes, etc. at Sports Complex on Campus
6:30 Family BBQ - Sports Complex

Wednesday, June 22
6:30 5K Run
7:00 Prayer Breakfast
7:00 Post-Secondary Council Breakfast Meeting
9:00 General Assembly
* Retiring Teachers
* Hall of Fame Presentation
* CATA Service Certificates
* National FFA
* Nomination Speeches
12:00 20+/Past Presidents/Retiring Teachers/Hall of Fame Luncheon
1:30 Professional Sessions-Draft
* CTE Incentive Grant
* Center for Food Integrity
* Career Pathways
* FFA Educational Resources
* Teaching Entrepreneurship
* Online Water Management
* ID Techniques for Crops
* ICEV Certification
* ICEV CDE
* Medication/Feed
5:00 Banquet Child Care Begins
5:30 Pre-Banquet Social
6:00 Banquet

Thursday, June 23
8:15 Regional Meetings
10:15 General Assembly
* Speaker
* Honorary American Farmers
* Recreation Awards
* Membership Awards
* New Teachers - Express Them-Selfie - Awards
* Idea Show Awards
* Farm Show Report
* Election Results
* Officer Installation
12:00 CATA 2016–17 Governing Board Planning Session
1:00 Agriskills Classes Begin (June 23 and June 24)

2016 Idea Show
Farm Shop – Building 9
Tuesday, June 21

Enter your great teaching ideas in this year’s Idea Show at CATA Summer Conference.

There are 11 areas to enter:

1. Ag Production/Processing & Products
2. Ag Mechanics
3. Ornamental Horticulture
4. Natural Resources/Rural Recreation/Forestry
5. Ag Science/Farm Labs
6. Departmental Operations
7. FFA Operations
8. SAE
9. Working with Support Groups (i.e. Ag Advisory, Ag Boosters, etc.)
10. Floral Design
11. Ag Business

Bring your entries to the Farm Shop (Building 9) on the Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo campus between 7:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Remember, a lot of demos and class activities are based on handouts or displays. All of these would make great entries for the Idea Show. You can’t win if you don’t enter!

Monetary awards for first through third places in each area are:

- First: $15
- Second: $12
- Third: $8

The entry selected as the overall outstanding idea is awarded an additional $50 cash prize.

See you with your entries at Summer Conference!
2015-2016 Calendar of Activities

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

2016 CATA Conference
June 19-23, 2016
Agriskills
June 23-24, 2016
Registration materials available at www.calagteachers.org