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# ❖ Aggie Annex ❖

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January 2008

## Southern Region News

By Amy Tomlinson

The Southern Region got off to a great start with their fall regional meeting held in Pasadena. The region would like to thank the Citrus Section for hosting the meeting this year and setting up the outstanding inservices at the Santa Anita Race Track and the L.A. Arboretum. Also, Robin and Joel got their groove on and received 10's across the board for their entertaining dance moves. They are looking forward to defending their title at the spring regional meeting, so don't forget to practice your dance moves and make sure you bring your dancing shoes to the meeting at Cal Poly Pomona.

With the horrific firestorms which struck Southern California in late October many of the schools, FFA members, and teachers in the region were affected by the fires. Schools became evacuation sites not only for animals but for community members. FFA members reached out to community members by housing animals on their school farms, seeking feed donations from local feed stores to cover the costs of feeding the animals for their owners, and taking in other agriculture department's livestock projects. I don't believe there was a section not affected by the fires and it goes to show that when disaster strikes everyone in the region pulls together to help each other out.

The *San Diego Section* has been busy dealing with the fall-out of the firestorms and finished hosting their Sectional Leadership Conference at the Tulloch Ranch. They also worked hard planning the San Diego Section Field Day held in December.

The *Citrus Section* had to reschedule their sectional leadership conference due to dealing with fire situations.

The *High Desert Section* has been busy getting projects going, attending National Convention, and preparing students for upcoming CDE events.

The *Riverside Section* just finished

the Southern California Fair, aka Farmer's Fair. A big thank you goes out to Indio High School for hosting the Southern California Leadership Conference again this year and helping to make it a success.

The *Orange Section* has also been back to work and just finished their Opening and Closing Ceremonies Contest as well as their B.I.G competition. I hear the teachers in the Fullerton district have been working with the staff at Mt. Sac to start the process for articulation agreements.

The *Imperial Section* hosted their Greenhand Conference at Imperial Valley College, with over 225 students in attendance. Dave Pritchard gave everyone a scare with his heart attack, but is back to work after a short but well deserved time off. The Imperial Section would also like to welcome a new colleague to their section, Dr. Patrick Pauley. He is the new agriculture instructor at Imperial Valley College and he is working hard to turn the program around at IVC.

That's it for now, hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season.

## South Coast Region News

By Kellie Hargett

*Santa Barbara Section*

*Pioneer Valley FFA* - Before the school year even began; the Panthers were definitely making their alma mater proud by representing their winning desire at the Santa Barbara County Fair. Many awards were brought home including Champion Turkey, Champion Swine Group, and Reserve Champion Cattle Group. From there, the officer group along with three advisors headed off to Santa Cruz where they held their annual officer and leadership retreat at Cal Poly's Swanton Pacific Ranch. Many activities were planned, along with the goals set by the individual officers and team as a whole. Some of the goals set were to continue to be the

largest leadership group, more community involvement and service, and to promote agriculture throughout the state and nation.

This year also happens to be a special year as Pioneer is hosting their first student teacher. Heather Nursement is from Cal Poly SLO and plans to be here for the remainder of the school year. She is an agriculture business major with an emphasis in marketing, and she just completed her coursework for her Master's in Agriculture Science.

*Cuyama* - Things are great with forty students out of ninety total in the whole school. Their pumpkin patch event was a big success!

*Righetti* had a National FFA officer candidate and their very own Jim English received the Honorary American FFA Degree.

*Lompoc* - Started ROP and OH class, and hired Katie Gradoville.

*Santa Maria* is going strong. They've already been out recruiting. Their chapter attended Fright Night at Magic Mountain.

*Pioneer Valley* - Good things happening! Planning on hiring for the next school year.

*San Luis Obispo County*

*Paso Robles* would like to welcome two new ag teachers Debbie Lauridsen and Will Sullivan, to the department. They had a great Mid-State Fair and helped at the National Futurity.

*Templeton* would like to welcome their new ag teachers, Katie Margreiter and Chris Hildebrand.

*Cambria* - Animals have finally been approved to come on campus and they expect to have dairy goats and more for the Mid-State Fair this year.

