Interesting Session Ahead as State Goes Bluer than Ever

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

As we go to press, Donald Trump is still the president-elect, the Green Party is spending millions to recount ballots, the Left Coast is bluer than ever, getting stoned on pot is now legal, and yet it seems everyone is irritated about something. I’ve been trying to think of a good way to summarize the results of both state and national elections, and all I can come up with is “I’m glad it’s over.” In many ways, this election was like watching a street brawl between people you really don’t care for, and you’re just left wondering how we got in the middle of this mess.

As we’ve watched both the election results and the emotional reactions to those results, it seems that we need a national “time out.” Too many people are hyper-ventilating over the prospects of what might happen, what might not happen, or what is going to stop happening.

Just chill, folks — life will go on. Some stuff will happen, some won’t, and you just have to trust that enough good, smart, practical people are engaged in the process to ensure that our republic will endure. Trump isn’t the boogie man, Hillary wasn’t our only hope for salvation, and just maybe this mess won’t end up being such a mess after all. Take a breath. Get over it. Please.

Democratic Super Majority

As I noted above, California is now bluer than ever, with a super majority of Democrats likely to be present in both houses of our state legislature. It makes it far easier for the Dems to raise taxes and move other agendas through the process, but it also presents increased risk if they go too far over the line.

In many of the legislative districts, the margin of victory was slim, and if they alienate even a small number of voters in some districts, their present victory will be short-lived. The moderate Democrats will play an important role in balancing that agenda, and we’ll just have to see how those relationships play out over the next two years. Should make for an interesting session.

One of the most important events in January is the release of the Governor’s budget proposal.
Could Doc@Distance Be Right for You?

By Erin Gorter, CATA State Treasurer

When I was a little girl, like many little girls, I wanted to be a veterinarian. For someone who loved animals it seemed like an excellent career opportunity. But I soon realized that I would not get to spend my days diagnosing My Little Ponies and Pound Puppies. Thus, I changed career pathways, knowing that no one would ever refer to me as Dr. Thompson.

Two degrees and a name change later, I have found another opportunity through the Doc@Distance program leading to the creation of Dr. Gorter. For those of you who may be interested in pursuing a terminal degree in agricultural education, the Doc@Distance joint Ed.D. program through Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University is about to open the application for Cohort 8 to start in August 2017. Here is some information for anyone thinking of taking this path.

The Doc@Distance Program

Approved in 2000, the program is the first and only of its kind. The four-year program has been utilized by professionals nationwide from a wealth of backgrounds and careers. The current Cohort 7 is made up of agriculture teachers, extension agents, food bloggers, school administrators and military personnel, just to name a few.

There are 32 faculty members combined from both institutions, which work with each cohort providing expertise in a variety of agricultural education-related fields, including teacher preparation, extension education and communications.

The Coursework

For the first two years of the Doc@Distance program, you take a prescribed curriculum of seven units per semester with three units over summer. There is opportunity to take additional units if you choose. The majority of the program is asynchronous with modules opening weekly.

A typical module may include assignments such as online discussion forums, presentations, collaborative projects, reflection journals or abstract writing, to name a few. And reading. Don’t forget the reading. There is a lot of reading.

Some instructors prefer to administer online exams, while some do not. It’s a wide range of methods, as is any college setting. On rare occasions, you may be asked to conduct a live online presentation, but the professors are very good about setting up flexible schedules.

The Costs

As Mark Twain once said, “Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but a cabbage with a college education.”

If you want to be cauliflower, it will have a price, with an out-

Sacramento Scene

Interesting Session Ahead as State Goes Bluer than Ever

(Continued from page 1)

and we’re really not expecting too many surprises. Given the results of the national election, it would probably be prudent to assume that federal revenues sent to California will not flow as they have in the past. This may impact the allocation of some resources for priorities and programs, and we’ll just have to wait and see if it dramatically alters the way that California restructures its expenditures. For the time being, we expect the Governor to take a cautious approach.

Career Technical Education Funding

We continue to work with our GetREAL partners to identify sources of permanent, sustainable funding for Career Technical Education programs in California. Part of the frustration we face is the attitude within the legislative and administrative branches of government that somehow they “fixed” CTE by providing short-term funding through the CTE Incentive Grant.

As that program has been implemented, we are hearing more instances of districts simply supplanting district dollars with CTE funds, with no real impact or benefit to local programs. These scarce dollars are now set to decline over the next few years, and we cannot let funds vital to our programs get ripped off for other purposes.

