2018–2019 California State Budget

By Matt Patton, CATA Executive Director

The 2018–2019 California State Budget includes a total of $300 million in ongoing funding for K–12 Career Technical Education (CTE). This is the first time in decades that state funds have been allocated to support CTE and optimistically signifies that finally the Legislature sees the value of CTE and the need for options for the students of California.

Almost a year ago, a group of individuals highly invested in agricultural education and sympathetic to the continuous decline of CTE in California over the last 40 years, formulated a plan to protect and strengthen agricultural education and to resurrect an almost-extinct CTE. This group of people was tired of fighting battle after battle to protect the status quo and had visions of what could be accomplished in a proactive world. With a solid and logical plan of the funding and structure needed to successfully rebuild CTE, they set forth to convince the lawmakers and governing body of California of their vision.

Politics

Enter the political process. Otto von Bismarck is credited with saying that “Laws are like sausages. It is better not to see them being made.” The sausage-making process went something like this: the original plan was interpreted by the Governor’s office, tweaked by Department of Finance, revised in May, influenced by advocacy groups, opposed by the Assembly, punted by the Senate, transformed by the Conference Committee, and finally negotiated by the Big Three.

The final result is $150 million being channeled through the California Department of Education (CDE) to be distributed in a modified continuation of the Career Technical Incentive Grant process. An additional $150 million will be administered by the community college system via the strong workforce model. The community college system will additionally receive $14 million for staffing. This staffing will result in 114 K–12 regionally placed Workforce Pathways.
Who Is Qualified to Be an Agriculture Teacher?
By Clay Freeman, State CATA President

As you look out upon the landscape of agricultural education, one thing is clear: We are a victim of our own success. For a variety of reasons, Agricultural Education in California has been the one constant in Career Technical Education (CTE—formerly known as vocational education). As a result, Ag Ed has absorbed many of the CTE facilities on campuses up and down the state.

At the same time, our programs have demanded a seat at the table in science. Programs that once serviced only those students with the flexibility to have an agriculture class as an elective have now become major forces on their campuses providing A–G courses in science, social studies, and fine arts, as well as state-of-the-art technical courses. Couple that environment with the current, unprecedented, funding and focus on CTE and we now have to answer the question of who will we get to teach these classes?

New Teacher Shortage
For the past few years, the supply of new teachers has been woefully inadequate to meet the demand. The Teach Ag Campaign has begun to realize its efforts with a dramatic increase in the number of students interested in a career in agricultural education, but it takes time to get through school and many of these students find new interests while in college, pursuing paths outside of education.

In order to meet the demand, universities are trying to produce numbers as quickly and efficiently as possible. As a result, positions are being filled with candidates who, while they are well-trained in teaching methods and FFA operations, they, in many cases, have limited agricultural industry experience.

Some schools have opted to hire industry professionals to fill vacancies. This option tends to add a new dimension to agricultural programs, but these teachers may be ill-equipped to face the challenges of classroom management and leadership training.

The path to a CTE credential (in lieu of a single-subject credential) attempts to fit years of educational training into months of mostly distance learning/self-driven courses that are taken in the midst of a full teaching load.

Don’t get me wrong; there are many, highly effective teachers who have come from industry, but there are also many who are reluctant to embrace the three-circle model that we all agree is the foundation of what has made us so successful.

Current Choices
So which is the better choice—a young teacher with limited industry experience, but a palatable passion for the FFA, or an industry professional focused on passing on knowledge gained from years in the field? With the

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The significant growth in our program equates to a 132% increase over the last 10 years. Of course, we are excited at the prospect of increasing the number of new teacher candidates; however, the challenge we face now is serving all our students. 

**Faculty Changes**

Our challenge seems a little greater when you consider that Dr. Art Parham has retired. Dr. Parham dedicated 35 years of service to our program. Fortunately, Dr. Parham isn’t leaving us completely; he will be working for us half-time and supervising our initial student teachers.

We also feel fortunate that our Dean, Dr. Sandra Witt, has allowed us to conduct a search for a new agricultural education tenure-track faculty position to replace Dr. Parham. If our search is successful, our new faculty member will join us for fall 2019. We are excited at the prospects of adding a new member.

Likewise, we are thankful to have great part-time faculty to help us teach our classes and supervise student teachers. Our part-time faculty this fall are Susan Henderson-Perry, Ken Heupel, Charles Parker, Jill Sperling, and Kevin Woodard.

