Career Technical Education Funding
a Hot Topic for Coming Year
By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

The legislative year is winding down as this column is being written, with a final adjournment date set for September 15. Not much action is expected on education issues during these final days of this session, but things are moving forward to make Career Technical Education (CTE) a “hot button” issue for the new session, which begins in January. This is the final year of funding for both the CTEIG and Pathway Trust Grants, and there is great legislative interest in seeing that these programs continue to receive some type of dedicated funding over the next several years. We are working hard to see that this happens.

Legislative Hearing
An important event to highlight this need will be held in Southern California during the first part of October, as a Joint Legislative Committee will hear testimony from teachers and others about the status of CTE and the need for continued investment and leadership. CATA will be present at the hearing, and we have arranged for Ag Education to be well-represented at the event. Our GetREAL partners have also arranged to have other voices heard as well.

Budget
In addition to the legislative interest, we are hopeful that the Brown administration will support some kind of continued investment in Career Technical Education in next January’s budget proposal. We have had some discussions with administration officials regarding Ag Education and CTE, and are encouraged by their interest in maintaining and improving CTE programs. We have a commitment for continued discussion, and will be meeting with staff over the next several weeks to explore ways to support and improve Career Technical Education in California.

Lost Positions
Obviously, one of our major concerns is the loss of the Superior Region Ag Education Consultant — a position that directly supports nearly 10,000 students in a very rural and remote region of California.

The California Department of Education (CDE) has waged...
Is Your Ag Department a Team?
By Clay Freeman, State CATA President-Elect

We all know how easy it is to get caught up in the grind teaching our classes, supervising the projects we are responsible for and coaching our teams — so much so that we rarely pull up for a breath of air. Then what time is left we spend with our families.

But what about our teaching partners? You will spend as much (or more) time with the other members of your department than you do with your family, so it is important to develop and nurture those relationships as well. With as much time as we spend at work, it only makes sense to want to be happy and enjoy the company you keep.

Just like any relationship, it takes effort to develop working relationships that result in a shared vision. As the department head, the bulk of this responsibility will rest on your shoulders.

Strong Hires
Any good team is going to start with strong hires. We are currently in the midst of an unprecedented expansion of agricultural education, which means that many departments are adding to their ranks, expanding their departments and changing the group dynamic along the way.

Whether your program is going from two to three or five to six or simply filling a vacancy, there will be a shift in the group dynamic; it is critical to make the right hire for the department.

In the hiring process, the first relationship must be with your administration. If you don’t have an administration that is open to the idea of you playing a role in the hiring process, everything else will be more difficult.

Assess Program
Let’s assume that your principal is willing to include you or, even better, allow you to recruit candidates. If that is the case, the first step is to assess your program.

(Continued from page 1)

Sacramento Scene
Career Technical Education Funding a Hot Topic

(Continued from page 1)
a well-documented war against CTE over the past 40 years, and it now seems their sights are firmly set on dismantling the highly successful Ag Education delivery system. CDE does not commit any state funds to support any staff positions in Ag Education, and has stated their belief that “Ag Education is overstaffed” — an interesting claim for an agency that once had 186 individuals working in CTE, which has been reduced to an all-time low of 25 positions.

The recent elimination of an additional 10 Career Technical Education positions, I believe, reflects CDE’s desire to simply get out of the CTE business. This lack of leadership, vision, and interest in Career Technical Education is staggering, even for an agency as historically dysfunctional as CDE.

Despite our efforts to engage with management within the California Department of Education to resolve these issues, there has been, to date, no response from upper-level CDE officials. Phone calls and email messages to Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) Tom Torlakson have gone unanswered, and questions about the elimination of the Superior Region position have been completely ignored by management staff within the agency.

This should not come as a complete surprise to those of us in Ag Education, given the SPI’s virtual boycotting of statewide FFA activities over the past seven years of his tenure in office. You would think that the state’s leading education official would, at the very least, find a few hours to attend the State FFA Leadership Conference, the largest gathering of school youth in California. Not this one…. Social Media Outreach

Clearly, the resolution of issues affecting Career Technical Education and Ag Education will not come about by dealing with the California Department of Education, nor will they come about by depending solely on the legislative process in Sacramento.

CATA and our GetREAL partners have invested in a new social media outreach program that will both highlight the lack of leadership and commitment to Career Technical Education over the past 40 years, as well as the incredible need to support students and programs in CTE as we move forward.

By the time this edition of the Golden Slate goes to print, I hope you are seeing this information via social media and doing your part to help spread the word. The treatment of Career Technical Education within our public school system over the past 40 years has been deplorable, and enough is enough! Please do your part to encourage students, parents, and others to let our elected officials know that the time for change has come!

Parting Thoughts

Although my tenure as Executive Director comes to a close on December 31, please know that I will do all I can to ensure that Ag Education remains strong and viable in the future.

I truly believe that Ag Education should serve as the model for how all Career Technical Education programs operate in California, and that our successes should motivate policy leaders and others to fashion a system that truly recognizes, values, and supports what we do for students, communities, and society in general.

