

AGGIE ANNEX

JANUARY 2013

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH COAST.....

BY JODI EVANS

San Luis Obispo Section

Atascadero FFA sent their chapter officer team back to National Convention, their officers shared with their members the benefits of attending the National FFA Convention when they returned. They are in the process of transplanting over 1,000 plugs and cuttings. Atascadero FFA members have over 30 market hog projects on feed for the Arizona National Livestock Show and National Western Stock Show and they are excited to be sending six Creed speakers to the regional contest in March at King City High School.

San Luis Obispo FFA wants to congratulate Patrick Smith and his wife, Kari, as they welcomed their baby boy, Mason, into the world on, October 11, 2012. Congratulations also to Anna Bates and her National win with the Novice Parli-Pro team. Anna and her team were working hard throughout the summer and fall preparing for the competition and it seems the fruits of their labors have paid off! At home, the San Luis Obispo FFA challenged other clubs on campus to a canned food drive and they collected over 821lbs. of non-perishables for the Food Bank!

The *Templeton FFA* chapter has had a very busy fall. They recently attended the National FFA Convention where they had a national proficiency finalist and the second place Livestock Judging team in the Nation. Additionally, Kayla Hildebrand was named second high individual in the oldest FFA Career Development Event. The team is busy fundraising to visit Europe in the summer. Back at the school, the chapter

recently collected over 170 coats for their annual *Clothe the Needy* drive, and had a very productive school farm work day in November.

Santa Barbara Section

Nipomo FFA had a busy Fall, which included a "Cow Pasture Golf Tournament". There were 108 students at their Sectional Opening and Closing Ceremonies contest at Cal Poly. Twenty-one members traveled to the National FFA Convention. They were excited to have Christine Woodman as their student teacher this semester.

Santa Maria FFA hired two new teachers: Amanda Rodriguez and Mark Powell. They held a successful "Welcome Back" breakfast for over 100 staff members. They have been participating in many community service events: over 90 students helped at the Chumash Pow Wow Celebration over a two day period; over 25 students put on a petting zoo at the local Grapes and Grain Festival. There were over 60 students who competed at the Sectional Opening and Closing Ceremony from Santa Maria FFA. Nine students and two teachers attended the FFA National Convention and six American Degrees were received. Marc DeBernardi was awarded his Honorary American Degree.

Arroyo Grande FFA has finally moved in to their brand new facility with four classrooms, and an ag mechanics shop and a floral shop. One student's market hog was the Supreme Grand Champion at the Santa Barbara County Fair and there were also other

winners.

After a long and successful career teaching agriculture, David Parker has retired from *Pioneer Valley FFA* and Christine Linné has replaced him. The students did very well at the fair last summer. They had a very good start to the school year and enjoyed a "Welcome Back" breakfast hosted by the Ag Leadership class for all FFA members.

Everything is normal at *Santa Ynez FFA*, they took 30 students to the Greenhand Conference. Two students went to the National Convention and there are students gearing up for Vine Pruning. We are also excited to purchase a Fodder Feeder Solution System.

Monterey Bay Section

Greenfield is doing well with 183 students in their program. Greenfield is looking into the possibility of expanding their program next year with the addition of a new agriculture teacher. Mr. Villasenor's wife is pregnant and due December 31, 2012. Congratulations!

King City FFA is off to a great start with 484 students in their program this year. King City welcomes new agriculture teacher Nick Traini, to their program. King City took seven students to National Convention including a national proficiency finalist and the only national choir participant from California. Although their proficiency finalist didn't win their division, they did win a trip to Costa Rica!

It's happening in *Soledad* with about 360 students in their FFA pro-

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gram. Soledad FFA has had very high participation in their chapter meetings, contests, and parent fair meeting. The Soledad Agriculture Biology CST scores were some of the highest test scores in the school. Way to go!

Gonzales FFA welcomes agriculture teacher, Lauren Fontes, to their program this year. Gonzales FFA has their plasma cam up and running, they had a very successful Monterey County Fair, a great Greenhand/Chapter Degree banquet, excited about their new sweatshirts, and student interest in land judging after several of their students attended a land judging workshop at the Salinas High School farm.

Salinas FFA welcomes agriculture teachers Megan Tefertiller and Mardel Runnels. Salinas FFA has started the year strong with 399 students in their program. Salinas is adding a new greenhouse, they had several Monterey County Fair champion animals, and has the highest agriculture government test scores in the school. Salinas has also been selling many floral arrangements and is working diligently on proficiencies and state degrees.