In addition to the new students on our campus, we are also excited about a new faculty member who joined us this fall. We feel fortunate to have Chris McKenna join our team in our Mechanized Agriculture program. McKenna was formerly an agricultural mechanics teacher at Merced-El Capitan High School.

He’s working with John Williams to give us a outstanding duo to build our Ag Mechanics program and provide our students with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful teaching secondary agricultural mechanics.

In addition to hiring Williams and McKenna, our Ag Mechanics program also has benefited greatly from the Moller Family Gift, which provided $250,000 to update our shop and purchase new equipment. Our shop now has a new computer-controlled plasma cutting table, multi-process welders, iron worker, and hydraulic metal shear and break.

**New Leadership Certificate**

Our new students also will find new opportunities in our college for professional development and growth toward becoming our future agricultural leaders. We previously mentioned the hiring of Dr. Avery Culbertson, who was charged with the development of our agricultural leadership program. Well, that is exactly what Dr. Culbertson has done.

Beginning this fall, our students will be able to earn a Certificate in Special Study in Agricultural Leadership. The certificate requires students to complete four upper division courses: Introduction to Leadership in Agriculture, Leadership in Groups and Teams, Professional Development, and either Organizational Leadership and Change or an Agricultural Leadership Project.

This certificate program will be a valuable addition to our program and provide students from across our college with the opportunity to become better advocates for our industry.

**Ag Discovery Program**

When Dr. Culbertson wasn’t busy developing our new leadership certificate program, she was preparing for our USDA Ag Discovery Program. This past June, she and 30 of our faculty hosted this program for the second year in a row. This two-week experience attracted 16 participants from as far as Maryland 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 more than 35 scientists and field experts.

Due to the success of the program, USDA has committed funds for the program at Fresno State in 2019 and beyond. The call for applications will be announced in January. Students
Teacher Educator News

Retiring AGED Faculty Leave Big Shoes to Fill

By Sarah DeForest, Director of External Relations

More than 100 alumni, family and friends gathered at Canyon Oaks Country Club on May 20, 2018 to celebrate the careers of two retiring agricultural education faculty members. The surprise party honored Professors Brad Dodson and Mike Spiess for their combined total of more than 60 years in agricultural education.

Dodson wrapped up 18 years at Chico State in the spring, following a distinguished career as a high school agriculture teacher, regional ag education consultant, and assistant FFA state advisor. He joined the College of Agriculture in 2000 to lead the agricultural education program. Dodson became a national leader in developing curriculum for agriculture and career and technical education teachers in the areas of leadership and career development.

Dodson’s colleague of 15 years, Spiess, will remain active in the College of Agriculture for a couple more years as he finishes up the Faculty Early Retirement Program. Spiess, who earned his bachelor’s degree in agriculture from Chico State, returned in 2003 to teach agricultural mechanics and technology. Spiess has provided immeasurable behind-the-scenes service to the agricultural education profession throughout his career, developing a number of widely used computer and tabulations programs, coordinating professional journal and poster submissions, and serving as an elected officer for the American Association of Agricultural Educators.

Beginning in the fall of 2018, two more long-time Chico State professors have joined Dr. Spiess in the Faculty Early Retirement Program. Dave Daley and Lee Altier both joined the College of Agriculture in the early 1990s, Daley in animal science and Altier in plant science.

Daley, who has served as professor, program coordinator, associate dean, and interim dean, has stepped out of the classroom but will continue to manage the University Farm. Altier, who in addition to teaching has also served as the director of the Center for Learning and Teaching (CELT), will reduce his teaching load as he approaches retirement, and will continue to remain involved in the Organic Vegetable Project, which he founded.

Come Grow With Us

CSU-Chico’s agriculture programs remain on the rise, with an average of 6% enrollment growth each year since 2008. Enrollment hit more than 970 students for the first time ever this fall. In addition to a huge crop of new students, we also added four new full-time faculty to help manage the growing course load. Here are their introductions.

Dr. Mina Hejazi – Agricultural Business

Dr. Hejazi earned her Ph.D. in agricultural and applied economics from Virginia Tech, where she has most recently been serving as a postdoctoral research associate. Her research focuses on combining agricultural and international trade policies with quantitative methods to analyze agricultural and food policy issues in the United States.