I would like to thank the members of CATA for their dedication to students and for believing that Ag Education truly can make a difference in the lives of young people. Your efforts are truly inspiring! Thanks also for your support of the CATA organization and our efforts here in the office over the past 25 years — it’s been a great ride! Best wishes for the future!
How to Be a Professional at the New Professionals Institute
By Erin Gorter, CATA Secretary

The New Professionals Institute (NPI) is right around the corner. For those who are attending the first time, here are the “5 P’s” of maintaining your professionalism during the conference and when you get home. And, no, I did not make these up; these are actually the accumulated thoughts of your peers who were in attendance last year. I just creatively made them start with “P” because I was feeling fancy.

Perspective Required
Accommodations do not make a professional development event. As a matter of fact, that is a really low-level way of evaluating a professional development event. Past attendees say “it’s a bed and it’s not like we spend that much time in our room,” and “the meals are fine, I mean we get fed, we get coffee when we need it.”

And although the venue of choice is not usually very high-brow, please attend with the perspective that you are here to learn, not indulge in five-star cuisine. NPI is about people and growth, not food and facilities — although sometimes you get lucky and there are complimentary bottle openers installed in the bathroom for your beverage enjoyment.

Practical Relevance
The information gained at NPI is invaluable. It is relevant, and it is not necessarily time sensitive. Sometimes November is not an ideal time for completely revamping the way you grade laboratory activities. This does not mean it should be dismissed. File it away! It will be available when the time is right.

The key is the information will be useful at some point. Clean what you can for immediate implementation, but save the rest for when you have time to make major adjustments.

Painful Realizations
Collegial support is something we all need and seek. “Those involved in change need to know their efforts are valued and honored by colleagues, and that ample opportunities for collaboration and sharing will be provided.” (Guskey, 2000, p. 157)

Sometimes, we return to our program with new, golden ideas and they are shot down by those we work with. It can be painful for our new professionals and it can be frustrating for our more seasoned professionals.

Attendees should feel confident in returning to their teaching sites and feeling like collegial support exists where they can share their new ideas, but they should realize that just because you had an idea does not mean it will be supported by the rest of their department. Attendees must realize that Guskey says “ample opportunities for collaboration and sharing,” not guaranteed adoption of all new strategies and ideas.

People Really?
You get to spend 36 hours (roughly) with more than 100 new teachers just like you. Why would you choose to spend your time complaining about every little detail in your program, the people you work with, and your students?

Newsflash: You work in education; it’s not going to be all sunny days with rose-scented uni-

(Continued on page 4)
Fresno State:

New Faces and New Opportunities

By Dr. Avery Culbertson, Dr. Steven Rocca and Dr. Rosco Vaughn, California State University, Fresno

The fall semester has begun and with it came many new faces at Fresno State. We are excited about our new crop of outstanding Agricultural Education students. We have 70 new freshmen and transfer students who joined our Ag Education program and have begun their journey to attain their college degree. At your fall regional meetings, you may see some new faces as well. We have 27 student teachers placed in the San Joaquin and Central Region with 10 full-time candidates completing their credential program this fall and 17 who are in the initial part-time phase of their student teaching experience.

If you walk the halls at Fresno State, you will see even more new faces. The 2017 fall semester opened with nearly 25,000 students, exceeding enrollment projections.

About 3,500 freshmen and 2,100 transfer students began taking classes this fall along with more than 1,000 new graduate and credential students.

Our Agricultural Education program has also reached an all-time high with 248 students: 164 majoring in Ag Ed/Teacher Preparation, 49 Ag Ed/Communication majors, 34 students pursuing their credentials, and we were just joined by our very first master's degree student.

The significant growth in our program is fantastic and we are excited at the prospect of increasing the number of new teacher candidates. The challenge we face now, however, is serving all of our students.

**Experienced Educators**

Fortunately, we have been able to recruit some very talented and experienced educators to help us this fall. Teaching our Ag Ed Orientation/Early Field Experience classes we have Charles Parker, San Joaquin Regional Supervisor, and Kevin Woodard, Instructor at Reedley College and formerly an agriculture teacher at Clovis East High School. We are so appreciative to have Mr. Parker and Mr. Woodard teaching our Ag Ed students as they learn about the agricultural teaching profession through their classroom and field experience.

Our other adjunct professor thought she had retired from teaching, but luckily we were able to lure her back to help us supervise our huge group of full student teachers. Susan Henderson-Perry has joined our team and will be on the road supervising some of our final student teachers. We feel very lucky to have these three outstanding educators joining us this semester and our students will surely share in our excitement as they benefit from their years of experience and expertise.

**Growth Challenges**

Of course all of the growth in our programs has created challenges, the most obvious being limitations on the number of students we can admit to the university. Fresno State has become a major impacted campus, which has made it more difficult for some students to get admitted.