*Shandon* - They just added onto their shop an area strictly for wood working. Lots of house cleaning for Ag Incentive grant reviews. Working on building a covered storage area for ag vehicles, tractors, and farm equipment.

The *SLO FFA Chapter* is reaping the benefits of the CTE Grant and just received a new 20' aluminum goose-neck trailer, as well as other necessary

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equipment.

*Atascadero* passed the first stage of being approved for Prop ID money to expand the program, adding a diesel program in ag and a full welding fabrication shop.

*Morro Bay* - Their first drive thru BBQ of the year was a success with over 120 racks of ribs sold, nursery/greenhouse class halfway through and so far successful, Veggie Pony Pak Sale; Barn Dance fundraiser to pay for five year school farm improvement plan.

*Ventura Section*

*Santa Paula* held the Faulkner Farm Pumpkin Patch Petting Zoo. They hosted the pre-college Academy Night and Cal Poly, SLO and Cal Poly Pomona Ag Ambassadors attended.

*Ventura* - The campus flower shop is open to the public. They are working with the school district on Healthy Schools program. Produce is being grown by students for the campus salad bar. ROP Landscape has 2,000 plants in production as part of student production projects.

*Fillmore* is rebuilding the ag mechanics shop.

*Camarillo* has an internship for Vet/floral supplies. They have nursery production, greenhouse, pasture, and a poultry unit on campus.

*Carpinteria* - Their new ag science classroom has \$15,000 of new equipment. They have a new ag government and vet science class. They hosted an antique tractor presentation at the city museum.

*North Salinas* has recently added a new staff member, Tom Jones, will be helping to build up the ag mechanics and OH programs. They also welcome their fall ag intern, Stephanie Pfarr. They are taking over the old floristry building and with the specialized ag grant they received they will be converting the building into a small animal production facility. They are currently waiting on word about replacing their two greenhouses and adding an OH class in the spring. Tom Jones has taken over the woodshop and is in the process of converting it into an ag mechanics lab. Their principle, Mr. Carensani, has allocated "thinking money" to potentially start an ag academy. North Salinas HS received the 2007 CATA Outstanding Single Person Department award. Be happy! Wasabi!

*Salinas HS* - Students participated in "Taste of the Valley" a fancy wine/food

event, co-sponsored by Monterey County wineries, produce growers and processors, and many local restaurants.

*Gonzales HS* - With two new teachers this year there has been a large learning curve, but everything is going great.

*Soquel FFA* is very proud this year to add a brand new dog training and agility facility, as well as, a turf management component to its already established floral design, veterinary science and horticulture programs.

The *Watsonville Chapter* is electromagnetically energized with a new administration and a renewed community connection. Our positive charge has attracted two new partnerships with Driscoll Berries and Naturipe Farms that has ignited an arc bridging the gap between our students of today and the workforce of tomorrow, the initial work piece is being fabricated with twenty E6013 computers donated from industry.

*Soledad* is putting in concrete and plumbing for a new school farm on campus. They have started a smaller learning community in the School of Agriculture Research and Technology for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.

*Everett Alvarez* has expanded their program and added a new teacher, Janelle Smith who will be developing a horticulture pathway. Alvarez was approved for the first round of the Prop 1D grant. The plans are to build an ag center that will include a greenhouse, biology lab with growth chambers, and a multimedia center.

*Greenfield* is proud to announce that they have over 300 students in their ag classes this year. They are currently working to build a usable garden area to house student projects.

The *King City* ag department continues to grow under the leadership of a all female department. Lindsay Buckner joins Jessica Wright and Debbie Benson as the ag mechanics teacher. The new, on campus, livestock facility is nearly complete. The department received word that the ag business class now meets the UC/CSU requirements, added to the Ag Chemistry and Ag Biology classes already in place for UC credit.

*Santa Cruz Section*

*Sobrato* is hoping to improve their facilities this year by building a hog barn and horticulture facility.