Fresno State: Where Future Leaders Are Grown

(Continued from page 3)

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. Culbertson at (559) 278-2904 or aculbertson@csufresno.edu.

Research Project

In the coming year, Dr. Culbertson and Dr. Rosco Vaughn will also be working on a new research project that many of you may be interested in. We hope that this study will help us to better understand how secondary agricultural education programs operationalize leadership development.

While studying leadership and the benefits of it within agricultural education is not a new topic, we realized that data has not been collected in California. The purpose of the study will be to assess how California agricultural educators are teaching leadership in their programs, specifically looking at how leadership is defined, how many programs teach leadership courses and examining leadership class content. Ultimately, this study will allow us to provide recommendations for teaching and facilitating leadership in your programs. We will be sending out email invitations for you to participate through the CATA database.

Once data is analyzed, we will share the results, including recommendations resulting from the study with the profession. We would greatly appreciate your participation in this study.

Student Teachers

Lastly, we’d like to recognize our future leaders in agricultural education and our partners that will help us prepare them. We are on track to match the 25 student teachers who completed our program last year.

This fall the following 11 will be student teaching: Anna Allen at Visalia-El Diamante, Kaylie Cates at Chowchilla, Ryan Coggins at Ripon, Haylee Cole at Atwater-Buhach Colony, Cameron Ford at Bakersfield-North, Joseph Garbaldi at Tulare, Dani Knight at Bakersfield-Frontier, Kara Langley at Visalia-Mt. Whitney, Britney Machado at Merced-Golden Valley, Amanda Madden at McArthur-Fall River and Victoria Saldana at Bakersfield-Highland.

Additionally, we have 14 students who will begin their initial student teaching this fall with final student teaching scheduled for spring.

They include Megan Bove, Dakota Burns, Kiley Gravatt, Alexandra Hahlbeck, Danielle Hyatt, Mikayla Kopp, Destinee Leonardo, LaKeishia Martin, Kaitlyn McDonough, Jonathon Porter, Christopher Sharp, Cassidy Steenbock, Shea Van Aiken, and Lesley Zorra.

If you have students interested in joining us at Fresno State, we are always here to help.

For questions regarding admissions, please contact our Undergraduate Recruitment Counselor, Michelle Perez, (559) 278-8416, mperez@csufresno.edu.

If you would like to visit our campus and tour our University Ag Laboratory, please contact Dr. Steven Roca, (559) 278-5088, sroca@csufresno.edu.

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her Ph.D. from UC Davis in animal behavior and stress physiology this year. Her primary research interests include mitigation of heat stress in dairy cows and the optimization of cooling strategies for lactating cows.

Dr. Logan Smith – Animal Science

A Chico State agriculture alumnus, Dr. Smith also is a graduate of UC Davis in molecular, cellular, and integrative physiology. He completed a postdoctoral fellowship with Oregon Health Science University, where he characterized the role of IL-1B in cancer treatment-related symptoms of muscle wasting, fatigue, and inflammation. Most recently he has been teaching at College of the Siskiyous while working as a senior program manager for the Siskiyou Economic Development Council.

Dr. Crystal Waters – Animal Science

Dr. Waters also received her bachelor’s degree at Chico State before earning her Ph.D. at Texas A&M University in meat science and food safety. She has done collaborative research with Tyson Foods, Texas Farms Pork Producers, and the National Beef Cattlemen’s Association, and she has coached several competitive Meat Judging teams to provide students with valuable personal and professional skills.

Proposed Changes to Agriculture Major

The College of Agriculture has proposed changes to the structure of its agriculture major that may be implemented as early as the fall of 2019. Where the current agricultural science and education program is an option beneath the agriculture major (which also includes an option in crops, horticulture, and land resource management), the new proposal would split the agriculture degree into two separate majors: agricultural science and plant science.

In addition to providing a clearer pathway to graduation for our students, this change will create a new option in agricultural communication in collaboration with the Department of Journalism and Public Relations. Within the agricultural education option, students will have the ability to earn both a bachelor’s degree and a credential in four years. The proposal is working its way through the campus approval process.

FFA Leaders at Chico State

The College of Agriculture is proud to be rooted in FFA, where several of our student leaders have made real marks over the past year. Please encourage your students to apply for College of Agriculture recruitment scholarships. The proposal is working its way through the campus approval process.