Everett Alvarez welcomes agriculture teacher, Travis Wyrick, to their program this year. Alvarez's greenhouse has been ordered, new planter boxes are being built, and the garden started. Alvarez hosted a successful Monterey Bay Section Opening and Closing contest and a floral pumpkin sale.

Soquel FFA started the year with very enthusiastic students. Soquel High has a new director of food services who is eager to provide fundraising opportunities. Soquel's veterinary science

program is doing well working with everything from domestic animals and large animals, to aviary species.

Ventura Section

Santa Paula FFA - When the Calvary Arrives.....

When no one knows what goes on in an agriculture program and an unimaginable crisis occurs – you had better have a backup plan. For the past 60 years, we have had our two acre school farm on school property which we leased for a \$1.00 a year, paying only the utilities. The farm is any agriculture program's dream situation; however, when the city decided to sell the parcel to the local trash company, it became our worst nightmare come true! Aside from the glooming budget crisis, priorities on standardized testing, and upcoming elections - all we can do is pray for the Calvary.

The Calvary came in the most unconventional form, but came it did! The City of Santa Paula, Crown Trash Company (purchasing the land the farm is on), our school district, our school board, Agriculture Advisory Committee, community members, parents, and students worked collaboratively to find a new farm in just three short weeks. Why did these people and community members care enough to work so diligently and tirelessly in such a short period of time? Simple; "they" know our kids, "they" know what they do and "they" understand the value and long standing tradition of the Santa Paula FFA program. How do they know so much about the program and the kids? We made the decision to shift the way we fundraise by getting more involved

in the community and helping other community organizations and in turn - the community organizations have supported the agriculture program both monetarily and through other means. It is a great feeling to call up Brokaw Nursery or Limoneira Co. to request a donation and to have them respond with "no problem", or we receive a check in the mail for volunteering at the local parade. Better yet, conduct our petting zoo at the local pumpkin patch to raise over \$4,000 for our program.

In addition to our community involvement, being a partnership academy has allowed us to build strong partnership with the agricultural leaders in Santa Paula and Ventura County. We receive funding for things we already do in an ordinary agriculture program but with additional benefits - additional funding, a-g academic track, an agriculture science academy counselor, and with that increased expectations to excel in school.

I am entering my 12th year of teaching and in that time I have come to realize the many mistakes and risks I have taken over the years. I am always trying to find ways to become a better agriculture teacher/FFA advisor. What some people do not understand is that when you are a single person agriculture department, you must do what you can to make it work. I am probably harder on myself than anyone. I look to those who are more forgiving than judgmental. I feel many times in the fight alone, but then all it takes is the one phone call, email, text, Facebook post or simply a smile to know that difficult times will pass and it is up to us to continue moving forward.

Register for 2013 CATA Summer Conference online at www.calagteachers.org.

CENTRAL REGION NEWS

BY JESSALEE GOEHRING

The Central Region has been full of excitement this fall and winter. With a successful trip to National Convention, we are ready for 2013. Happy New Year and hope you all enjoyed your Holidays!

Sacramento Section

Elk Grove HS had another successful National FFA Convention. Madison Albani was named a National Proficiency Winner in the category of Agriscience Research/Animals Systems. The Marketing Plan team was named the National Champion Team and the Ag Sales team placed eighth. They also had eight students place in the top five in the National Agriscience Fair. Congratulations!

Congratulations to *Florin HS* on their National winning Agriscience Fair project. Their students competed in the Plant Systems Division.

Delta-Cal Section

Marlene Hepner would like to thank the *Delta-Cal San Joaquin County Fair market poultry advisors*. She also wanted to state that the judge, Jeff Culbertson said "that the 'bird projects' have really improved in quality. Once upon a time, 4-H was the dominators and now, FFA is really rising to the challenge and giving 4-H a run for their money! Good job on getting those birds to fair looking great! Super job on preparing for showmanship too." Jeff must have said twelve times how hard it was to pick showmanship winners and class winners. Keep up the good work!

Lodi HS had the third place Botany Novice Individual Agriscience winner at National Convention and also had two National proficiency finalists.

East Union HS in Manteca participated in the Manteca Unified AG Venture Day and had 4,000 third grad-

ers attend at their school farm. They also had an FFA Drive Thru BBQ and sold 500 dinners. Their chapter had three teams compete at Sectional Opening and Closing Contest and all placed Gold. East Union barbequed every home football game and sold over 200 tri-tip sandwiches per game! Great job!