If you are aware of instances where this has occurred, we would love to hear from you. In the meantime, we will continue to stress the importance of funding CTE in a sustainable manner so that these important programs continue.

Program Growth

On the Ag Ed front, we continue to see program growth and increased student participation in all regions. All of the leadership conferences have been well-attended, and we recognize the need to expand both the numbers and locations of future conferences. The FFA Foundation Board has been very aggressive in seeking new support for these important activities, with the goal of increasing access for more students. Thanks to those of you who have assisted the Foundation in these efforts.

We are hopeful that the CATA Advanced Leadership Conference can be rescheduled for this spring — we had an exciting program lined up for this past December until state contract processes sidelined our activity. Hopefully we can get contracts that were supposed to be in place last August finally approved this spring. Don’t you just love bureaucracy?

Finally, we know that another hectic season of Field Days, Leadership Contests, Fairs, etc. is ready to kick off. Besides having lots of fun opportunities to bond with your students on long road trips, this time of year is also a great time to grow and learn as an Ag teacher. There are a lot of folks in this profession who will willingly give of their time and talent if you have the courage to ask for some help. At the same time, please be willing to mentor and guide others as the opportunity arises — our profession will be stronger for it.

Have a great spring season!++
Bad Day? Turn to Student Testimonials for a Lift

By Craig Davidson, Highland High School

Like some of you reading this article, I woke up this morning tired. It was hard, but I was able to persevere past the dark, cold and foggy atmosphere that was hovering over my house. The rain was battling down and I really didn’t want to go in to work. Have you ever had those days? Have you ever noticed you’re on burnout by the time Thanksgiving comes along and the Christmas break can’t come fast enough?

I think we’ve all been there at some point. It’s good for us to take a step back, perhaps pull out our “Bad Day File” and be reminded of the good we are all doing within our classrooms. As you know, we don’t always know which students we are reaching, or how impactful our relationships are. In many cases, it’s the kid you least think you’ve reached who is the kid who has been most impacted.

I asked my students last night to write a brief testimony of how the program has changed them. These are great encouragements to me, but may they also serve as encouragements to YOU because your students, I bet, are very similar to ours.

Student Testimony

The Agriculture Program has impacted many students and I’m proud to say that I’m one of those students. The Ag program has helped me in many areas. This program has helped me choose the career I want to take, it has helped me be prepared for the future. It has not just helped career wise, but also has helped me become a better person. It has helped me with many leadership skills also, because it has taught me that reaching out to the community and getting involved is important.

I went into this program just because I needed one of the classes it offered. I didn’t know I was going to end up really liking this program or that it was going to impact me the way it did. I’m really happy I joined; the people and the teachers in it are all great. All the activities that the Ag program offers have helped me open up more and be more social with everyone. I do not regret one bit in joining the Agriculture Program. Now I want to be an ag teacher.

— Diana Zuniga

The FFA program has impacted me in different ways. I have been in Ag for four years now and have gained knowledge and skills toward agriculture. The ag program here at Highland has many opportunities for us to be involved with.

For example, I have gained experience in public speaking and have learned how to grow and nurture plants and animals. This program has had a huge impact because it has taught me the importance of the things that can be used on a daily basis. Ag has also shown me that this world revolves around agriculture and without it our world would be useless.

— Melanie Grove

The FFA program has impacted my life by determining my future. I’ve decided to become a large animal vet due to the Highland Future Farmers of America program that I’ve been involved in over the past four years of my high school experience. I enjoy being hands-on with animals and learning about their life cycle and anatomy. I’ve decided to go to college to study agriculture and to make that part of my life. Agriculture has also taught me many other things besides animals, such as respect, courtesy, and commitment to your work.

— Savannah Aboqui

The agriculture program has impacted me tremendously in many different ways. It helped me challenge myself to try new things and be a leader in the world. It showed me that I can turn my weaknesses into my strengths.

This program has really made me the person I am today. It helped me be more comfortable and confident in presenting in other classes, not just in ag. It showed me how to maintain my grades and also have responsibilities at the same time. This program has really helped me through skills I never thought I would develop. I just want to thank you ag, and thanks to my ag teachers who encouraged me to be the best I can be and not miss out on the opportunities that were coming my way.