*Morgan Hill* started the year off with a bang. Morgan Hill did exceptionally well at the Santa Clara County Fair, they had champion animals in hogs, lambs and steers, also had champion hog at Santa Cruz Fair. They have been renovating their school farm with new barns and improvements.

*Hollister* recently heard that they were ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> high score for the CTE facilities grant, within the next two years they should have a new ag farm.

*Gilroy* - Ewes and does are currently being bred. In the process of getting a multi passengers vehicle for the program.

*Campbell* - Hosted 90 Westmont teachers for a luncheon and farm tour. Their goal this year is to get a tractor for their farm.

## Superior Region News

By Tim Brown

*Colusa FFA* has had a lot to be proud of this fall. Todd Stegall was a National Proficiency Finalist in Diversified Livestock, Heather Thomas received her Honorary American FFA Degree and Holley Erisey and Keith Deane received their American Degree. Alyssa Sankey won their local and regional RCD Speak-Off and was third at the State Competition. They hosted the North Valley Section Contests in November to over three hundred members. They appreciate the cooperation of all the other teachers from their section that pitched in and made things run very smoothly. Winning BIG was Maxwell, Gridley won Co-Op, Colusa won Farm Records, and Maxwell won both Novice and Advanced Opening & Closing. Good job everyone!

*East Nicholas FFA* was one of three chapters chosen to dance on stage with the Beach Boys at National Convention. During convention they also worked at Maplelawn Farmstead for Days of Service. They have been busy hosting a variety of activities: statewide Greenhand Conference - 15 schools & 197 students, CATA Sectional Meeting, Sectional Opening/Closing (13 schools & 236 students). East Nicholas is honored to have Sierra Buttes Sectional Star Administrator. They also have a few exciting additions to their program, such as, a science teacher with ag credential, a Plasma Cam,

and money available (in planning stages) for a new greenhouse.

*Las Plumas News* - Karen Falconer transferred to Independent Study because of health reasons. Ashleigh Aldridge was hired in her place. Ashleigh student taught for Karen Falconer in the spring of 2007, so the transition has been a smooth one. Ashleigh is a Butte County native and is doing great as the new FFA Advisor while teaching Ag Science, Ag Biology and Leadership. She was able to move into the new Ag Science building that was built in 2006. The department now occupies 3 out of the 4 classrooms in that new building - hopefully they will have the fourth by next year. The ag shop received a facelift over the summer through modernization money. Matt Joiner was able to move his desks into an actual classroom and utilize the entire shop as work space. Jim Knapp is working on getting the nursery certified this year and is currently teaching 6/5th's because of their expanding program. Andree' Earley recovered from her broken ankle and is busy keeping up with responsibilities of Subject Area Coordinator and the large number of students with animal projects. The department is expanding like crazy with an R-2 count of 399 this year!

## North Coast Region News

By Debi Batini

The *Alameda-Solano Section* would like to welcome Grant Ermis into their section, who is a student teacher at *Dixon* from UC Davis. He is in good hands though, because he is working with John Ramos who has been teaching for 28 years and Bill Scott with 31 years under his belt. Dixon also just moved into a brand new school, with thirty acres next to the main campus devoted to the program.

At *Armijo*, Derek Clark is back teaching after fourteen years. They are busy working on the school farm, and just finished selling pumpkins from their pumpkin patch.

*Half Moon Bay* has seven students that are raising steers this year, and they held a very successful Ranch Breakfast and Wreath Sale fundraisers.

*Brentwood* had a very successful county fair with three supreme champions

and two reserve animals.

*Livermore* purchased a new van and a ROP Ford Expedition. They also have a new agriculture mechanics class and are in the first phase of their new agriculture complex design.

*Rio Vista* agriculture department is going to be remodeled and their Rio Grow Fertilizer Company is still up and running. Larry Wright also took back eight students to work backstage at National Convention this year.

*Vacaville* raised \$1,000 at their car wash fundraiser. They are also putting up a new greenhouse, setting up for an egg production project, and installing a concrete floor in their show arena.

*Napa* is developing and remodeling a facility for an egg laying project. They are also putting in a rabbitry and new turkey pens. Currently, they are raising twenty hogs to be donated to the Salvation Army in their area.