FFA Leaders at Chico State

Breanna Holbert was elected president of the National FFA Organization state association. We were thrilled, along with our students, this change will create a new option in agricultural communication in collaboration with the Department of Journalism and Public Relations. Within the agricultural education option, students will have the ability to earn both a bachelor’s degree and a credential in four years. The proposal is working its way through the campus approval process.

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We are thrilled, along with all of California, when Breanna Holbert was elected president of the National FFA Organization last November.

We look forward to the spring semester when Breanna will return to Chico State as a sophomore majoring in agricultural education.

We are also very proud of sophomore agricultural business major Joel Mendosa, who won the Grain Production-Placement Proficiency Contest at the 2017 National FFA Convention.

Bell Family Presidential Scholarship

The Bell Family Presidential Scholarship Program continues to grow at Chico State. With an additional $1 million investment from donor Dan Giustina in 2017, we were able to welcome five new Bell Family Presidential Scholars and boost their annual award to $6,000 each year for four years. They are: Jaycee Harris, an animal science major from Chico High School; Taylor Gallaty, majoring in agricultural business from West Valley High School; Callie Norton, studying agricultural science and education from Atwater High School; Angel de Trinidad, an animal science major from Yorba Linda High School; and Peyton Yount, also studying animal science from Central High East.

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 are also 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.

Upcoming Events at CSU-Chico

October 5-14: Chico Experience Week
October 20: Chico Preview Day
November 18: Livestock Judging Cattle Contest
January 25: Chico State Social at Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale
January 26: Swine Day
February 6: Colusa Alumni Breakfast
February 9: Sheep Day
February 21: Agriculture Career and Internship Fair
March 9: CSU-Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day
June 10: Superior Ag/Tri Counties Bank Golf Classic
We Need YOUR Help!

FFA Foundation Upcoming Events

By Katie Otto, Fund Development Director

Consign for a Cause
For the second year in a row, during the month of November, the California FFA Foundation will be partnering with California Livestock Auction Markets Association (CLAMA) to encourage consignors to donate a portion of their proceeds to local chapters and the state.

Please contact your local livestock auction yard, encourage them to participate, and see how your chapter might be able to help at an upcoming sale.

For more information, please contact Katie Otto at kotto@californiaffa.org.

Giving Tuesday: November 27, 2018
Save the date.
Giving Tuesday is right around the corner. The California FFA Foundation will once again join forces with Blue Diamond Growers to Give the Gift of Blue on Giving Tuesday.

Please watch your email and social media for more information and help the Foundation encourage donors and alumni to give and provide FFA jackets for members.

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I was starting to believe that my will, at times, set me back, but struggles and temptations that I wasn’t perfect. I still had following Jesus.

I haven’t told you is that in high where I have come from. What of the most incredible disasters. I saw some tsunami wiped out hundreds of a tiny island off India, and youngsters, players, community kids and spread the gospel to the put on soccer clinics for the local in Ireland and the Far East. We we played professional teams ministry, Athletes in Action, and people to minister to them. I
taveled with 30 other students for a six-week stint in Scotland where I got to use my strengths and knowledge of the people to minister to them. I played soccer with their sports ministry, Athletes in Action, and we played professional teams in Ireland and the Far East. We put on soccer clinics for the local kids and spread the gospel to the youngsters, players, community people, and families, alike.

We traveled to Sri Lanka, a tiny island off India, and Thailand immediately after the tsunami wiped out hundreds of thousands of people and heard chilling stories and saw some of the most incredible disasters.

I tell you this, not to look all spiritual, but to paint a picture of where I have come from. What I haven’t told you is that in high school, I was a party animal, ladies’ man, and certainly not following Jesus.

Questions Arise

Now, fast forward six years. I wasn’t perfect. I still had struggles and temptations that would, at times, set me back, but I was starting to believe that my purpose was far stronger than I originally thought. My values had changed and I was looking at the world from the perspective of a Christian. Through the years of being mentored by some Godly men and spending time in the Word, my faith strengthened, but more questions rose about God’s plan for me.

I found myself contemplating my next move in my life. I had just finished student teaching and I was excited about getting out of California and going to a new place. I had many ideas, including moving back to Scotland or somewhere in the Midwest. I really didn’t know where I wanted to go—I was trying to seek what God’s plan was for me.