— Victoria Benavidez

I’m Jacquelyn Barrera from Highland High School. I am currently a senior and this was actually only my second year taking an Ag class and being involved with the FFA. I can honestly say that I wish I had taken an Ag class since my freshman year. The experiences FFA has let me be a part of have really changed my life.

(Continued on page 4)
Bad Day? Turn to Student Testimonials for a Lift

(Continued from page 3)

outlook on the world and my life. The program that Highland has to offer pushed me to be involved in activities that I would have never tried. One example would be raising a market sheep for the Kern County Fair. This experience has taught me much about business and responsibility. Also the FFA has helped me become involved with my community by doing some community clean-ups or hosting Fall Harvest where kindergarteners get the opportunity to come on our school farm and do many activities to learn about the agriculture industry. If it wasn’t for the FFA program at my school, I would not have learned many great skills and opportunities that awaited me.

— Jacquelyn Barrera

Ag has given me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of how agriculture works in not just America, but countries around the world as well. It has made me a better person as a whole and has shaped me into a leader. Through ag I have made friendships that will last a lifetime and I have met some of the most dedicated teachers in the nation. They help students open up and become model citizens who can be looked up to or help them set an example for those whose leadership qualities aren’t necessarily developed to their potential. This experience has led me to challenge myself in areas outside of my comfort zone. Without ag I wouldn’t be half the person I am today.

— Hannah Dill

The program that Highland has provided me with so much knowledge and so many opportunities that no other program at my school could have ever given me. This program has helped me realize that I want to go into this field in the future and for the rest of my life. I’ve not only realized what I want to do in my future, but I’ve also gained more confidence, speaking skills, time management skills, and many more friends. I have met many of my closest friends through the Highland Agriculture program and I love my entire FFA family. Without this program, I would still be shy and maybe even clueless of what I wanted my future career to be. Thank you, Highland Agriculture for all the great laughs and memories I will never forget!

— Yazmin Luna

The Highland Agriculture program has impacted me in so many different ways. Before I reached high school, I showed lambs at the fair with my older brother while he was in the FFA. At that time, I thought the only difference between me showing independently and someone showing in the FFA was that blue jacket that they added to their show uniform. When I finally became a freshman, I learned that it meant so much more. From sharpening my public speaking skills, to learning that leadership is just a fancy word for service. The FFA did it all. I learned the different problems that the ag community faces and how important agriculture actually is. I learned and practiced communication, teamwork, responsibility, organization, and was able to take pride in helping others be happy and feel welcome. I was always an odd bird, but the FFA made me feel like I belonged and like I had people supporting me, people who cared. The FFA program gave me so many opportunities to travel across the state and visit different colleges such as UC Davis and Fresno State. I was able to travel to Kentucky and participate as a national delegate and represent the California FFA Association. I’ve met so many different people whom I love and still keep in contact with today. Not to mention my advisors. They are among the greatest and most encouraging people anyone could meet. They kept me going when the going got tough. Because of them and the people I met and the FFA program itself, I was able to become the person that I am today.

— Savannah Carter, Alumni

I have been involved in the Agriculture program for 4 years and I have learned many useful skills that have helped me throughout the school year. I have learned responsibility and dedication to the program and enjoy the hands-on activities. The program has influenced me to continue my studies in college and someday have a career in Agriculture. The Agriculture program has also allowed me to raise market animals and learn more about public speaking. The Agriculture program has been very beneficial to my school year and I highly recommend it to students.

— Bayley Lopez
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Movie Lessons: Two Generations Can Gain Inspiration from Each Other

By Wesley Hunt, North Coast Region President, Healdsburg Union High School

Every so often, my Sundays consist of nothing more than movie marathons. I know that not everyone has this luxury, because of little ones running around or master’s homework to be completed, and our never-ending list of to-do’s, but if you get a chance, here’s my new movie recommendation.

“The Intern,” with Robert De Niro and Anne Hathaway, follows a retired 70-year-old man who applies to be a “senior” intern at an online clothing company, and ends up becoming the CEO/brand creator’s personal intern. They go through a myriad of events, and at the end they form a friendship, but at the end of the day they both become better at their jobs.

They learn a ton from each other and I think Ag teachers could use the same approach. We need to work harder to blend the old and new, or fresh and experienced. I know that we sometimes get stuck in our own little world, making sure all our t’s are crossed and i’s are dotted, but we need to do more to mentor each other, on both ends of the spectrum.