In the *Humboldt-Del Norte Section*, retired *Ferndale HS* agriculture teacher Bill Fales, is now selling certified organic produce. He is growing over 10,000 tomatoes and many other vegetables. He is also working with many of the agriculture programs in the area to provide students with the opportunity and experience of working with produce.

*Arcata* formed a new agriculture advisory committee and broke ground on their new school farm.

*Del Norte* has increased their enrollment and their new administration team is already looking at expanding their program.

*McKinleyville* had their first Drive Thru BBQ fundraiser, raising over \$1,200. Their forestry class is working with Green Diamond and Simpson Lumber Company to provide more hands-on opportunities for their students.

*Eureka* has their largest enrollment in years. They are finishing their new greenhouse and pole barn for sheep. They also formed a new Ag Boosters Club this year.

*Ferndale* is breaking in a new superintendent, and has started construction on a new greenhouse.

Sandy Dale is the agriculture mechanics girl at *Fortuna*, and Lindsey Bugbee is teaching agriculture business and floral design for the first time. They

are also preparing for their Tri-Tip on Wheels fundraiser.

In the *Mendo-Lake Section*, *Boonville* received new benches for their greenhouse.

*Covelo* has a new superintendent and principal. They are still looking for a full-time woodshop and mechanics teacher.

*Kelseyville* sent five students to the National FFA Convention. They also had a great time at their annual Hayride FFA Meeting in October.

*Middletown* had their first National Delegate this year. They are now on a seven period modified block schedule, with 160-plus students per teacher.

*Ukiah* finished their tractor barn and is almost done with their new livestock barn and remodeled greenhouse. They harvested their grapes again this year and sold them to Brutocao Winery.

In *Upper Lake*, Erika Boomer is busy fulfilling her responsibilities as a new mom. Congrats again!

*Willits* had three of their agriculture classes CP approved, and are working on getting more approved for next year. They also finished the concrete in their barn, and they are restoring the fencing around their new pasture.

The *Sonoma Section* had its first ever Sectional Activity Night at *Elsie Allen HS*. With a Halloween costume contest, pumpkin carving, and a "Who Did It?!" activity, the event was a success. *Elsie Allen* raised \$33,000 at their annual fundraiser at Kunde Winery and is getting ready to put in the raised beds for their salsa project.

*Forestville* has increased its enrollment enough to now have a full time agriculture department and was busy harvesting their vineyard.

*Healdsburg* had nine students attend the Greenhand Conference, and three attended the National FFA Convention.

*Petaluma* is preparing for its 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Trap Shoot this spring, and was awarded Prop 1D funds to remodel an agriculture science room.

*Santa Rosa* had three members receive their American FFA Degree at National FFA Convention, and also received Prop 1D funds to build their Veterinary Technician Laboratory.

*Sebastopol* just finished putting in their new school vineyard.

*St. Helena* has strong numbers, with half of the school enrolled in their pro-

gram. Their viticulture class harvested half a ton of Zinfandel this year and sent sixteen students to National Convention.

*Sonoma* raised \$23,000 at their annual BBQ fundraiser. They also have a new Earth Science and a Plant and Soil Science course being offered this year.

*Tomales* is busy renovating their department by installing new electricity and equipment in their shop. They are also hoping to purchase a new greenhouse.

## San Joaquin Region News

By Shay Williams-Hopper

We are half way through the school year! As a "young" teacher, I am always amazed at how fast the years speed up the longer you have been teaching! It seems only like yesterday it was the first day of school in August and now...we are in January! The San Joaquin Region hopes that this email finds you looking forward to a prosperous new year!

The *Tulare High School Farm* would like to welcome their two newest additions! Mike Mederos from Kingsburg HS has joined their teaching staff to fill an agriculture mechanics position. He is in his eighth year of teaching. So far Mike has truly been a huge asset to their program and he is looking forward to a successful year with Tulare FFA. The second newest addition to their department comes in the form of a new son for Kevin Koelwyn and his wife Cathy. Caleb was born in July with a full head of hair! Congrats to their family. Lastly, Angela Browning and Josiah Mayfield (Bakersfield-Foothill) were married on December 29th in Grass Valley!