In reality, the eligibility requirements for freshman and transfers haven’t changed too much for our Ag Education majors; however, some programs in our college have raised their requirements for students outside of our local area pretty significantly.

It is important that your students review the admissions information provided on our website to see if they meet the eligibility requirements for their chosen major. They will find that some majors, such as Animal Science/Pre-Veterinary, have a much higher GPA requirement than our Animal Science Production Management options (Equine, Dairy, Livestock/Business Management, and Meats).

By doing a little homework, your students may be able to greatly improve their chances of being admitted to our college.

If you or your students have questions or need assistance, we are always here to help. Please contact our Undergraduate Recruitment Counselor, Michelle Perez, (559) 278-8416, mperez@csufresno.edu, or Dr. Steven Rocca, (559) 278-5088, srocca@csufresno.edu.

**Ag Discovery Program**

We also wanted to tell you about a new opportunity for your high school students offered by our college. This past June, Dr. Avery Culbertson and 30 of our faculty hosted our first USDA Ag Discovery program.

This two-week experience attracted 16 participants from as far as Puerto Rico and some from right here in our backyard. These students participated in a residential program on campus designed to increase student interest and knowledge, and promote future involvement in the areas of plant and animal sciences, agricultural business, natural resources, and food science.

The program focused both on knowledge building and skill development. Participants met with over 35 different scientists and field experts. Students spent time in various classrooms and labs across campus in addition to meeting with local producers in the Central Valley.

Due to the success of the inaugural program, USDA has committed funds for the program at Fresno State in 2018 and beyond. The call for applications will be announced in January.

(Continued on page 5)
The College of Agriculture is pleased to welcome Tommy Henderson as our newest tenure-track professor in agricultural education. Tommy earned his bachelor’s degree in agricultural business and a master’s degree in ag education from California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo.

He is wrapping up his doctorate in agricultural education through Oregon State University this fall while teaching a variety of agriculture classes, including directed field experience in ag education, curriculum and methods of teaching ag mechanics, and agricultural machine systems.

College of Agriculture alumnus Haydn Clement has also returned to Chico State. Haydn earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agricultural education in 2014 and 2016, respectively.

As a student he worked in the University Farm meat laboratory under Adam Knapp and James Richards. In June, he returned to the meat lab as the staff technician, replacing Richards, who left to pursue a law career.

College of Agriculture Continues to Grow

Since 2008, the College of Agriculture has grown more than 100 percent. It reached a new milestone in enrollment this fall, cresting 905 students for the first time ever, with 936 enrolled at last count. That’s up 7 percent over 2016 after two years of remaining relatively stable.

Animal science remains the largest major in the College of Agriculture with 394 majors, followed by agricultural business at 292. The agriculture major consists of two options: crops, horticulture, and land resource management with 136 majors, and agricultural science and education with 114 majors.

New Programs Offer Resources, Advising, Connection

Two new programs are underway in the College of Agriculture to help students navigate their first couple of years of college.

The College of Agriculture Peer Advising Program launched in the spring of 2017 and adds two paid, fully trained student advisors to the College of Agriculture advising options.

Hanali Tapia-Palacios and Breanna Holbert hold regular office hours in Plumas Hall 104, meeting one-on-one with freshmen and sophomore students to advise on class schedules, involvement opportunities, and simple career planning. Students can visit the peer advisors when their assigned advisor is unavailable and when talking with a fellow student feels more comfortable than meeting with a professor. The peer advisors are supervised by Student Success Coordinator Ashley Person.

A separate program provides resources specifically for underrepresented students in the College of Agriculture. The Chico STEM Collections Collaborative (CSC2) is a cross-disciplinary effort by the Colleges of Agriculture, Natural Sciences, and Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management to increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rates for Hispanic, low-income, or first-generation students majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

The CSC2 program includes a dedicated study center, a mentoring program, workshops for college, life and career preparation, and a paid undergraduate research experience. The CSC2 program is the result of a $4.2 million grant that the University received in 2016, just over a year after being designated a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Bell Family Presidential Scholarship Program Continues to Grow

The College of Agriculture is pleased to welcome Miranda Jachens of Rescue, Emma Kirchhoff of Clarksburg, Jackie Kesting of Kingsburg, and Jack Mason of Novato into the Bell Family Presidential Scholarship program as freshmen in 2017.

Eleven outstanding agriculture students are now studying at Chico State under the Bell Family Presidential Scholarship program, and the donor has made a new investment to expand the scholarship program in the future.

Under the current program, each year the College of Agriculture is able to recruit four high-achieving freshmen who receive $5,000 for four years as long as they remain eligible for the scholarship. A $1 million scholarship.

Fresno State: New Faces and New Opportunities (Continued from page 4)

Students ages 15–18 are eligible for the USDA program. Please let your students know about this opportunity and encourage them to apply.

For more information about the USDA Ag Discovery program, please contact Dr. Avery Culbertson at (559) 278-2904 or at aculbertson@csufresno.edu.