Movie Ideas Worth Considering

A couple of things we could keep in mind from the movie to better blend our profession:

• Dress professionally: My favorite part of the movie is when the young online interns all talk with Robert De Niro about why he chooses to wear a suit every day. He says, “It’s more comfortable.” While we need to remember to be comfortable, we need to be professionally dressed too. Seems pretty simple, but if we ask our kids to dress the part, we probably should too.

• Try new things: Don’t be scared to try the new gadget or app on your cell phone. Do what you can to make yourself more efficient and more in-tune with what kids are doing to best manage teams of all kinds.

• Respect and manners never die: Learn how to write professional letters and emails. Use proper grammar and spelling. Teach the boys to hold open doors, and everyone to leave a decent tip for your table of 12 that just had 47 soda refills. This is quite possibly my favorite thing kids learn while we travel to National Convention each year—Yes ma’am, no ma’am, thank you, and everything in between.

• Have a conversation: Yes, a real face-to-face conversation. While we love email, text, phone calls and any other social media or convenient ways of communication, they don’t replace human interaction from a face-to-face conversation. That face-time conversation is when we learn the most from our mentors. Their experiences and advice are best served when chatting over a meal.

• Commitment and dedication: Whether we work at one school our entire career or move a few times, become committed, loyal and dedicated to your school and your students. They are your people and they need you. Ask for help within that community and our Ag Ed community.

• Ride the bike: Anne Hathaway rides her bike through the office to get across the room quickly. I like to think that this is a great metaphor for encouraging all of us to take the fun route, but don’t forget to wave and smile to everyone along the way. We need to make sure that even though we have high expectations of our students and love each other, we enjoy the ride that is our chosen career. Enjoy your fellow Ag teachers and have a little fun!

Learn from Each Other

Bottom line: we need the traditional as much as the innovative. We are a better profession because we have experienced teachers and younger, fresh teachers.

If you’re older, find a young teacher to draw inspiration and energy from. If you’re a younger teacher, find a mentor teacher and learn everything they know.

We can only be better, if we openly choose to communicate with each other and learn from each other.

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Strictly Ag Mechanics...

By Mark Perkins, Willows High School

Amazingly enough, this title actually applies to me. For the first time in many years, I am teaching three wood and three welding classes. By the way, it’s not that ag mechanics is better than any other subject; I just like it the best. Who wouldn’t want to be in a room with dangerous tools and teenagers?

I am going to bounce on a few different subjects that are somewhat related to each other: Giving back to the profession, retirement, the common core, and certifications.

Giving Back: It makes us all better.

Those who have known me over the years understand I have had some ideas about teaching that may not necessarily be considered “mainstream.” Admittedly, I’ve missed some opportunities along the way.

I have also missed the last few deadlines for contributing to the Golden Slate and I think it is important that every one of us should contribute to our profession through our publication. The Golden Slate is published only three times a year. Just tell us what you do.

Secondly, keep in touch with our newer teachers. This is simple to do. It is good to see that the Vision 2030 is addressing mentoring. If you’re not picking the brains of your colleagues, then you and I are missing out AND doing a lot of extra work! Ag education and teaching is the noblest of professions. Help sustain it.

Retirement: It’s not too soon to start.

I sat through a State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) retirement seminar this past summer and I was amazed at how informative and painless it was. Who knew, right?

I recommend you do this ASAP. Even if you think your retirement is really far off, don’t wait! It’s a little like seeing the test questions before you take it.

Additionally, take any amount of money you can afford each month out of your paycheck, right up front, and invest it somewhere for retirement! After 30 or so years it adds up!

Common Core: The old is new again!

As I see it, the common core curriculum for the non-Career Technical Education (CTE) subjects is just the attempt to teach the core classes in ways we already teach. Some core teachers are finding this difficult. Some are not.

However, it’s not our job, as teachers of agriculture, to be gen-ed’s common core. It is our job to interpret gen-ed’s common core as it relates to our subjects.

How does that then work for us? Take for example any welding machine. It is a bit complex in terms of set-up and usage. There are many variables. AC, DC, DC+, DC-, DCEN, DCEP, volts, amps, CC, CV, open circuit voltage, etc.

Confusing, right? Experiences from your past must come into play! No one part of welding is isolated from the other and cause and effect is the welding process.

