
❖ Aggie Annex ❖

January 2010

Central Region News

By JessaLee Goehring

The Central Region has been full of excitement this past fall and winter. With a successful trip to National Convention, we are ready for 2010! Happy New Year!

Yolo Section

Winters HS was recognized at National FFA Convention for their 2 Star National Chapter Award and placed second in the Nation with their Marketing Plan team! Congratulations!

Sacramento Section

Sacramento-Florin HS was also recognized at the National FFA Convention for their 2 Star National Chapter Award.

Delta-Cal Section

Congratulations to *Shannon Clark* of *Argonaut HS*. She is expecting her second child in March.

Jason Weatherby from *Calaveras HS* was awarded the Honorary American Farmer Degree. Congratulations Jason!

Congratulations to *Escalon* and *Lodi HS* for their 3 Star National Chapter Recognition and *Bret Harte* for their 1 star National Chapter Recognition. *Bret Harte HS* also came home from National Convention as the Poultry Judging National Champions!

Escalon HS brought home the National Champion in the Agriscience Fair- Botany Division 3 and *Linden HS* had an Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication Proficiency winner. Great Job!

Manteca Unified School District has great news, they broke ground on the rebuilding of their farm with a new swine, steer and sheep barn, show arena, and a new shop with a paint booth! *Dani Ariaz* of *Lathrop HS* also started a district rabbit project and has approximately 20 students from the five Manteca high schools. *Pat Ariaz* and *Jaime Sanchez* have 18 students signed up for the Montadale Sheep Project, and *Ryan Costa* just finished a successful corn maze season with the help of 20 students from the Manteca schools. Additionally, a game bird Co-Op is being started where they will raise birds and then sell them for hunting. *Lathrop HS* started the school year with juniors and next year will finally have seniors. They had a successful rib dinner and hosted their second blood drive of the

year in December. The floral classes have started selling to the district to raise money and are continuing to grow. The mechanics shops are working on panels and feeders for the new farm, and the food science class cooked all kinds of yummy treats with leftover pumpkins!

Weston Ranch HS is in celebration mode! Both teachers are engaged! *Amanda Koslow* will be getting married on May 30 and *Gregg Bridges* on September 4, 2010. Congratulations!

Stanislaus/Tuolumne Section

Mark Nower of *Grace Davis HS* will be the head of the new vocational department for *Gegori HS*, which will open in the Fall of 2010. He will be opening the schools voc-ed department and assisting in the hiring of staff to fill the needs of the school. *Grace Davis HS* also placed with a Silver Award in the National Agronomy Judging Contest. Great Job!

Congratulations to *Hughson HS* for bringing home the National Proficiency winner in Specialty Animal Production!

Newman FFA has had a fun start to the school year. At their September meeting, they had a dodge ball tournament with 22 teams narrowed down to four champions. October's meeting activity was a pumpkin painting contest and the November meeting was a Turkey Bowling Tournament.

After being inspired by watching the players of the NFL wearing Pink Gear, the *Pitman FFA* organized a Cancer Awareness event. On October 29, over 1,000 students and staff wore pink to show their support for those affected by cancer. The *Pitman Video Production* class prepared a special broadcast including names and stories of *Pitman* students and families affected by cancer. Additionally, *Pitman FFA* hosted a Cruise for Cancer at their Annual Car Show held in October, they raised \$1,545.57 with donations coming from a variety of clubs and classes on campus. It was inspiring to see the number of students excited to participate. The amazing contributions from the campus were a truly special effort.

Merced/Mariposa Section

Congratulations *Hilmar HS* for winning the Ag Mechanics National CDE

Contest and placing fourth in the Nation in the Dairy Products Contest!

Los Banos HS won the Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance Proficiency at National FFA Convention! Congratulations *Los Banos*!

Mariposa FFA placed 10th in the Natural Resource Contest at National FFA Convention, congratulations!

The *Merced College Ag Division* would like to congratulate *Bryan Tassej* and his wife Erin. They are expecting their second child at the end of June...poor timing for Conference. They have already talked about proper timing in the event they try for a third! The Aggie Fest was once again a great success with over 400 people in attendance to "sample" 243 different beers, ales, and malts along with 13 flavors of sausages. *Kim Donaher* was awarded the Honorary American Farmer at National FFA Convention. For the first time this year, Merced will be offering two new contests at their FFA Field Day: Land Judging and Nursery/Landscape. Merced College faculty and staff would also like to wish everyone a Happy New Year!