Ag Leadership Certificate Program

One other opportunity for students we’d like to tell you about is our new Agricultural Leadership Certificate Program. During the 2016–2017 year, our faculty designed and taught three new agricultural leadership classes: Introduction to Leadership in Agriculture, Leadership in Groups and Teams, and Professional Development in Agriculture.

Students interested in obtaining the certificate will be required to take these three classes in addition to one other leadership elective course that is approved for the certificate program (12 units total). This fall, our faculty is developing and submitting the certificate program and curriculum proposals so that our students can add this certificate to their undergraduate degree program.

Dr. Avery Culbertson teaches the three agricultural leadership classes. Dr. Culbertson received her Ph.D. in Leadership Education and Development at the University of Florida. She has experience in adult, college, and student leadership development. For more information about our Agricultural Leadership Certificate program, please contact Dr. Culbertson or Dr. Rocca.

Teacher Educator News

CSU, Chico Update

By Sarah DeForest, California State University, Chico, Director of External Relations, College of Agriculture

Welcome Our New Faculty and Staff

The College of Agriculture is pleased to welcome Tommy Henderson as our newest tenure-track professor in agricultural education. Tommy earned his bachelor’s degree in agricultural business and a master’s degree in ag education from California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo.

Rick Phillips
rick.phillips@simplot.com
www.nutrientsforlife.org

Nutrients for Life Foundation

5
We would like to thank iCEV for being a title sponsor for the 2017 CATA Summer Conference. We sincerely appreciate their support!

Teacher Educator News

CSU, Chico Update

(Continued from page 5) donation by Dan Giustina in 2017 will allow the college to expand the program to five new students receiving $6,000 each year.

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

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

Credential Enrollment on the Rise

We would like to thank all of the cooperating teachers who prove to be instrumental in the development of our student teacher candidates. We are fully aware of the time and effort it takes to mentor young teachers.

We would also like to thank all of the agriculture teachers at the high school and community college level who encourage and support their students to attend CSU, Chico.

This year, a record 27 newly credentialed agriculture teachers from Chico State earned their certificates onstage during the CATA annual conference.

The fall class included Terra Jo Gibson, who was hired by Central Valley High School; Amanda Gilbert, who is continuing at the Shasta District Farm where she interned; Keri Luiz, who is at Modoc High School in Alturas; Emma Wilkinson at Durham High School; and Daniella Oliva, who has accepted a position at Soledad Middle School.

The spring crop of credential recipients included: Stephanie Bonomini, who is now at Central High School in Morgan Hill; Julia Brewer, who is at Ann Sobrato High School in Morgan Hill; Kayla MacKaben, who is working at Pleasant Grove High School in Elk Grove; Gino Farnelli, who is teaching in Galt at Liberty Ranch; Haylee Forseca, who was retained at East Nicolaus High School; Bella Leventini, who is working at Escalon High School; Jennifer Tarke, who is now at River Valley High School in Yuba City; Marleigh Ostrom, who is staying in Cottonwood at West Valley High School; Amanda Martinez, who is teaching in Princeton; Jarred Myers, who is working at Maxwell High School; Nicole Hefner, who is at Denair High School; Nicole Cecil, who is at Merced High School; Sara Riddick, who is at Elsie Allen High School in Santa Rosa; and Christie Hobby, who was hired at Waterford High School.

In addition to all these proud new teachers, Hannah Garrett, who interned at Chico High School, is now the leadership coordinator for the California Association FFA.

Upcoming Events at CSU, Chico

October 6–15 ...................................................... Chico Experience Week
October 7–8 .................................................. Sierra Oro Farm Trail Passport Weekend
October 21 .............................................................. Chico Preview Day
November 11 ..................................................... Chico CDE Workout
November 19 ..................................................... Livestock Judging Cattle Contest
January 20 ............................................................ Sheep Day
January 26 ....................................................... Chico State Social at Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale
February 7 ............................................................. Colusa Alumni Breakfast
February 10 ........................................................... Shear Day
February 10 ....................................................... CSU, Chico Invitational Parliamentary Procedure Contest
February 22 ........................................................ Agriculture Career and Internship Fair
March 10 ............................................................. CSU, Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day
June 11 ............................................................... Superior Ag/Tri Counties Bank Golf Classic
Agricultural teachers and FFA members in the Santa Barbara Section FFA graciously participated in a soft skills study through Texas A&M and Texas Tech University titled, An Investigation of Soft Skill Development of California Agricultural Education Students Participating in an FFA Career Development Event. The study determined that soft skills were being taught in the agriculture classrooms and that the level of soft skills increased from freshman to senior years.

The most exciting part of the study indicated that the students who competed in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies Contest gained twice as many soft skills as compared to those who did not compete.

The purpose of this article is to explain the research study, provide you with the soft skills survey for your students to use, and discuss how this could lead to a certification process for soft skill development.

**Survey**

Agriculture teachers from Nipomo, Santa Ynez, Pioneer Valley, Santa Maria, and Righetti High Schools provided permission slips and survey instructions to their students shortly after school started last year.