Relate a welding machine to the common core? OK, let’s take the CPM math textbook and look at some of the content. Confusing, right? In it are these things called “function machines.” (See diagram below)

Silly little black-and-white diagrams, (super uninteresting) that show inputs, outputs, and an equation or two. (Inputs go in the top, go through the equation(s) and the output is then the numerical algebraic answer.) We used to call this “solving equations.” Now it’s called a “function machine.” One even looks like a soda machine! Still it IS a machine, just like a welder IS a machine.

Are not welder manuals and technical manuals written with silly little hand-drawn black-and-white diagrams that are super uninteresting? (See above)

Well, a CPM function machine is just a welding machine in disguise. You determine the inputs of a welder, and it “crunches numbers,” and you get outputs based upon your skills, just like a math function machine. On an actual welder, it’s the same and the “right answer” is the correctness of the weld you make and not a numerical output.

Here’s another math example: \( y = mx + b \), the slope-intercept formula. A carpenter’s framing square is the “high tech” version of the \( y = mx + b \) machine, and stairs, rafters and right angles are outputs of that machine.

Once again, without bringing in other already-learned experiences, this is very confusing. The common core wants you to use knowledge from across the curriculum to solve problems—a well-rounded student, in other words. So does ag ed.

Ag students need to be told that common core stuff, like the CPM text and the Ag shop... (Continued on page 12)
Strictly Ag Mechanics...

(Continued from page 11) Ally ARE the same thing! Welding is not a series of isolated events; neither is math, science, history and English! Students will never know this unless we tell them! You will hear me say, “...and that’s your common core right there...” like when explaining why the manual on the MIG welder says, “settings for 0.035 in wire is 1.6 inches per ampere, based on 1/8” material thickness.” Then when a student’s weld is of poor quality, I ask, “What other experiences have you had that can change your weld (the outputs)” or “What can you fall back on, in your past welding experiences, to make this weld better?” Get the wrong answer, go back and rework the problem or adjust the machine. Actually, practice welding more. Truthfully, I usually just say, “It’s not right. Do it again!”

So the real common core battle becomes getting my students to remember what other factors they know about (should know about) to get this function machine to give you the right answer. Too hot, too cold, too far away, too fast, too slow, etc. The ag mechanics industry is begging us to give them a “total package” worker not the, “where’s the metal guy?” This struggle isn’t new either, just repackaged.

These are the kinds of ideas our non-voc ed (OK, CTE) colleagues are struggling with. How hard would it be, as ag teachers, if you don’t have piles of practical examples to illustrate your lessons from? In short, like a lot of things in the education profession, you already ARE common core!

Certification: What are we doing?

I am going to admit up front to NOT having my finger on the pulse of all that’s current for certifications, but I do know that most businesses will provide specific training for their employees. I don’t get it. What is the deal with certification?

As a newbie teacher, almost 30 years ago at my first ag advisory meeting, I asked members what they wanted in my students if they were to hire them.

They replied, “Send us a kid that knows how to work!” They assured me they would train them and sure, some shop aptitude was important, but they would likely be “pushing a broom” first off, just to see how they work.

Nothing has changed! In the past few weeks, I posed the same question to local metal fabrication industry professionals, and—no surprise to me—I got the SAME answer! Yes, they may have to test into the job, so some skills are very necessary. They will have to read some plans, build some kind of project before being hired.

What then does a certification do? The company will provide training specific to the job. Also necessary, of no surprise to me, were the so-called “soft skills.” Also, not surprisingly either, were computer (robotic) programming skills. These were emphatically emphasized as EQUALLY important to the “hard skills.”

How about AWS certification, I asked? Reply, “Nope!” In fact, statistics from a recent industry survey of 50-plus area metal fab businesses found that AWS certification was “not necessary” in any of those businesses.

So again, what are we doing? Would not teaching where we emphasize the soft skills, some real-life computer skills and some common core stuff make our students the most job ready? Is there a cert for that? Certification as a teaching method to motivate students and improve quality I can see as being very useful.

Are not the day-to-day and somewhat painful affective domain things we teach about punctuality, attendance, tardiness, staying busy on task, teamwork, thinking skills, and doing a good job no matter how you feel, more applicable to a potential employer than the glam stuff that’s passing for “cutting-edge” curriculum these days?

Not that exposure to higher-level skills is wrong, but it’s pretty clear, employers can’t find “good workers” and the three cents on the dollar profit margin is already cut very thin.