Congratulations to *Bret Harte HS*! Their Poultry Judging team placed third at Nationals and the Floriculture team placed fifth!

Escalon HS is very proud, as their former student, Lindsay Anderson was named the National FFA Western VP! Way to go, you have made California very proud. They also had a National FFA band member and a student place second in National Agriscience Fair competition. Congratulations!

Dean Archer from *Linden HS* was awarded the Honorary American Degree at the National FFA Convention. Congratulations Dean, what an honor!

Stanislaus Section

Riverbank HS is going through a new beginning of sorts. Started with negotiations with the city of Riverbank last year, a ten acre school farm laboratory facility is being planned on city land less than a half mile away from the high school. This facility will increase the opportunities for Riverbank HS FFA students to participate in a wide variety of SAE projects and experience commercial agricultural production. The plans for the facility include permanent tree crops such as almonds and fruit trees as well as vegetable plots. The almonds will be used to demonstrate production agriculture, while also raising a sustainable income for the farm facilities and agriculture program. The fruits and vegetables raised will be sold at the local farmers market as student

projects as well as used for student exhibits at the Stanislaus County Fair. On top of the farming operations they will also construct barns for animal student projects. The advisory committee is currently working with industry partners to secure donations and materials needed to move forward with the project. As many of you know, a farm facility for a primarily suburban school like Riverbank will allow their students a great opportunity for SAE participation and FFA degree advancement!

Tri-Rivers

Congratulations are in order to *Hughson HS* who had two National proficiency finalists in the area of Goat Production and Agriculture Education.

Pitman HS is getting back to their agricultural roots with two new enterprise projects under construction. The first new project is a swine breeding project. The project consists of a donated Hampshire gilt. In partnership with MJC, the ag science class will be breeding and caring for the gilt throughout her gestation, farrowing and weaning. The gilt is housed on the Pitman campus in the ag department compound. The litter will be timed to have hogs for a September fair, as one of the conditions of the donation.

The second project is modeled after the St Helena Ag Department's Viticulture class. They will be installing a vineyard on campus. Duarte Nursery is set to donate 140 Cabernet Sauvignon vines for planting this spring. The vineyard will be located on the Pitman campus near the varsity baseball fields. The new Viticulture class will be charged with caring for the vines from root to bottle. The students will not partake in the fermentation or tasting processes because that will be handled by the local participating winery. Once in produc-

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tion, the vineyard should produce one barrel of wine per year which should yield 22-25 cases of wine.

Merced/Mariposa Section

Congratulations to **Atwater HS** on their hard work at National Judging Finals. Their Dairy Products team placed sixth overall and Agronomy placed seventh overall.

Le Grand High horticulture students talk to the Antarctic Field Research Center. Students in Monica Bianchi's ROP ornamental horticulture class at Le Grand High School got a chance to talk plant science issues with Joselyn Fenstermacher, the greenhouse supervisor at the South Pole Station in Antarctica, about 9,000 miles away.

Through a Skype video chat, the Le Grand High juniors and seniors learned from Fenstermacher what it takes to run a remote greenhouse research station in one of the harshest environments on earth, student teacher Andrew West helped to arrange the video chat lesson.

"The conversation was enticing for the students because it showed that they could use their developing skills in horticulture well outside their local community," West said.

Bianchi said, "since we are a global economy that imports and exports so much produce, disease and pest issues are of grave concern to California agriculture, the more we can learn about growing plants around the world the better for all of us."

Le Grand students sent Ms. Fenstermacher nine scientific questions, focusing on how greenhouses operate and how diseases are controlled in a confined environment and then she responded to the questions.

"Students learned that the greenhouse was controlled by excess heat from the station generators, which helped make the greenhouse too warm," West said. "This extra warmth in the greenhouse may have increased the chance for the disease botrytis, appearing like a gray fuzzy mold, and root

and stem rot."

Bianchi's 37 students study basic soil-borne parasites such as nematodes and they look at ag insect pests as the second economic expense to growers, along with invasive weeds.

"Le Grand students were in select company, one of only three places in the United States to communicate with the station's horticulture center. The University of Arizona and NASA were the only other institutions to correspond at this level", West said.