Students completed the soft skills survey twice, once before the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, and then again after the contest was held at the end of September.

The questionnaire consists of 24 statements that the students were asked to rate from 1-8 (1 not like them and 8 being like them). The survey focused on the following eight soft skills:

- **Time Management:** optimum use of time
- **Social Competence:** personal confidence in social interactions
- **Achievement Motivation:** ability to achieve excellence
- **Intellectual Flexibility:** ability to think creatively and to accommodate new information
- **Task Leadership:** lead other people effectively
- **Emotional Control:** maintain emotional control in stressful situations
- **Active Initiative:** initiates action in new situations
- **Self-Confidence:** confidence in abilities and actions

**Study Results**

The study results determined the following:

- In only 60 days, students gained in their overall soft skills. The results also determined that student’s soft skill levels increased from their freshman to senior year in high school.
- Students who were enrolled in agriculture courses improved their scores in six of the soft skill areas with an overall mean increase in soft skills of 3.93. The largest gains were in the areas of emotional control and time management. Students who were able to compete in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies Contest improved their scores in all eight of the soft skill areas with an overall mean increase of 8.64. The largest gains were in emotional control and social competence. In comparing the groups, students participating in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies Contest doubled their overall gains in soft skills, as compared to students who did not compete.

A comparison of Group One (left column) and Group Two (right column) scores are shown in the graph below.

- To further evaluate the effects of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies Contest, Paired Sample t-Tests (p < .05) were conducted. They determined that students enrolled in agriculture education experienced significant change in three soft skill areas: time management, task leadership, and emotional control.
- Students who competed in the contest experienced significant change in six soft skill areas: time management, social competence, intellectual flexibility, emotional control, active initiative, and self-confidence.

These results indicated that participation in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies Contest positively impacted the amount of soft skills gained by the agriculture students.

**Free to Download**

The survey that was used in this research study is called the Life-Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ-H Survey) and is available at [http://wilderdom.com/leq.html](http://wilderdom.com/leq.html). The LEQ-H Survey is free to download and provides an Excel sheet that can be used to calculate student scores.

I would highly encourage your students to complete the survey annually to monitor their own progression of soft skills.

Introducing them to what soft skills are will heighten their understanding of the skills that employers will be looking for and they might even be more motivated to participate in FFA activities.

In addition, you could complete the LEQ-H Survey based on your perceptions of your students’ skills and then compare it to their own results.

**Competitive Advantage**

Being able to certify that agriculture students have soft skills would give them an advantage in applying for competitive positions in the agriculture industry.

The challenge in developing certification for soft skills is being able to effectively measure soft skill development. The LEQ-H Survey might hold a solution to this challenge.

With additional input from agricultural teachers and industry leaders, maybe it could become an accepted soft skill assessment tool for agricultural students.

I would like to give a big shout-out to the Santa Barbara Section FFA for their participation in this Soft Skills Study.

Additional appreciation goes to my committee members who assisted with the research: Dr. John Rayfield, Dr. Tim Murphy, Dr. Steve Fraze, and Dr. Rudy Ritz.

The results proved that agriculture students are gaining soft skills through agriculture courses and FFA activities.

We as agriculture teachers have known this all along; now there is research to support it!
5 Tips for New Teachers from First Year Teachers

By Nicole Borba, Dinuba High School, and Martha Marin, Tranquility High School

Congratulations on obtaining a teaching position and starting a new journey in life! As many veteran teachers can tell you, your first year as an agricultural educator is the most challenging; physically, mentally, and emotionally. Your first year brings new experiences, new challenges, and tremendous opportunities for growth and reflection. As the school year comes to a close and we are preparing for summer fairs, CATA conference, and family time, here are a few tips from first year teachers to assist those coming into the profession to aid in their survival year.

1. Start Organized and Maintain It
   As a college student, there were many times when I was frantically looking for lecture notes or assignments the day before a test. I began the year hoping to be organized and bought folders, binders, and notebooks, but toward the end of the semester, I had given up. In order to have a successful school year, it was crucial to start organized and stay that way! It was a lesson that was passed on to my students this year, especially when working in the classroom. Small things definitely help, like clearing up your desk at the end of the day or not letting clutter accumulate.

2. Reflect Daily
   After each lesson, unit or activity, take the opportunity to reflect on what went well, what did not work, or suggestions for next time. Keep a document or spreadsheet to be utilized next year to assist you in strengthening your curriculum and driving your learning environment. Do not trust your brain to remember next year what you wanted to change this year!

3. Less Judging Teams; Do Them Better
   Many teachers pride themselves in having successful CDE teams, and why shouldn’t we? Hearing the name of one of our students or our chapter name being called in front of thousands of students is something that brought a smile to my face and a tear in my eye. Both of us only had one CDE team (B.I.G) this year. We knew it would be overwhelming to try to do too much so we decided it would be best to accumulate and learn all the study material to better prepare us in coaching the contest in future years. This coming school year, we will add a second CDE team. It will be a challenge to fit in practices for a second team, but the foundation we created our first year will help the balance!