San Joaquin Region News

By Shay Williams-Hopper

Greetings from the San Joaquin Region. We would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you and your families a safe and happy new year!

Taft HS has been in the process of designing and building a new agriculture program facility over the last two and a half years. To date they have finished a new 4,000 square foot shop with up-to-date equipment, two new agriculture classrooms, an FFA Leadership Lab, storage and advisor offices. *Taft Ag Department* began teaching in this new facility this fall and the project is nearly done. Additionally, they have added a huge greenhouse and several raised bed planters at their school farm.

The *Reedley High Ag Program* received great news from a local organization a few months ago when it decided to call it quits – nearly \$20,000 in donated machinery and farm supplies. The *Reedley Young Farmers* finally pulled the plug on their operations after being in non-active status for about seven years. Deciding to give back to

the youth in the agricultural world, they donated funds to purchase items for the Reedley Chapter and the local 4-H group. For its part, Reedley received several biomicroscopes with computer hook-ups, four microscopes, and new lab equipment for its biology courses. For the farm, Young Farmers purchased 20 hog panels, 15 T-posts, 10 self animal waterers, hand tools, and a new 6-foot orchard disc. In the welding shop, they purchased a portable, self-contained air purification system and CNC system.

Clovis Ag Department had a tremendous trip back to Indianapolis where the horse evaluation team left early to practice at the Congress Quarter Horse show in Columbus, Ohio. There were over 8,500 horses and a large trade show where the students were able to visit with leaders in the horse industry about reproduction and nutrition. From there Clovis headed back to Indianapolis where they placed second in the nation for horse evaluation. Clovis was also fortunate to have a national proficiency winner with Austin Perry winning Beef Entrepreneurship. Clovis is also getting ready to move into the new agriculture mechanics building which added an additional 12,000 sq feet to the existing 4,000. The recent tour of the facility has the community, as well as the school district administrators, very excited about expanding students opportunities in this field.

The *Firebaugh Ag Department* welcomes Hector Jimenez to the teaching staff. Hector is teaching agriculture chemistry, agriculture biology, and agriculture economics and government. Our students are excited to learn new ideas for chapter activities from him! If you see him, please welcome him to our region!

Foothill Ag Department is in full swing of their poinsettia sales! Each year, the San Joaquin region sells 12,000 poinsettias. This huge poinsettia fundraiser would not be possible without the dedicated staff at Foothill HS heading up the fund raiser efforts!

Hanford FFA had 22 American degrees (a National Record), two national proficiency finalists, and placed fifth in the Nation with their meats team in Indianapolis. Continuing with their winning streak, Hanford also swept both the A and B divisions at the State Cotton Finals in November. Hanford would also like to welcome their two new hires, Jared Castles and Dennis Fuller. Tulare HS Ag Department has started off strong with a national proficiency award winner in Ag Mechanics Energy Systems back in Indianapolis. Tulare would also like to congratulate, Shay Williams-

Hopper who was selected as the NAAE Region I Outstanding Young Member. Shay and her husband traveled back to Nashville, TN to accept the award.

On a sad note, we would like to offer our deepest sympathies to Mike Rossi from Parlier. Mike lost his father in November. Please keep him and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

North Coast Region News

By Lynn Scholten

Sonoma FFA is planning their big chapter fundraiser at the Serres Ranch again this year in early June.

Elsie Allen is moving forward with the modernization of their facility through Prop 1D funds. They are excited to be getting a new Ag mechanics shop and biology lab. Their greenhouse is full of over 700 cuttings from classes working with the Men's Garden Club. The plants propagated will be used for a plant sale in the spring where a portion of the proceeds will go back to the students in the form of scholarships.

McKinleyville FFA trick or treated for canned goods and got over 600 cans in 1.5 hours, and donated that to the local food bank. They had their Greenhand Chapter Farmer banquet and were really pleased to have over 75 people attend considering they have a small chapter of 55. They had 28 kids from McKinleyville attend the awesome Humboldt Del Norte Sectional Bowling night.

Arcata FFA won first place in the Sectional Marketing/COOP Contest and was awarded \$100 from a local company. Arcata had 38 students in attendance at the Sectional Bowling night.

The *Healdsburg FFA Chapter* had a very busy and exciting start to the 2009-10 school year. On November 7, the Boosters held a very successful fundraiser at the Alexander Valley Hall. They had a canned food drive and handed out turkeys at the local food pantry for Thanksgiving.