What about those fair projects, especially from our juniors and seniors? Do they really meet industry standards or are they just “craft” type projects? Did they come from a student-generated blueprint, with an accurate cut list, and would they pass the same scrutiny as the project’s employer use to screen applicants?

Summary: Be you!

• Give back to your profession: It makes us all better. Be that “someone else will do it” person who actually does it.
• Get going on your retirement planning! That day will come sooner than you think. Fix the roof when the sun is shining.
• Stay real: You were common core before it was even thought of as something “new” in education.
• Emphasize “soft skills.” It is a vital part of the package!

• Emphasize useful.
Questions to Ponder... Answers from the Future Generation of Agriculture Instructors

By Travis Cardoso, Operations Division Secretary, Hughson High School

The voice of a growing generation has spoken. The new generation of agriculture instructor has been growing for quite some time and will be necessary in order to keep this profession alive. A hybridization of sorts at some point is going to have to take place between the new and the old guard in order to make this transition as smooth as possible.

To allow the “older generation” to know what these instructors really need from us, 30 surveys were sent out and down the state to agriculture teachers in their first five years of teaching. Of the 30 surveys sent out, 26 surveys were returned, and for those who returned them, I am very grateful. The questions were simple, but I feel that they are going to give perspective to those teachers who have been teaching longer than five years to glean from this new/future generation.

Questions
There were five questions the instructors had to answer:
1. What do you feel is the strongest aspect of CATA?
2. What do you think the future of CATA holds for you?
3. What is one area in which CATA can help younger teachers “stay in the game”?
4. Do you feel supported by more experienced teachers in our profession; how/why?
5. How can more experienced agriculture educators help you become better?

The 26 instructors who had responded were very excited to feel included on a task such as this. That is where the epiphany hit; in the response emails from these teachers, they were all so very appreciative to have the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than them. So I will share the collective group’s answers to each question.

Answer: Question 1
Of the 26 teachers polled, 24 said that they appreciate the ability to be a united/family front and have an amazing networking opportunity, not only within their regions, but within the state as well. They feel that programs such as New Professionals, Regional Road Shows, CATA Summer Conference, and Vision 2030 have been instrumental in making them feel informed and included. They also feel that being able to collaborate within their pathway/curriculum at these entities is important to them as well.

Two of the individuals felt that the work ethic and dedication of members of the past have created the strong foundation that we are able to see today. Without the struggle of those in the past, much of what we do today would not even be possible.

Answer: Question 2
This question I looked at in great detail before I asked it. My email that I sent out stated that I wanted to actually get their voice heard. I told them that it would remain anonymous for this specific reason so as to not be hunted down for giving the CATA an honest answer.

Again, 26 people were polled and of the 26 surveys returned, 20 said that they feel that CATA holds for them opportunity, via professional development, curriculum building, Vision 2030 or networking. This looks promising for many of our teachers with fewer years of service. Granted, this was only a small sample of teachers, but I did poll teachers from all sections.

Of the 20 who submitted responses, seven felt that one day they would eventually be interested in running for CATA office at a higher level. Many of them stated that this would take place once things like tenure, induction, and other new teacher programs were completed.

Four of our young teachers proclaimed that they loved everything that was taking place at their current level right now and had no interest in running for office within CATA. They felt that currently, it is too much of a popularity contest and they almost feel “shamed” for sharing their opinions and views because it differs from the more experienced teacher’s way of thinking.

Two young teachers were still undecided on what the future holds for them. They wanted to be able to get through all of their current “hoops” and then see where it takes them after year five.

Needless to say, these teachers all took a good long look in their mirrors before they answered and we all need to take these responses very seriously; the good with the bad is very important as we try to grow CATA in the next 14 years to our “vision” of agriculture education in 2030.

Answer: Question 3
When all 26 surveyed approached this question, there was an overwhelming consensus that veteran teachers need to do a better job at prepping the new generation for the profession as a whole. Some suggestions included, but were not limited to, meeting with “future agriculture teachers” before they start the credential program and mentally prepare them for what life is like in the real world. Another was that there should be a delegated CATA representative in each section whom younger teachers could contact if they need to ask questions or talk. They like the idea of having someone outside of their department so they can receive secure and professional opinions.