4. Trying is Key!
   As a new educator, you will be learning as you go, trying to maintain all of your new responsibilities while attempting to keep your sanity! Remember, trying is key. You will not be the perfect teacher, you will make mistakes — it’s OK. Don’t beat yourself up. Take every obstacle you face, every experience you have, and turn it into an opportunity to grow as a professional. Even if you may not get recognized, your efforts are noticed!

5. Do Not Be Afraid to Ask for Help!
   As a new teacher, some of the veteran teachers can seem very intimidating and not easily approachable. Oftentimes, these can be some of your greatest supporters as an up-and-coming educator. Don’t be scared to reach out; make that connection and build that relationship.
   Many veterans would be flattered that you thought of them as an expert in that area. Just remember when you become a veteran, be that source of knowledge and experience to help the newbies to our small professional community.

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Many veterans would be flattered that you thought of them as an expert in that area. Just remember when you become a veteran, be that source of knowledge and experience to help the newbies to our small professional community.

The first year is difficult, but is the biggest step to one of the most rewarding careers out there.

Still Giving Away Cal Ag License Plates

Thanks to all of you who helped launch the first-ever California Agricultural License Plate! Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

The California FFA is giving away FREE California Ag License Plates to the first 750 to submit a completed application.

To get your free plate, complete the Reg. 17 Special Interest License Plate application available from the DMV website (www.dmv.ca.gov). Please note: we will only accept completed applications for a sequential, California Agricultural (CalAG) plate. Only the first 750 applications will be funded; any extra applications will be returned.

Once the application is completed, print and mail it to the California FFA, P.O. Box 460, Galt, CA 95632.

Once 750 completed applications are received, they will be forwarded to DMV with payment.

For questions, please contact Jim Aschwanden, jaschwanden@calagteachers.org.

Corporate Membership

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@cata@calagteachers.org so we may send pertinent information.
Corporate Membership

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Mentors Are Life Preservers
By Frank Roche, Corcoran High School

As a teacher going into my fourth year, there are some things I have learned: 1) Don’t lose the gas card; 2) learn to enjoy only existing through the miracle that is coffee; and, most importantly, 3) learn to ask for help. As a newly minted agriculture educator, you have the benefit of being part of a network that very few educators have access to in their daily lives. With that being said, find yourself a mentor.

If you are lucky like I was, you will be in a department with a mentor in your specialty who is more than happy to share the tips and tricks they have learned during their time as an educator. You could also be in a district with quite a few schools and can reach out to other teachers at different sites. These experienced teachers are the life raft in the ocean of insanity that is your first year of teaching. The raft will not magically float to you. You will need to swim to that raft if you want it to help you float.

The times I have stayed up late thinking and tinkering with a lesson only for it to flop are numerous. When discussing this failure with a more experienced teacher and they say, “Oh I have been doing that for years. This is what I do and it works out fantastically.”

We need to stop reinventing the wheel. A study by Catharine Shoulders and Hannah Toland (2017) in regards to millennials and non-millennials in the agriculture classroom stated millennials spend 17% of their time for personal time. When these millennials are swamped with all the demands of a beginning teacher, that personal time can evaporate quickly. Perhaps this is contributing to the 721 agriculture teachers nationwide who left the profession after the 2015–2016 school year? I believe that percentage of time spent personally can easily be increased by finding a mentor to bounce ideas off of—it just makes life so much easier when you can focus on what works, and not on fixing things that didn’t.

Always remember that these mentors are not there to hold your hand and walk you from unit to unit and tell you how amazing you are, but to bounce ideas off and let you know when it is time to change a strategy. A mentor is a vital necessity to any young teacher.

As an agriculture mechanics teacher, mentors like Emmett Schultz, John Coon, John Williams, Chris Williams, Blaze Chaney, Tim Deniz and many others are instrumental in why I am still here in this beautifully insane career. They took my questions, mulled them over and gave me an idea of how they would approach each issue. I am extremely lucky to have those educators in my career. That is not to say I have not been ridiculed, laughed at, and sent away when I asked a question in regards to my class or FFA or SAEs—sometimes we need to learn how to think on our own. You will have times when you are down and out, times when you think you cannot muster one more kick of the legs or one more stroke to keep your head out of the water and it can be because of a bad lesson or unkind word from a parent or administrator. Luckily for you, there are 800 people out there who are waiting by to give you that raft and keep your head above the water.

Our profession has a culture and way of doing business that is rare in the field of education.

Don’t let the isolation and tension that affects all new teachers keep you from reaching out to others who have walked this path already — you will be amazed how much easier the path is if you take advantage of their sage wisdom.
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Telling ‘Our Story’
By Matt Patton, CATA Secondary Division Chair

Well-told stories will get stuck in our mind, being remembered long after first hearing them; helping us know people we have never met and experience places we have never been. Across all audiences, a well-told story connects and resonates with people.

I am embarrassed to admit that at times, early in my career, I did not truly understand the power of storytelling. On occasion I would intentionally mislead people or be vague to avoid telling “Our Story.” It usually happened when I was extremely busy, overly tired or a combination of the two. Someone, not in the agriculture industry, making polite conversation would innocently ask “What do you do for a living?” To avoid a lengthy explanation, I would generically respond “I am a science teacher.”

This response was not because of embarrassment of the profession — quite the opposite is true. I am defined by my occupation and I hold great pride in what I do; it is my very essence. The reason for this answer was simple: I felt that I did not have the time or energy to explain the layered and nuanced vocation we have chosen.

I now realize this response is selfish and irresponsible. The main offense is not the omission of truth, but the failure to capitalize on an opportunity to expose and educate someone the benefits of Agricultural Education. I was neglecting an opportunity to tell “Our Story.”

Connecting with Students

After telling someone not familiar with Agricultural Education about what you do, you inevitably get a follow-up question: Do you teach people to be farmers?

At a basic level, we teach the technical skills involved in the production of food and fiber, just like a math teacher provides the technical skills needed to solve algebraic equations. However, what makes Agricultural Education so effective is the personal connection we make every day with our students. Effectively telling “Our Story” should emphasize not only the scientific, technological, and engineering principles we teach, but also how we emotionally engage our clientele.

We must emphasize this emotional connection, as it is our distinction over other educational models. We all have a heartfelt story about a student who has been positively affected by you or your program, and these are the stories we should share with the public.

Five Keys to Storytelling
An article by Anett Grant, “Your Fail-Proof Formula for Telling Powerful Stories,” outlines five key elements on how to effectively shape a compelling story.

1. Choose the Story Wisely
   The best stories you have are the ones that have affected you emotionally. When you recount what happened, emphasize how the events made you feel. This will personalize the story and connect with the listener.

2. Set the Scene
   Establish context by giving listeners only the important and relevant information. Be as brief and concise as possible. Economy of language will ensure that important facts are emphasized without boring or confusing the story.

3. Build Toward the Action
   Tell the audience what happened step-by-step using only the relevant and succinct information.

4. Hit Your Climax
   This section should be what the action was building for, the payoff of the story. It should be short and to the point, usually only a few sentences.

5. Make Everything Connect
   This is where the meaning of the story is relayed and its connection to the benefits of Agricultural Education is indicated.

Emotional Connection
If done correctly, your story should emotionally connect to ensure the audience will remember it whenever they hear about Agricultural Education in other contexts. The story should make the complex and foreign notions of agriculture and education relatable on a human level.

Once you have outlined your story, it is important to work on the delivery. Just like telling a joke, the more times you perform, the better the connection with the listener. Timing, vocal inference and body language all add to the telling experience, and these skills become easier the more familiar you are with the material.

Practice at home, with your teaching partners or with anyone familiar with Agricultural Education and ask them to help refine your story.

Build your arsenal with several stories developed in a similar manner. Having a few go-to stories ensures that no matter the situation or audience, you can deliver “Our Story.”

Sharing Builds Support
It is our responsibility, no matter how busy or tired, to share “OurStory” with as many people as possible. The more people understand what we do, and have a real-life examples of Agricultural Education connecting with students, the more support we will have. There is no better advocate for Agricultural Education than the students whose lives we touch, and we need to share those stories with the world.
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The Fight for the Future of Agricultural Education

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, Department of Education

Over the years, many of us have been involved in battles to save different pieces of our agricultural education delivery system. When I was a young teacher, I would hear reference to the battle to “Save our Bureau.” We certainly have had many battles to save Agriculture Incentive Grant funding.

My first year as a CATA officer, we battled State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, to keep the regional outstation offices. Ultimately, when Jack O’Connell was elected to succeed her, he reinstated the region offices as one of his first acts.

This past spring, we fought to keep $15.3 million of funding for high school Career Technical Education (CTE) programs that included funding for FFA, Partnership Academies, and other programs. The day after the Governor agreed to include the funding in the budget, the California Department of Education announced that it would not replace the Superior Region Supervisor position that had been vacant for months.

Now What?

This will not be a battle. This will be a war. The California Department of Education has been reducing CTE staff for the past 40 years. Now, Agriculture Education is the only subject area with more than one staff member. There are no general fund dollars spent on any CTE staff. Limited Carl D. Perkins dollars (federal funds) are used to pay all salary, benefits, travel, and supplies for all CTE staff. If state employees get a raise, the department cuts positions, travel allocation, and supplies. There is no vision to do anything different in the future.

Our challenge will get worse. Jack Havens is planning to retire this year. Lloyd McCabe has plans to retire in December 2018. If those vacancies are not filled, then what?

You may be thinking, “No problem; we will just do the same thing we did to save funding.” I wish it was that easy.