El Molino FFA is encouraging members of the chapter to bond outside of class with activities such as ice skating and bowling nights, which have had tremendous success so far. Students are helping the community by gathering food products for local families and volunteering with disabled children at Big Steps Horse Center. They are excited this year to be creating a Chapter newsletter and web site which will keep members and parents informed, and hopefully attract

new members to join as well.

Tomales just finished another successful Ag Booster Dinner. Shop students are busy building a large metal storage rack along with other small projects. Ag took over the woodshop this year so the Ag Mechanics class is doing more wood projects. They have added two more classes to the Food for America Program at the elementary school for a total of three grades being involved. Elementary teachers love having the FFA members come down and help out teaching lessons and working with the students in the school garden.

Santa Rosa JC - The Wine Studies Program is once again very impacted with almost all classes closed months before the semester began. There is a tremendous surge of students desiring a certificate from the five concentration areas of the Wine Studies Programs: Wine Business and Marketing, Enology, Wine Service and Hospitality, Wines & Vines, and the Winery Mechanic Program.

The Shone Farm Winery has recently been approved as a bonded facility and will also be incorporated in the educational program. Environmental Conversation and Park Management Program Coordinator, Kasey Wade, welcomed students back to a slimmer NRM Program. This semester there were only four NRM classes for students to choose from. Even with this offering, the interest in Natural Resource Management is still high and 232 students enrolled in those four classes! This semester there are two interns working in the forest at Shone Farm. Their work includes fuel reduction, trail construction/maintenance, and ongoing gully restoration. The interns were happy to report that 90% of the redwoods that were planted in the forest last spring survived. Finally, Ag Trust graciously provided funding to purchase a 'Rainwater Harvesting System' for Shone Farm. This will not only provide access to a limited resource, but will also demonstrate to students alternatives for living sustainably.

Environmental Horticulture: Heather Moore leaves the EH Program for full time employment in the local landscape industry. We wish her well and will miss her passion for our program. Amber Parsons moves into the Greenhouse and Nursery Manager position. She was our student greenhouse technician. With four years of nursery experience and loads of botany knowledge she is a most welcome member of our "green team." Ag Trust has expressed genuine interest in focusing the next large fundraiser toward the construction of the proposed new environmental horticulture facility.

Viticulture: The Sonoma County Vineyard Technical Group funded the purchase of a Decagon light-meter (\$3,000) for the Viticulture Program. This will allow the students to upgrade their canopy assessment skills. At the Shone Farm, there are two newly planted, updated blocks in the vineyard. The Viticulture students are able to follow closely each step of vineyard development from the initial soils analyses, ground preparation, infrastructure installation, to vine planting, and training.

Sustainable Agriculture: Thanks to the hard work of adjunct instructor Heidi Hermann, Santa Rosa JC is seeking a grant of \$25,000 from the Felton Foundation to employ two positions to improve the Sustainable Agriculture (SusAg) Program. Ideally, one student would be hired at Shone Farm to take a lead role to expand and market produce via small scale agriculture business models appropriate for Sonoma County. The funds would hopefully also support the Sonoma County the employment of a curriculum specialist, to update, revise, and create new program courses.

Animal Science: The livestock judging team is in full competition mode, with Riggs Lokka, Victoria Hamilton, Erin Monahan, Lauren Ramos and Katie Eslick representing Santa Rosa JC. This semester the college will be competing at Collegiate Livestock Judging Competitions at the Fresno Fair, the American Royal in Kansas City, the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, and Arizona Nationals in Phoenix.

Equine Science: In 2007, the Santa Rosa JC Foundation Ag Trust was presented with \$250,000 from the estate of the late G.K. Hardt, an avid horseman. These funds were utilized to build the newly completed G.K Hardt Stable at Shone Farm. This new facility includes stables to house horses requiring special care, space for supplies and equipment storage, as well as staff offices. This generous contribution helps to complete the newly developed equine science facility which includes outdoor and indoor arenas, round pen, and 18-stall pad-dock.

The *Agriculture Business Program* has introduced classes at the Petaluma Campus. Ray Johnson is teaching an Introduction to Agriculture Business, which is the orientation class for the program and transfers to the CSU Agribusiness programs, as well. On the main campus, Dan Muelrath and Bob Fraser are teaching the evening Agriculture Computer class and Bob is teaching a day and an evening Agriculture Economics class which satisfies general education

requirements.