Le Grand High is one of the first schools to teach using iPads, this is the first of many interactive science lessons that are being conducted at Le Grand High School as interest remains high to be a leader in the use of technology in education. It is hoped that through the use of Apple iPads and networking, Le Grand students will have the tools to become 21st-century leaders on a global scale in agriculture and horticulture.

Southern Region News

By Margaret Chapman

High Desert Section

Antelope Valley was excited to have a visit to the schools ag lab by the California Secretary of Agriculture, Karen Ross, over the summer. She was impressed by the FFA members that greeted her. They are also excited about a partnership with the local fair and community group which has so far donated a state of the art hydroponics system, as well as materials to re-skin their greenhouse.

Apple Valley is excited about opening up a new machine shop and adding new equipment to their current welding shop. The mechanics program

is growing by leaps and bounds.

Grove FFA is currently cleaning up the school farm, as well as renovating the facility's structures. The program is getting tons of community support and continues to grow their farmers market that the students help run.

The *Littlerock HS* apple orchard is in full production with sales going well. They just completed their freshmen fun day with over 60 freshmen in attendance.

Lucerne Valley FFA attended National Convention, taking five students. They are also gearing up for some

chapter activities including, FFA dodge ball, a lunch time meet and greet, as well as the Ram it Forward Fundraiser.

Palmdale Ag Program just finished with some successful coop pigs that students raised. Also, the ag mechanics program is doing well with some great projects coming out.

Serrano FFA school year is started off great with fundraisers, including sausage sales and the Ram it Forward Fundraiser.

Imperial Section

Blythe FFA is installing a new irrigation system for their greenhouse

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and a new 30'x60' screen house. Enrollment has grown to 150 students with 97 livestock projects. The month of October was busy with the annual Pumpkin Patch and Corn Maze fundraiser. In addition, they worked in conjunction with the Blythe Chapter of California Women for Agriculture hosting the annual Agriculture Days for 1,500 elementary school students.

Brawley FFA had two students who received their American Degrees in Indy and the chapter had another eight students go to watch and support. They are setting up the greenhouse for another year of tomatoes and getting animals for the March fair. Students have started fundraising by selling pies and advertisements to fund this year's activities.

Callexico FFA is down a teacher but up in membership. Opening and Closing attracted over 90 members making up 15 teams, resulting in the first Chapter Opening & Closing contest ever. The chapter was excited to have a delegate serve at this year's National Convention and represent the Southern Region.

Calipatria FFA is off and running this year, with several positive things happening in the north end of the Imperial Valley. The reinstatement of a foods course on campus has raised the possibility of some great partnerships and the possibility of getting a student garden placed on campus. With help from the energy industry in the area, they are starting a very interesting bio-fuels class, in cooperation with the IVROP. Senior students will qualify for "credits by exam" with a corresponding IVC class which will be offered next year.

This year *El Centro FFA* is participating in a local farmer's market to sell honey and seedlings. They are continuing to expand the school garden and

are also working closely with the culinary arts classes to put on some community events.

Holtville FFA looks forward to a great year with the completion of two new agriculture pathways for students to follow with the addition of Plant Science and Ag Economics/Government classes. They had their first parent and student fair meeting with a great turnout of 80+ students interested in fair animals. All in all, excitement has hit Holtville as the Ag Advisory donated \$10,000 to spend on the department and farm improvement.

Imperial HS is back in action with a great turnout for their Annual Social Event. The Ag Booster Golf Tournament went well being their biggest fundraiser of the year. Emilee Callens is back from maternity leave. She has an adorable little boy.

Orange Section

Buena Park HS is excited to welcome Scot Worrell. With three full time teachers and almost 500 students they are busting at the seams. They are looking forward to a new pad being poured for the new lamb barn and hope to put in a shade house this year.

The *Chino Ag Department* has hit the ground running this year. Their new Anatomy and Physiology in Veterinary Medicine course was approved as a UC Lab Science Course. They are excited about the new opportunities this will bring. If you are interested in a copy of the curriculum contact Laurie McCormick.

Covina has completed a four-way pathway with Ag Economics and this year will have ten students as four year completers. The program has never been as popular as it is this year – with enrollment at its highest in four years.

Don Lugo FFA is working hard and busy under the advisement of Carri Walker, who just joined the program. Recent activities have included the Community Farm Clean-Up Day, Fall Festival, Christmas Tree lot sales, and Holidays on the Farm.