Critical Decision

All the way through my studies, my intent was to graduate with my degree, get my credential, and move back to Scotland. I really felt as if God was calling me back to Scotland to start a church, reach young people in particular, and bring Jesus back to a country which, for all intents and purposes, has kicked him out. It’s considered a post-Christian country now because it’s so far removed from Christianity. I believed that was my calling.

A couple months before I was to graduate, I told Susan Vaughn at Fresno State that I had changed my mind and I felt like I was to move to Minnesota. I had recently gotten back from a trip and I fell in love with it. Looking back, I know it wasn’t a God thing, but I was definitely convincing myself that it was. My heart was full.

She looked me blunt in the face, and said, “You can’t do it.” The tears started to flow down her face and she was visibly shaking at the thought of me moving. She then proceeded to say, “God is telling me that if you go, something bad is going to happen.”

At this point, I didn’t really know her that well, but I could see in her face that she was serious. It was enough for me to say, OK, I’ll stay. Over the next couple weeks, she convinced me to continue in my path of teaching because she felt God was telling her his plans for me.

A year later, the main bridge in Minneapolis collapsed and killed 50 people driving on the freeway. I couldn’t help but wonder if this was the bad thing she had warned me about.

Bakersfield

I didn’t know a soul when I took the job at Highland High School in Bakersfield, but I knew that Mr. Lemuchci and his wife, Lisa, were going to be taking care of me. I knew they were Christians and that was very important for me. They took me under their wings and I had not only the best mentorship at work, but in life. I was able to watch Ric at work and see how he interacted with students.

Ric’s mentorship during my first three years has proven to be invaluable as now I have taken the torch and moved forward with the program. I now continue to apply the many life lessons they taught me.

When I purchased my first home, my first requirement was to live in the same area where most of our students do—simply because, if I’m going to invest my life into these students, I wanted to live among the students. I wanted to be a part of the community. When I go to the grocery store, I run into parents or students. When I’m parked at the stop light, they come up next to me and wave. When I go for a walk in the neighborhood, they’re outside playing. These children have become my ministry.

Low Point

During my first several years of teaching, I had a pretty low point. I was living on my own in a small one-bedroom apartment, a drug dealer below me, and my alcoholic girlfriend across the walkway. It was normal to hear yelling and the sort.

In fact, one day I woke up to police banging on the door, guns drawn, telling me to get out with my hands-up. They were actually yelling at the guy below, but it was enough to freak me out.

At around the same time, my principal at the time was very difficult to work with. She enacted a new policy that we could no longer use a combination lock to allow students on the farm; they had to be let in by an advisor.

I was the only one at the time, so I found myself wondering, why the heck am I here? My life

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New Perspective

I don’t remember the time, but it was sometime during this timeframe, I was driving to school for a 5 a.m. departure to a California Department of Education (CDE) contest. It was pitch dark outside, the sun had not started to rise, and I looked over to the corner of a small landscaped area across from the school. I noticed a silhouette, so I stopped.

Out of the darkness emerged one of my students on the team named Patience. Patience was an amazing young lady. Quiet, very shy, very smart, but had a very nasty attitude at times. I knew this was a kid who was at-risk, but I didn’t really know to what extent. She had never received a home visit from me, but I had met her mum several times before.

What I learned from Patience this morning changed my entire perspective on my purpose: Patience had been living in a motel. Before that, she was living in another motel. Before that, a homeless shelter, and before that, another motel.

She was essentially homeless with her little sisters and her mum. Her mum was being attacked on a daily basis by the local pimps, drug dealers, and men who were living in the same area. During all this time, Patience had to watch as her mum was beaten, raped, and mentally abused. There was nothing she could do.

Additionally, her mum didn’t have a car, so anytime we had an event, practice, or leaving for a contest, Patience would find a place to stay for a while, or take the local bus to get to school. That’s why she was there so early. The bus dropped her off at 4:30 a.m. I would never have known if I hadn’t passed her out there.

As I continued to get to know her, I learned that she had been earmarked as a failure because of her circumstances. No one believed she was going to college and no one believed she would be successful with her high school endeavors.

The reality is that her mum wanted her to succeed and did everything she could to provide Patience with the opportunities. I didn’t know that when I was asking for money to offset a CDE contest, Patience would find a place to stay for a while, or take the local bus to get to school. That’s why she was there so early. The bus dropped her off at 4:30 a.m. I would never have known if I hadn’t passed her out there.