Lastly, they were hoping that more spots would be open in the future for many of these mentoring conferences. They felt as (Continued on page 14)
New school vans, trucks, computer carts, large-scale printers, cordless microscopes, science equipment, and cool new teaching resources are all “things” that are being purchased with the North Coast Ag Partners CCPT Grant funds. Some amazing changes are taking place in all 16 schools involved in the North Coast Region grant. However, long after the computers have been ruled obsolete, the vehicle miles roll over 100,000, and the equipment is worn out, the true benefits of the grant funding will still stand. It is not the physical changes that we are making in these programs that will last; it is the upgrades in curriculum and relationships that we are fostering that will stand the test of time.

Implementing Agriscience Pathway
The goal of our grant funding is to implement the new Agriscience pathway courses in all of the schools. Our teachers have worked so hard to make this happen! This year all 16 schools are teaching the Biology and Sustainable Agriculture course, eight schools are teaching the Chemistry and Agriscience course, and one school is implementing the Advanced Sustainable Ag course. Students and teachers alike are enjoying the new curriculum.

Schools are moving through the approval process at their local districts for the final courses with the goal of having three pathway courses being adopted at all 16 sites by 2018–2019. The nature of this college- and career-ready curriculum creates something which will be around long after the grant funding ends, benefiting both the students today as well as the students in the future.

Strengthening Relationships
One unexpected side effect of the grant funding has been the strengthening of the relationships among our teachers. The common goals created by the vision have given our teachers a place to focus their attention in a team effort. They have come together to support one another in so many ways.

Last summer, the teachers attended a "Teacher Collaboration Summit" (so named because "World Leaders" were present in all 16 schools involved in the North Coast Region grant. However, long after the computers have been ruled obsolete, the vehicle miles roll over 100,000, and the equipment is worn out, the true benefits of the grant funding will still stand. It is not the physical changes that we are making in these programs that will last; it is the upgrades in curriculum and relationships that we are fostering that will stand the test of time.

Questions to Ponder…
(Continued on page 14)

(Continued on page 14) agriculture grows in California and some of our more prominent teachers begin to retire, it is going to take many teachers to fill the spot of one awesome teacher—a swatch of years 1–5 to not only promote confidence, but also to allow for growth. They know that there is New Professionals, but they were hoping for a smaller group approach.

Answer: Question 4
This question was answered in many different ways, and it seems like the majority feel that they are supported, but only by their master/cooperating teachers. Of the 26 polled, 18 said that they feel supported by their master/cooperating teachers and that is really it.

The area that seems to show the most promise is agriculture mechanics. Eight teachers said that they feel that they could walk up to any agriculture mechanics instructor and receive great feedback. Even at the California Department of Education (CDE) field days, the coaches of the agriculture mechanics contests are more inviting.

We had eight teachers who feel there is a large disconnect between the two areas, old and new. They cannot really place at what year the connection starts to falter, but they feel any time there is a new change in idea or policy, it is very difficult to get their new point across. Many less-experienced teachers say they shut down when it comes to meetings because they feel if they speak their mind, they are going to get shamed/“blacklisted” for doing so.

Many teachers who are new want and need the help, they said, but they do not want to feel horrible for bringing up a new idea/policy.

Answer: Question 5
The teachers who were sampled felt that as long as teachers were willing to reach out and offer help when they could, that would be fantastic. All 26 stated that it could be anything from curriculum to a friendly smile. One teacher said that they wanted to keep the "Breakfast Club" style mentality and form a more united front. They all feel the future is bright as long as we move in the right direction.

Summing Up
In conclusion, the overall tone is that we as experienced teachers have set the tone for personal growth and career success, but there is always room for improvement.

The next time we are at a conference, workshop, field day or speech contest, go the extra mile and reach out to the new teachers across the room. Remember we were in their shoes at one point and look at how far we have come.

Keep up the hard work, CATA, and let us continue to trend upward and onward, because our future depends on our decisions we make today. — LITERALLY! The goal of the three-day retreat was to prepare teachers to teach the new curriculum, plain and simple.

What happened there went far beyond course preparation. Of course the teachers developed things like lesson plans, shared lab ideas, discussed pacing guides and equipment lists.

But as the day went on into evening (and perhaps the wine started flowing), we took time to reflect on some bigger issues affecting our students and careers.

Table topics like "What does an effective Ag program look like?" "How do I make time for myself/ family and still maintain a good program?" "How do we reach all students in our classes?" and many more were all talked out and thoughts shared.