La Habra HS has been working on a new marketing strategy to compete with on campus programs and bring in more excited FFA members. They are looking at incorporating lessons on composting and getting the school cafeteria involved. Their hope is to expand the composting lessons and workshops to elementary school tours and the community, as well as the agriculture students.

Orange HS is staying busy. This year they have added a new class, Veterinary Science and have developed a new FFA Alumni Chapter.

Sonora Ag Department is excited about a new year. With an increase in enrollment, the department has welcomed two part time staff members, Jeremy Johnson and Samantha Valverde. Because of this growth, Mary Kerr has moved her classroom into the science wing and has made valuable connections with the science department as the school prepares to adopt the common core standards.

Sunny Hills FFA Chapter welcomes Chelyse DeBoor to their department.

The *Westminster FFA* Chapter welcomes Brian Kim as an addition to the department. The chapter took over 30 students to the Los Angeles County Fair Field Day where they participated in Vegetables, Specialty Animals, and Floriculture contests.

Riverside Section

The *Jurupa Valley Ag* Program hosted an Ag Department/FFA Open

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House BBQ with over 320 students, parents, and family members in attendance. They have ten sections of ag, full of excited and motivated students that are keeping them busy. They had a successful SoCal Fair in October where students entered livestock, ag mechanics, and floral projects.

Norte Vista FFA exhibited over 200 still exhibits at the Southern California Fair, as well as over 30 animal projects. They attended the National FFA Convention in October with twelve students and three receiving their American Degrees. They are also in the process of developing a Plant and Animal Academy to start next year.

Perris FFA is excited about beginning construction on a new greenhouse, shade house and farrowing barn. They are looking forward to their students showing animals, landscapes, and arrangements totaling over 60 exhibits at the Southern California Fair. With great things happening and student involvement increasing, they were pleased to add a fourth ag teacher to the staff, Desiree Trapp.

West Valley HS is busy working on the transformation of their department into a thriving and productive farm. They recently received donations of over 400 fruit trees, blueberry plants, and pomegranate trees. Two new agriculture teachers were hired, John Campbell and Danielle Gheen, and we wish them luck as they continue to build the West Valley Chapter.

San Diego Section

El Capitan teachers are excited to finally be moving into their new multi-million dollar facility and had a successful ribbon cutting community event. They welcome a fourth teacher to their department, Jesse Meade, who graduated from El Capitan High School and returned home with his wife Tara, who is also an agriculture teacher and a graduate of El Capitan. Their first child Colton was born only two weeks into the school year. Everyone is very happy to have Jesse join our team.

Escondido rocks and is working on vertical strawberry gardens.

The *Fallbrook FFA* was pleased to work with the Fallbrook Ag Boosters in hosting the very successful 1st Annual Golf Tournament, Dinner & Auction Fundraiser. They were excited to have students participating in the National Agriscience Fair and proficiency award competitions at National Convention, as well as having two alumni students receive their American Degrees.

Julian is wonderful with more students in Ag this year than any other year.

The *Mountain Empire Ag* Program is continuing to grow, with enrollment totaling over 100 students. The program is excited about the district's construction of a new greenhouse.

Orange Glen just finished building a show arena and is currently working on building a shade house.

At *Poway HS*, things continue to

run smoothly as students prepare for competitions and to get their fair projects. Thanks to the help of several eager Eagle Scouts several improvements were made to the ag department and they look forward to the next project which is the construction of a greenhouse in the next few months.

Ramona HS is very excited about their increase in numbers this year. Last year they had 35 students in the entire program and now they have 110. Although still a part time position, Ramona FFA continues to stay hopeful that very soon the position will be full time. This summer Ms. Tobin returned as Mrs. Wright, and all the returning students are having a hard time adjusting to calling her by her new name. Congratulations Vanessa!

San Pasqual has grown to five full sections of agriculture with 170 students this year. With help from the parents, they are working on several improvements to the school farm including moving the livestock fence to increase the animal area, redoing irrigation and leveling out the garden and orchard area. Congratulations to Arlene Peck and her husband who welcomed their new baby girl in October.

Valley Center FFA is holding three blood drives this year. They had a very successful ag department clean up day and a new wash rack was built for student steer projects.

Warner Springs FFA has applied for a farmers market permit in hopes of selling produce, eggs, and pork.

2013 CATA Summer Conference - Sunday, June 23 thru Thursday, June 27

Farm Show and Idea Show - Tuesday, June 25

Agriskills Institute - Thursday, June 27 thru Saturday, June 29