Please help the Santa Rosa JC Agriculture and Natural Resources Department welcome the newest member of their full time faculty, Dr. Dan Famini, DVM. Beginning Fall semester 2009, Dr. Dan is assuming the roll of full-time, continuing contract position for the Veterinary Technician Program. He graduated from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and has worked at the Humane Society & SPCA of Sonoma County since 2005. Dr. Dan is a third generation Sonoma County native, backyard poultry enthusiast, and he co-leads the county-wide Veterinary Science 4-H project. Dr. Dan also helps out local wildlife rescues with veterinary services including Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue, Sonoma County Reptile Rescue and the California Bat Conservation Fund.

Animal Health: The new and improved Veterinary Technology Program is just around the corner. With a full time faculty member investigating, invigorating and advocating for the program the Veterinary Tech curriculum is being updated and upgraded. A closer association with local veterinary practices is being initiated including an Emergency Medicine course tentatively set to occur at a local 24 hour care facility! The Redwood Empire Veterinary Medical Association will be holding their annual symposium at the SRJC Shone Farm. In addition, REVMA is sponsoring the first Vet Tech scholarship to pay for the state board examination fees of students completing the Vet Tech Program. To better serve a variety of students, it will be possible to complete the program through offerings at the Petaluma campus or during afternoon hours in addition to the traditional evening Santa Rosa campus classes. This exciting program overhaul should roll out over the next several semesters so expect to see great things in the near future.

South Coast Region News

By Sara Bandy

San Luis Obispo Section

Coast Union is happy to have added Darcy Dobrec as their second agriculture teacher. She is teaching agriculture construction and agriculture maintenance and will be working with the animal science class to build the new swine unit.

Shandon has been holding up to "The Few, the Proud" theme adopted by the FFA officer team this year. Less teachers

on campus means more kids in each class. Caesar Lopez has arrived as a student teacher this fall from Cal Poly and is doing a fine job.

Atascadero was excited to represent California in the livestock contest at the National Convention.

Morro Bay just had the largest drive thru BBQ - 600 dinners and 180 racks of ribs. Morro Bay will be getting huge solar panels in the agriculture compound at no charge, which will be utilized as the new beef and equipment barn.

Templeton is happy to have their outstanding student teacher Chris Lemos from Cal Poly; he is doing great with his welding class and is excited to learn more each day. We had our first fundraiser of the year it was a drive thru BBQ where we served 700 dinners.

Ventura Section

Santa Paula's annual petting zoo fundraiser was held every weekend in October at their local pumpkin patch. The petting zoo raises \$4,000 for the FFA chapter.

Carpinteria is happy to have student teacher Heather Clement and new agriculture teacher Gabe Ponce.

Fillmore had an excellent fundraiser with their Agriculture Boosters Fire Works booth raising over \$18,000. Fillmore is also putting in a new greenhouse.

Ventura students are learning by doing. The introduction to agriculture classes are building a new greenhouse which was purchased with a special educational grant from Lowes. Since the beginning of school the Landscape design ROP students have completed five offsite landscapes for members of the community. The agriculture biology students and introduction to agriculture students are donating all produce to food share from 26 raised vegetable beds.

Santa Clara Section

Sobrato would like to welcome their student teacher Alissa Sarvinski and Joey Martin, their new agriculture teacher to the program. Joey is helping to build their agriculture mechanics program and is a great asset.

Hollister would like to welcome back Vera Gomes who is teaching one agriculture class this year. We are growing slowly and looking forward to introducing new curriculum, Agriculture Earth that will complete our pathway. The new barn will be breaking ground soon.

Gilroy held a successful harvest celebration, which is an event where the community is invited to the farm for activities and information is given about FFA and agriculture.

Campbell is currently working on creating two more pathways including animal science and horticulture. In their ag mechanics pathway they are working on a partnership with the local electrical unions for immediate school to work placement. They are continuing to work on their alternative energy sources area.

Live Oak is very excited to have their floral class approved as a fine art. They are also very excited to have four periods of ag biology.

Los Angeles Section

Canoga Park is excited to have Lillian Martinez as the new teacher on board. As a result of the grant they received from Lowes, their school has set a goal to go green, they will soon have solar panels installed in their horticulture area and a new drainage system.

Santa Barbara Section

Arroyo Grande was busy with the harvest festival and produced a great float.

Santa Maria kicked off the year with a ranch style breakfast to welcome staff back to school that was enjoyed by over 200 staff members. They held a petting zoo at the Grapes and Grains Festival.

Lompoc - National Tractor Entry going to Indiana.

Monterey Bay Section

Greenfield FFA constructed a haunted house, held a Halloween dance, annual canned food drive, and coat drive!