I could talk for hours with similar stories, like Haley, who signed up for my class because she was scared to dissect in a regular science class. I took her that year to do a necropsy on a calf, which inspired her to also study vet science with Temple Grandin at Colorado State.

My point is that through all of these success stories, God was at work. He was at work with my life, but he was also at work in the lives of those students. The difference is that He was using me as his hands to bless those students and give them a path.

Finding Answers

If you’ve been struggling to understand your purpose as an ag teacher, why you are where you are, you’ll find the answers if you graft yourself into your community and your faith.

Be the Branches on the Vine

If you’ve been struggling to understand your purpose as an ag teacher, why you are where you are, you’ll find the answers if you graft yourself into your community and your faith.

No Coincidences

Here’s the slap in the face! The A-HA moment! I’d like to go back to the opening of my story. I felt as if I was being called into the ministry. Although my ministry at the time was Scotland, it’s not a coincidence that I have my ministry at Highland High School, the Home of the Scots. It’s not a coincidence that my telephone extension is the exact same number as my phone in Scotland (minus one digit).

If you’ve been struggling to understand your purpose as an ag teacher, why you are where you are, you’ll find the answers if you graft yourself into your community and your faith.

Recap

In review: 1) Find a good mentor to live life with. 2) Persevere through your trials. Every storm passes. 3) Listen: What you think you’re hearing isn’t always what is right. Talk to people. Get solid advice from your mentors. 4) Be faithful and love others. 5) Have the perspective of a ministry, not a job.

Invest your life, stay connected to the vine, be the branches, and you will see the bearing of tremendous fruit.

Aggie Annex Now Online

Look for the Aggie Annex online at www.calagteachers.org/GoldenSlate.html

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Corporate Membership

Corporate Membership 2018–2019

Our Corporate Members are listed with a brief description of their products on the next few pages. We encourage your patronage of our Corporate Members, as they have shown a commitment to supporting agricultural education in California. If you are aware of any others who may be interested in this type of membership, call (209) 744-1614 or email cata@calagteachers.org so we may send pertinent information.

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Elevate Ag Education Explores Ecuador

By Erin Gorter, CATA President-Elect

What did you do this summer? It is a standard question as the school year begins. This year, I am happy to report I harvested potatoes in the Andes, sampled cuy, made chocolate, saw monkeys, visited the only commercial producer of mini carnations in the world, and rode a 1934 open air pick-up while listening to Bomba music cruising down the Pan American Highway; and that’s really only a fraction of what I experienced in Ecuador.

I was one of nine California agriculture teachers who boarded planes, buses, and canoes while venturing across Ecuador for 10 days in July. The adventure, held jointly with other agricultural educators from the states of Utah and Oregon, offered the following opportunities to its participants:

- Re-examine values and priorities to become better contributors to the global education community
- Understand the diversity of the host society and better understand the diversity in our own society
- Develop a better understanding of global issues in education and gain a heightened awareness of global agricultural concerns
- Improve problem-solving skills by developing empathy for others and a trans-cultural perspective by becoming culturally self-aware.

Top Five

What was the best part? A difficult question to answer. I will attempt to narrow it down to a top five, in no particular order:

1. The people we met and the relationships made with persons not only in our traveling group, but also with our local host families and travel coordinators.
2. Spending three hours in a cocoa plantation, making chocolate over an open fire, listening to the World Cup finals on an old radio, while children caught fish in the river for lunch.
3. Spending a morning watching two Holstein bulls respond to audible cues while pulling a “modern” plow across a hill too steep to till with a tractor.
4. Riding a canoe down the Napo River as it is the only means of transportation to get to your hotel in the Amazon basin.
5. Visiting the Instituto Tecnológico Superior Alfonso Herrera in El Ángel, Carchi, a local agricultural high school program with a giant school farm complete with quinoa and potato fields.

Most Difficult

What was the hardest part? Being immersed in a new country and a new culture with new people was uncomfortable, but as the very wise Ashton Kutcher once said, “As long as you are uncomfortable, it means you’re growing.”

We participated in overnight home stays with local host families in Tulcán. In my case, this involved substantial use of the Google Translate App. In the end, I think we all gained a tremendous amount of empathy for our students who come to us from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds—it is not an easy transition.