We got personal, learning more about everyone’s strengths and applauding each other for them.

To put it simply, the time together was not only valuable, but powerful.

Most Memorable
There is no doubt that we are all enjoying the amazing side effects that dollars pumped into a program brings.

The students are feeling valued by more than just their Ag teachers and parents.

The teachers are getting to use the latest in technology and getting their wish lists fulfilled.

The school administrations are more than happy to see the program upgrades.

But at the end of the day, I am certain we will look back on these times and remember the things that we learned from each other the most.
Why Teachers Should Give Teachers, Not Pay Them

By Nicole Ray, Operations Division Vice Chair, Exeter High School

Living to serve. We are quite familiar with the concept. We teach it in our classrooms, and we practice it as we selflessly serve our students on a daily basis. In the hustle and bustle of each day, we may sometimes overlook opportunities to serve members of the ag teaching family.

You may be familiar with the Ag Ed Discussion Lab on Facebook. The online forum has become a great opportunity to share ideas and seek advice from those all over the U.S.

This past summer, I noticed a few teachers utilizing the forum as a means by which to market their teaching resources through a site called Teachers Pay Teachers. I certainly understand the idea of protecting intellectual property; however, I’m quite certain any teaching resource you create is not an idea completely unique to you.

What’s Original?

If you have some free time, I recommend the TED Radio Hour podcast “What’s Original?” What it comes down to, everything we know builds on what others have created or learned. Teaching agriculture is science, it’s art, and it’s everything in between.

Consider some of best remix songs of your time. As successful teachers that’s what we do. We take parts of the most fascinating and relevant resources and repurpose them.

King City High Teacher Receives National Scholarship

Lauren Peterson, agricultural educator at King City High School in King City, California, was one of a select group of agriculture teachers nationwide who received the 2016 Teachers Turn the Key (TTTK) professional development scholarship from the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE).

As a scholarship recipient, Peterson attended the NAAE annual convention in Las Vegas, November 29–December 3.

The TTTK scholarship brings together agricultural educators with four or fewer years of experience and immerses them in three days of professional development that addresses issues specific to the early years of teaching agriculture. Participants also have the opportunity to become involved in NAAE leadership and network with other NAAE convention attendees.

TTTK awardees come away from the experience with a long-lasting peer cohort and tools that will help them have successful careers as agricultural educators.

In addition to attending professional development, each of the TTTK scholarship recipients was recognized at a general session during the NAAE convention. RAM Trucks sponsors the TTTK program as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

NAAE

NAAE is the professional organization in the United States for agricultural educators. It provides its more than 8,000 members with professional networking and development opportunities, professional liability coverage, and extensive awards and recognition programs.

The mission of NAAE is “professionals providing agricultural education for the global community through visionary leadership, advocacy and service.” The NAAE headquarters are in Lexington, Kentucky.

Applications Due February 15

Teachers interested in participating in Teachers Turn the Key this year should submit applications to CATA by February 15. The requirements for the application can be found at http://www.naae.org/resources/awards/.

The 2017 NAAE conference will be in Nashville, Tennessee, December 5–9.

With the internet at our fingertips, information and resources can travel at lightning speed. Remember Bloom’s Taxonomy? You likely consider those levels of knowledge as you design your curriculum, but have you thought about what it means to you as a teacher?

We have come to what we know as teachers through exposure to individuals and ideas in a myriad of ways. Are you a passive consumer of other teachers’ knowledge and experience, or are you doing your part to help actively contribute?

Give, Not Pay

Teachers should give teachers, not pay teachers. Benjamin Franklin never patented any of his inventions, and Tesla recently released the patents to its technology.

So what’s stopped you from sharing? What are we afraid of? I’m challenging you to share every resource you have. Why? Because we owe it to our students to give them the best possible experience. You owe it to yourself to be the best teacher you can be.

If you open yourself to the idea of sharing, we can build on each other’s strengths to create tremendous resources.

Join the Facebook Ag Ed Discussion Lab and participate, follow other teachers on Pinterest, share your lessons on Canvas, tweet your triumphs and failures. We have nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

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## CATA Calendar of Events 2016–2017

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<td>Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree &amp; Vine Pruning</td>
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**Aggie Annex Now Online**

Look for the Aggie Annex online at

[www.calagteach.org/GoldenSlate.html](http://www.calagteach.org/GoldenSlate.html)