Soquel FFA started the year with a bang at the Santa Cruz County Fair, participating in the Feature Booth Competition and providing a corsage demonstration for the public. Their Floral Shop was busy, busy with holiday and wedding orders, and their Grooming Shop still provides the best deal in town on Thursdays and Fridays! New exciting things on the horizon this year include a Parakeet Breeding project and the installation of their new orchard!!

Gonzales FFA has been productive since August. Just to name a few activities they have participated in are officer retreat, Monterey County Fair, Santa Cruz County Fair, Drop calves, greenhouse is busting at the seams, Ag Mechanics projects are hot as ever, splinters are flying in the wood shop, chapter meetings, home cooked meals from home visits and an amazing visit from the State Officers!

Salinas FFA has welcomed a new teacher, Lindsay Buckner-Almond.

King City FFA down to a two person department, but still going strong only down 30 students. Just received UC credit for their animal science and floral classes

making it five UC approved classes total.

Superior Region News

By Janice Lohse

Placer High - Shannon Browning and her husband Randy celebrated the arrival of their first baby, Reagan Olivia on July 8, 2009. Melissa Baber is filling in for Shannon as a part-time agriculture teacher. Placer HS has successfully completed all stages of their experimental rose garden and their second greenhouse is currently being built and should be finalized by June!

Hamilton City FFA members teamed up to provide a day of fun for local students. Kindergarten through fourth grade students from Hamilton Elementary arrived with a smile as they visited the school farm to pick out a pumpkin of their choice. Other activities included a petting zoo, story time, face painting, coloring, snack, and a bounce house - which was the favorite of the day. Other activities for the chapter include a bottle calf project in animal science, floral club, and Christmas tree and wreath sales.

The *Elk Creek FFA* officers held a patriotic observance for Elk Creek elementary and high school students on September 11. At 8:46 a.m. everyone took a moment of silence in remembrance of the 9-11 attack. The FFA officers explained the meaning of the pledge of allegiance, then everyone all stood and said the flag salute. One of the students Chenyce-Sissy Hill sang the national anthem. We were very thankful to have the CDF, sheriffs, and Stony Ford Volunteer fire department there to remember this event.

Shasta College - Hard to believe that a year ago, we--with the help of many friends of Ag--were fighting to save our programs and farm. Feels like an old western "Riding for the Brand" to save a tradition started in 1952.

Looking to the future, the Ag and Natural Resources Department has made substantial changes to the Sustainable Agriculture Science degree (new name), offering options in Ag Education, General Ag Science, and Ranch, Wildland, and Range Management. The addition of a new Agriculture Business degree with a shared core strengthens the program across the board. Both of these degrees offer students the ability to receive their A.S. degree at Shasta College and then seamlessly transfer to a four-year institution with 70 units. Hopefully all goes

well, and the new changes will take effect beginning fall 2010.

This year, their students successfully hosted FFA Ag Field Day for more than 1,000 participants, 4-H judging days, and a high school counselors' conference. They participated in the CAL training with 18 students in attendance. New this year, a rookie livestock judging team tested their abilities at the CSU, Chico practice contest. Their Ag/NR Leadership Club sold 850 Christmas trees as their main fundraiser and hosted the First Annual Country Christmas on the Farm as an open house for the community.

Starting in January, the Advanced Transportation Program will feature new classes that will prep students to obtain their Class A commercial driver's license. Hands-on and behind-the-wheel training, in conjunction with diesel and heavy equipment classes, will provide the industry with students ready to work. Their Heavy Equipment Operators program completed three off-campus projects this semester. The students excavated and graded a small park expansion for Kid's Kingdom with the Redding City Parks Department. This included the installation of the irrigation system and shrubbery. The new equipment is sure fun to put to work!

The Environmental Horticulture program is going native by helping Happy Valley Elementary School and the BLM propagate native grasses, oaks, and shrubs. This program's massive plant propagation project of 1,200 poinsettias and the associated community sales help fund their activities and travel. Currently, students are working on a tissue culture project of carnivorous plants.

New genetics and "all natural" pigs are proving successful. Recently, they acquired a small band of donated black-face ewes and a ram to use. They are looking forward to their new bred gilts farrowing in December and January. Both groups should produce show-quality livestock. The "all natural" pig project has been used cross-curricular with five different classes. The Ag Economics class is niche-marketing the pigs. Other classes involved are performing husbandry practices, recordkeeping, and data collection for our Ag computer classes.

The past year has certainly pulled the "hands" together and re-emphasized the need to protect and ride for "The Brand."

Your support and help has been greatly appreciated!