Our group was forever grateful for the planning and guidance of Charlie Walkinshaw with Experience International and Santiago Levy of Fundación Altrópico. From providing us with pre-departure information to Spanish lessons and English ballad singing on the bus, they made sure we were prepared enough to be uncomfortable and grow with lots of laughter along the way.

Next Adventure: Ecuador 2020

For those of you interested in elevating yourself professionally and traveling with Elevate Ag Education in the future, please stay tuned for details on our next adventure to Ecuador in July 2020.

I would encourage you to connect with Carli Bradshaw, Brandi Crivello, Jerilyn Kapus, Cesar Lopez, Katie Maiorino, Luz Mendoza, Morgan Perry, Kevin Woodard, or myself. We all would love to share with you more about our experiences and the opportunity of participating in a study tour program like Elevate Ag Education.
News and Views

Elevate Ag Education Explores Ecuador

(Continued from page 13)

Brandi Crivello and Erin Gorter with their homestay hosts in Tulcán.

The whole group at La Casa Del Suizo in Ahuano, Napo.

Erin Gorter, Brandi Crivello, and Cesar Lopez at a typical livestock market in Ecuador.

The whole group at an impromptu rose production stop.

Just a picture of where we traveled in the country.

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News and Views

Elevate Ag Education Explores Ecuador

(Continued from page 14)

Brandi Crivello and Erin Gorter sipping sustainably grown coffee at Escuela Binacional Agroecologico in El Carmelo.

Kevin Woodard harvesting yuca in Mascarilla.

Erin Gorter mingling with other teachers at the Instituto Tecnológico Superior Alfonso Herrera in El Ángel, Carchi.
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Looking Forward to New Year in Ag Education

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, Department of Education

I remember when I was teaching how optimistic I would be at the start of each school year. There would be the anticipation for what the returning students might accomplish or the anticipation for what the new group of freshmen might become engaged in based on the discussion that happened when visiting with them and a parent during the summer. What an exciting time it was.

For the first time since being a member of state staff I feel a similar type of anticipation for what the year may bring. Could this be the year that I have only one job? Although the process has been delayed, soon we will interview for a new Southern Region Supervisor. It would have been nice to have someone in place to begin the new school year, but I guess that was not to be.

By the time that this is published in the Golden Slate newsletter, the Unit Manager/State FFA Advisor position will be posted. With Lloyd McCabe retiring at the end of December, we need the person who will become the State FFA Advisor to be designated. The California Department of Education (CDE) has committed to back filling the vacancy that will be created, assuming a current member of state staff is selected. Hopefully, the new supervisor will be in place along with the Southern Region Supervisor by the beginning of the new year.

Superior Region

At the CATA conference, we had some discussion related to the Superior Region vacancy. As the 2017–2018 fiscal year came to an end, we were optimistic about filling the Superior Region position.

Once the budget was approved, it was discovered that two positions at CDE were eliminated. Those two positions were the people charged with managing the CTEIG funds.

Once this was discovered, it was clear that those two positions would need to be funded by the CDE. That eliminated the funding that was planned for the Superior Region position. That was not a happy day for me.

Fewer Regions?

At the CATA conference, there also was some discussion related to making a transition from the current six regions to five regions. Let me be clear: there is nobody here who wants that to happen. At the same time, the current practice of having one person covering two regions is not sustainable.

If nothing changes before the 2019 CATA Conference, the discussion of the five regions may very well focus on specific details of how it may be done, including who would be assigned to each region. There are many people working very hard to help us avoid the need to have that discussion.

As most of you are aware, agricultural education and the FFA have bipartisan support of the Legislature.

There are currently members of the Legislature working with CATA to try to find a solution. Imagine being a member of the Legislature that just approved more than $300 million in funding for K–12 Career Technical Education programs and then being told that there are still funding problems. They share our frustration.

By the time this article is posted, I will have begun my 35th year in agricultural education. I will have celebrated my 59th birthday. My fall-born A.I. calves will have hit the ground, and hopefully I will have some idea of who will be joining the state staff.