*Hanford High School* has had an outstanding start to their school year! At this year's National Convention, they were recognized with one National Proficiency Award Winner, a second National Proficiency Finalist, and two Star National Chapter. Kris Elliott was recognized as the NAAE Region I Outstanding Young Agriculture Teacher. What an accomplishment! Sam Rodriguez and his wife Lisa (Orosi HS) also welcomed the birth of their son, Samuel Jr. in August. Congrats to their family.

*Corcoran High School* has hit the ground running with many activities planned and accomplished so far this year. The chapter is implementing an

enterprise project for students to manage and grow crops. Two students are paired up on a 40 acre parcel and are in charge of ground work, irrigation, planting, cultivating, managerial decisions, and harvesting their 40 acres. The students receive 10% of the profit from the project. There are currently six students on the project, growing alfalfa, wheat, and possibly cotton or corn. Corcoran also recently had the High Individual at the Fresno State Cotton Judging Finals in November. Darcy Pearce is a senior planning to attend UC Davis to become a vet. It was her fourth year in cotton judging, and all her hard work paid off as she follows in the footsteps of her sister, Dory Pearce, also the High Individual at Fresno State Cotton Judging Finals a few years back.

*Selma High School* welcomed a new baby to their staff this fall as well. Melissa (Land) Rodriguez and her husband Jay welcomed their son Dylan Christopher Rodriguez into the world on September 17.

*Parlier HS* has grown into a three person department allowing them to hire Mark Browning and Samantha Silva. Their membership has increased from 300 to 432 the highest enrollment ever at Parlier HS. Parlier exhibited close to 700 projects at the Fresno Fair, with floral winning sweepstakes for the 6th year in a row and they also won the Garden Display. Congrats to Parlier on the great changes taking place and the growth in their chapter!

*Farmersville High School* is very excited to have purchased a tractor and implements from Quality Machinery Center in Tulare. The greenhouse that they have had for about eight years is also finally being completed! It will be fully functional this spring! Koren Brown and her husband Zach (El Diamante HS) will be welcoming their second child in February of 2008.

*Fowler High School* is off and running with another very busy (yet rewarding) beginning!! Fowler FFA students took many projects to the Big Fresno Fair - including: chickens, turkeys, OH plants, floral designs, ag mechanics, ag horticulture, sheep, goats, beef, and swine. The Fowler Student School Livestock Farm is being expanded to nearly double its current size! Plans include sheep, goat, swine, beef,

and poultry pens, lighted show rings, divided pasture areas, and a possible community/school garden area.

*Reedley High School's* horticulture class was busy during the Fresno Fair in the Junior Division Building. Senior Randy Windh won first place in viticulture by displaying seven varieties of local grapes and senior Jared Taff won the stone fruit category. Each received a plaque and carry bag from the fair. Overall, Reedley had 15 students displaying fruit, which lead to the school winning the Sweepstakes Award for Horticulture. The FFA members also displayed houseplants in the Horticulture Building. The program will be utilizing CTE grant money this year to improve animal pens, by purchasing mobile pen units, purchasing metal welding booths, and overall classroom improvements.

*Clovis High School* kicked off the year with their annual Fall Classic Showcase (a school fair to prepare students for the Fresno Fair) in September. Fresno Fair brought another group of successes with many champions and winners in showmanship. Clovis FFA planted a pumpkin patch and corn maze with the intent of providing farm tours for local elementary school student. In Indianapolis Clovis sent two state winning teams to compete in Horse Evaluation and Meats Evaluation both returning as National Winners! We would also like to congratulate the Clovis FFA Chapter on hosting the previous year's National FFA President Beau Williamson.

*Mt. Whitney High School* has filled their agriculture mechanics vacancy with Brian Donovan. Brian student taught at Kingsburg HS prior to being hired at Mt. Whitney. Congratulations also go out to Cortney Elliott who has become engaged to Erin Bell (son of John Bell, Selma). Cortney and Erin will be married in July!

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