We can agree that the Legislature has shown bipartisan support for FFA and agricultural education funding. Our elected officials know that what we do with students is working as well as anything that they fund in education. When FFA members in their blue corduroy jackets tell their Assembly member or Senator that funding was cut, they will likely step forward and save funding for FFA.

The challenge is that this time it is not just a funding issue. We need to save the agricultural education delivery model — a regional delivery model that engages our students in learning at levels far beyond what many believe is possible.

Other CTE industry sectors have curriculum standards, educational resources, professional development, and Career Technical Student Organizations. What makes us different?

People Make the Difference!

Unlike our counterparts in career technical education, we have a state staff that connects with local programs to assist them in developing program plans, curriculum, leadership development, and supervised agriculture experience to best meet local program needs.

Additionally, the state staff facilitate, plan and operate the region FFA operations, and work collectively to do the same at the state level. Our students will not benefit from the same level of opportunity without this time-proven delivery model. We know that. At the same time, it is something that is difficult to explain to the Legislature.

We can’t expect that the California Department of Education is going to solve our challenge to deliver the three circle model at the local, sectional, regional, state, and national levels.

Either we fight for what we know is the best educational model to engage our students in learning and get the Legislature and Governor’s Office to fix things, or God help us!
2017 Agricultural Education Award Winners

(Presenting the awards is CATA President Dave Gossman)

Outstanding Young Teacher: Lauren Peterson, King City

Outstanding Teacher – Don Wilson Memorial Award: Darol Fishman, Merced College

Teacher Mentor: Roy Beck, Bret Harte Union High School

Outstanding Single Person Secondary Program: Tomales High School: Bill Costanzo

Teacher of Excellence Award Winners (from left): Aireal Covey, Clovis East High School; Isaac Robles, Oakdale High School; Donnie Whitworth, Winters High School; Shannon Welch, Elk Grove High School; Mike Rourke (Standing in for Jim Knapp, Las Plumas High School); Andréé Earley, Las Plumas High School; Ralph Mosqueda, Hemet High School; Kim Arntz, Petaluma High School; Morgan Rourke, Hayfork High School; Rosemary Cummings, Nipomo High School.
2017 Agricultural Education Award Winners

Outstanding 2-3 Person Secondary Program – Frontier High School: Linda McPheeters, Emily Benson, and Julie Beechinor (not pictured.)

Outstanding Large Secondary Program and Outstanding Secondary Agricultural Education Program State Winner – Santa Maria High School: Luis Guerra, Shannon Powell, Mark Powell, Amanda Rodriguez, Clemente Ayon, Melissa Flory-Guerra, Marc DeBernardi, Sara Araujo, Principal, Joe Domingues.


Agriscience Teacher of the Year: Nicole Ray, Exeter High School

2017 CATA Hall of Fame Inductees: Christine Dickson and Robert “Mr. Bob” Cummings

Aggie Annex
Now Online

Look for the Aggie Annex online at www.calagteachers.org/GoldenSlate.html
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>North Coast Region Meeting</td>
<td>Dixon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 22-23</td>
<td>Southern Region Meeting</td>
<td>Mission Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>South Coast Region Meeting</td>
<td>Hollister</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 23-28</td>
<td>National FFA Convention</td>
<td>Indianpolis, IN</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>Superior Region Meeting</td>
<td>Alturas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 4</td>
<td>Cotton State Finals</td>
<td>CSU, Fresno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 17–18</td>
<td>San Joaquin Region Meeting</td>
<td>Tenaya Lodge</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 18</td>
<td>Central Region Meeting</td>
<td>Elk Grove</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 30–December 2</td>
<td>Community College Mid-Winter</td>
<td>Solvang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 5–9</td>
<td>NAAE Conference</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 4–5</td>
<td>Student Teacher Conclave</td>
<td>Modesto</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 11–12</td>
<td>Winter Governing Board</td>
<td>Galt</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Natural Resources State Finals</td>
<td>Reedeley</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 3</td>
<td>Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree &amp; Vine Pruning</td>
<td>CSU, Fresno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>Central Region Meeting</td>
<td>Modesto Junior College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>San Joaquin Region Meeting</td>
<td>Tulare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 26</td>
<td>South Coast Region Meeting</td>
<td>San Luis Obispo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Superior Region Meeting</td>
<td>Chico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>North Coast Region Meeting</td>
<td>Mendo/Lake Section-Kelseyville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>Southern Region Meeting</td>
<td>Cal Poly Pomona</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>CSU - Fresno Field Day</td>
<td>Fresno</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22–25</td>
<td>State FFA Leadership Conference</td>
<td>Anaheim</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25–28</td>
<td>NAAE Region I Meeting</td>
<td>Utah</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>State FFA Judging Finals</td>
<td>Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>Executive Committee Meeting</td>
<td>Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>Pre-Conference Governing Board</td>
<td>Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 24–28</td>
<td>CATA Summer Conference</td>
<td>Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 28</td>
<td>Governing Board Summer Retreat</td>
<td>Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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