There are many people trying to solve our challenges. I trust that it will happen. What choice do I have but to be optimistic? Let us all have a great year.
News and Views

2018 Agricultural Education Award Winners

(Presenting the awards is CATA President Robin Grundmeyer)

Outstanding Young Teacher: Katie Titus, Galt High School

Outstanding Teacher – Don Wilson Memorial Award: Dick Piersma, Hilmar High School

Teacher Mentor: Dave Gossman, Atwater High School

Outstanding Single Person Secondary Program: Vista High School: Sara Benner

Outstanding 2–3 Person Secondary Program: Eureka High School: Kyle Shamp, Sandy Lovfald, Alissa Sarvinski.

Agriscience Teacher of the Year: Jason Ferreira, Hanford High School

(Continued on page 19)
News and Views

2018 Agricultural Education Award Winners

(Continued from page 18)

Outstanding Large Secondary Program and Outstanding Secondary Agricultural Education Program State Winner – Clovis East High School (from left): David Valdez, Steve Gambril, Jennifer Knight, Aireal Covey, Amanda Shoffner, Ken Dias, Greg Ravy.

2018 CATA Hall of Fame Inductees: Gerald Clark, David DeSilva, Flint Freeman, Bob Heuvel and Jean Landeen

Outstanding Post-Secondary Agricultural Education Program: Reedley College (from left): Gary Wenter, Kent Kinney, David Lopes, Sam Rodriguez, Desi Molyneux, Nancy Gutierrez, Juan Rodriguez, Larry Dinis, Kevin Woodard, David Clark, Nick Deftereos. Not pictured: Louie Long, Josh Soderlund, Dr. Tim Smith, Ganesan Srinivasan.

Teacher of Excellence Award Winners (from left): Dane White, Galt High School; Bill Costanzo, Tomales High School; Katie Alling, Nevada Union High School; Lindsey Kleiner, Fortuna Union High School; Rebecca Freeman, Tokay High School; Jennifer Knight, Clovis East High School; Aaron Nering, Perris Union High School; Melissa Flory-Guerra, Santa Maria High School; Art Parham, CSU-Fresno; Rick Neugebauer, Fall River High School.
CATA Calendar of Activities 2018–2019

October 14 ................................................................. South Coast Region Meeting ..................................................... Hollister High School
October 22–27 ....................................................... National FFA Convention .................................................. Indianapolis, Indiana
November 2 .............................................................. Superior Region Meeting ...................................................... Eureka
November 3 ...................................................................... Cotton State Finals .......................................................... Fresno
November 7–8 .......................................................... New Professionals Conference ........................................ Fresno Picadilly Inn
November 17 ............................................................. Central Region Meeting ..................................................... Black Oak Casino, Tuolumne
November 16–17 ...................................................... San Joaquin Region Meeting ........................................... Tenaya Lodge, Yosemite
November 27–December 1 ........................................ NAAE Conference ............................................................ San Antonio, Texas
November 29–December 1 ........................................ Community College Mid-Winter ........................................ College of the Redwoods
December 5–7 ............................................................ Advanced Leadership Conference ..................................... Wonder Valley
January 10–11 ............................................................. Student Teacher Conclave ................................................... Modesto Junior College
January 10–11 ............................................................ CATA Winter Governing Board ............................................... Galt
January 26 ............................................................... Natural Resources State Finals ................................................. Reedley College
February 2 ............................................................... Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree & Vine Pruning ....................... CSU, Fresno
February 4–5 .......................................................... Cooperting/Supervising Teacher Conference ......................... Location to Be Determined
February 23 ............................................................. Central Region Meeting ....................................................... Cosumnes River College, Elk Grove
February 23 ............................................................. San Joaquin Region Meeting ............................................... Mission Oak High School, Tulare
February 25 ............................................................. South Coast Region Meeting ................................................ San Luis Obispo
March 9 ................................................................. Superior Region Meeting ....................................................... CSU, Chico
March 23 ................................................................. Southern Region Meeting ................................................... Cal Poly, Pomona
March 23 ................................................................. North Coast Region Meeting ................................................ Livermore
April 13 ................................................................. CSU, Fresno Field Day ........................................................... CSU, Fresno
April 24–29 ............................................................. State FFA Leadership Conference ...................................... Anaheim
May 4 ................................................................. State FFA Judging Finals .................................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
May 21–25 ............................................................... NAAE Region 1 Conference .................................................. Alaska
June 23 ................................................................. Executive Committee Meeting .......................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23 ................................................................. Pre-Conference Governing Board ........................................ Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23–27 .............................................................. CATA Summer Conference ................................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 27 ................................................................. Governing Board Summer Retreat ....................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo