

# Golden Slate

May 2011

The Official Newsletter of the California Agricultural Teachers' Association

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## Deadlines

### Copy Due in Elk Grove

August 26, 2011 ..... October 2011  
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### Issue Date

Articles should be e-mailed to [cata@calagteachers.org](mailto:cata@calagteachers.org).

If you cannot submit the article electronically, please be sure your material is typed, double-spaced. Advertisements, graphics and forms must be camera-ready. ☼

## Sacramento Scene

### Ag Education Program Survival Depends on Attitudes, Actions, Commitment

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

By now most of you have heard the dire budget news coming out of Sacramento, and are well aware of the implications that impending cuts may have for future education funding in our state. With an additional \$12 billion-\$15 billion gap to close for the upcoming fiscal year, it is scary to think of what an "all cuts" budget would look like in terms of maintaining your program.

Whether or not we get to that point will depend on some very strategic decisions made by a handful of people over the next few months. Not much the average person can do about it right now, but watch the budget dance play itself out.

#### Ag Incentive Funding

As I travel the state, two of the most frequent questions I get from ag teachers these days are:

- 1) Will the ag incentive grant get eliminated if there isn't a budget agreement worked out? and
- 2) Can ag education programs at the local level survive without ag incentive funding?

My honest answer to question #1 is "No one knows," and the answer to question #2 is simply, "it depends."

Now, I don't mean to be flip-pant when I say that, so I'd like to take this opportunity to explain why "it depends"....

#### Successful Model

Let me make one thing perfectly clear — we have an educational model that has been highly successful for over 80 years, and I absolutely believe that ag education and ag teachers will be around for another 80 years regardless of what gets thrown at us.

Will every program survive, or will every program look exactly the same as it does now?

No, because not every teacher and program currently in existence is operating at the same level. "It depends" on how you measure up when it

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# Sacramento Scene

## Ag Education Program Survival Depends on Attitudes, Actions, Commitment

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comes to the artful skill of personal and program survival.

### Slugs

Here's the brutal truth: There are a few programs out there that are operating in what I would call the **Slug** mode — not visible at all to most people in their own community or to many of us in the Ag Education profession.

You never see them at field days, leadership conferences, regional meetings, etc., mostly because they have one lame excuse after another for not showing up. Slug teachers and their programs have completely ignored every message about the value of having a highly effective Advisory Committee, about the value of professional development, about the need to go above and beyond the minimum hours required to collect a paycheck, and every other critically important aspect of building a truly successful program.

Mere existence is seen as the goal of these types of programs and, like most Slugs, all you really have at the end of the day is a slime trail. Their survival is doomed.

### Turtles

A second group of teachers and programs could accurately be portrayed as the **Turtle** clan. Turtles are slow but persistent, and plod along predictably from year to year hoping that their shell will offer adequate

protection from threats to their existence.

Our Turtles find one or two things to chew on at a time, and seem very happy just doing enough to get by. They will work a little at maintaining their protective shell by keeping a few key folks in their community happy, but tend to retreat into that shell at the first sign of any threat — relying on others to stick their necks out and “fix” things.

Retreating into the familiar confines of their shell is their only survival tactic, and they are ill-equipped to exist without the protection of programs like the Incentive Grant. These programs will likely not survive a protracted funding crisis.

### Cockroaches

The third category of ag teachers and programs are what I would call the **Cockroaches** — those who will scramble, scrape, adapt and thrive in the future regardless of the challenges thrown at them.

This is the only group, in my opinion, that possesses the characteristics to survive the circumstances we may be encountering in the very near future.

Like their namesake, they simply refuse to die off, staying one step ahead of every threat and bouncing back from every challenge with increased vigor and vitality. Agile and alert, they are proficient at

adapting their actions to ensure that they always have enough sustenance to survive, even if that means outrunning a few of their own to get the last scrap of food.

Scientists have confirmed that cockroaches will indeed outlast every other form of life on this planet, and our Cockroach Ag Teachers will no doubt enjoy that same fate. No whiny excuses from this bunch....

### Where Do You Fit?

The big question that remains is: Where do you and your program fit in the Slug-Turtle-Cockroach matrix? Be honest when you answer that question, because an honest self-assessment may make all of the difference in the world.

Do you possess the survival skills and strategies evident in our pre-incentive grant teaching ranks, when ag teachers were routinely required to make it all happen on a wing and a prayer?

Is it possible to exist, and even thrive, without our customary means of support?

You bet it is, because I watched people like Warren Weaver, Roy Beck, Bill Loveridge, Gerry Wenstrand, Dan Kemp, Bill King, Kristi Mattes, Abdul Mohammed, Al DeRose, Chris Dickson and Ken Hutchings do it for years.

Regardless of how the current budget crisis is resolved, I believe that we would all benefit from taking a look at our

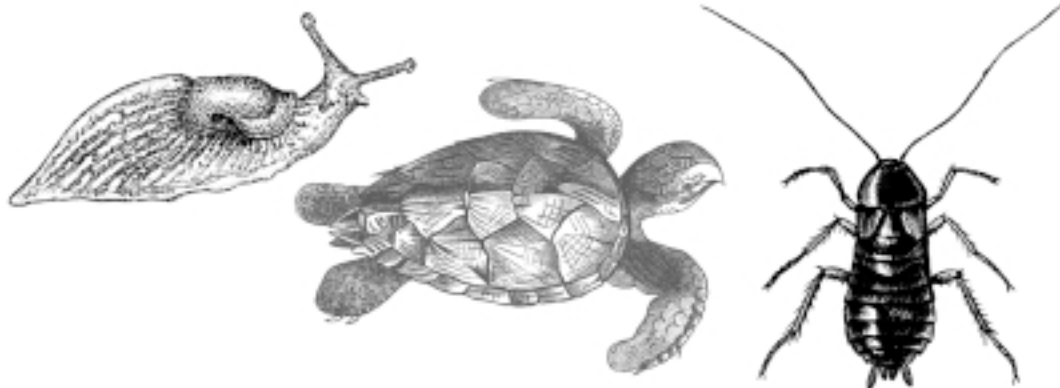
own survival capabilities, and working a bit harder to join the ranks of the Cockroaches of our profession. It may not be a noble title, but it beats the hell out of suffering the fate of the Slugs and Turtles....

### It Depends...

In closing, it really does “depend” on the attitude, the actions and the commitment made by individual teachers in our profession on whether a local program survives, thrives or perishes in the coming years.

I'm confident that many of you already possess those attributes, and am sure that future generations of students will benefit from the efforts of dedicated ag teachers to carry on the legacy of excellence that exemplifies ag education. Cockroaches rock!

If you haven't yet sent in your registration materials for Conference, get those in to Kerry as soon as possible, and don't forget to make those hotel reservations as well. We have a great conference planned for June, and I look forward to seeing all of you there. Have a great remainder of the school year! ☼



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# Officers' Corner

## Keep Your Ass Out of the Water!

By Darol Fishman, CATA President

I'm not writing this article as a state CATA officer or as an ag teacher, but rather as a contest advisor. I have some very deep concerns over the perceived purpose and possible future of those contests I have been involved with in one capacity or another.

For some of you who don't know me, I have been involved in all aspects of Ag Mechanics as a contestant in high school, student coordinator in college, team coach in high school, and contest advisor at Merced College. I have been involved in the Small Engines contest as well as Farm Power and to some degree Ag Welding. I am not bragging, but providing some credibility to the observations and comments forthcoming in the next few paragraphs. My intent is not to embarrass or otherwise humiliate anyone... my sole intent is to provide some insight relating to student safety, host courtesy, and common sense.

### Danger

First off, the four contests listed above are unique compared to others in that we deal with heavy equipment, hazardous processes, and moving objects that can maim and kill in a heartbeat. These aren't BIG or Cooperative Quiz contests where the worst that can happen is a paper cut or pencil poke to a finger.

Does this make them any more important than others? By no means! However, teachers who bring students to one of the "iron" contests had best have their students trained and ready for the day or someone is going to get hurt...or worse.

It makes no matter to me if you want to bring your entire freshman group to a BIG contest and they don't know E.M. Tiffany from Alfred E. Neuman.

It **DOES** matter to me if you bring students to an Ag Mechanics contest and they don't know how to use a torch, an arc welder, or a portable circular saw.

The same goes for the other contests mentioned... they had best know how to MIG weld in

**Students who show up to a contest are not at fault for not knowing how to perform the basic skills involved. It is your responsibility as their teacher/coach to do so and to keep them safe and make it an opportunity to show off what they have learned in class.**

an Ag Welding contest, how to drive a tractor in a Farm Power contest, and how to safely start their engine in Small Gas Engines.

### Showing What Students Have Learned

Students who show up to a contest are not at fault for not knowing how to perform the basic skills involved. It is your responsibility as their teacher/coach to do so and to keep them safe and make it an opportunity to show off what they have learned in class.

I have had this discussion with teachers whose students have come to our field day unprepared and the first thing they say is: "It's a great learning experience."

If it's a great learning experience, then we'll teach them the basic skills on that day, but that's not the way it works.

Along with every other person who puts on a contest, we make them exactly that... **A CONTEST!** It's time to show what you have and take the test!

My job on that third Saturday in March is not to teach them how to turn on and light the torch.

"That can't happen!" you might claim. We have had students show up who can't cut, drill, arc weld, wire a circuit, drive a tractor, etc. For many it's a Saturday car ride... plain and simple.

### Assess Abilities

At some point in time you must take a look at your skills and abilities and ask if the team you are coaching is truly within the realm of your abilities.

If I was back teaching high school and had four students who wanted to do a Livestock or Farm Records team, I would gracefully say no and tell them it's not my strong suit and I might find someone on the outside who can. I feel many teachers coach a certain team because it's within their class assignment and feel obligated to do so.

With few exceptions, no school that I know of **REQUIRES** one to coach a team because of that. There might be *expectations* but that's different than a *requirement* and a requirement must be put into your contract.

This all has nothing to do with winning either as there are successful teams that do well but never get into that blue ribbon category for one reason or another... but there is some tie to success and individual/team placing.

### Liability

With all that said, I must look at exactly what all of us who sponsor a contest put on the line. In this day and age of suit-happy lawyers and the ease of filing a suit, it won't take but one incident to have someone look at it and ask the

questions regarding liability and risk management.

At our contest, and every other contest, there have been students who could have easily lost a digit while using some of their carpentry equipment. Although it's in The Code they can use it, we need to ask should they be allowed to use it?

I will not allow the use of portable circular saws the next time we offer carpentry. "It's in The Code they can and they use them in the industry and if we're to teach real world then they must be allowed to use them!"

Scream all you want and you are correct in all aspects and I'm saying until you can guarantee that **ALL** students can safely use them, their use is out of the question...end of discussion.

### Qualifications

Qualifications have been put into place in Ag Mechanics and Small Engines to limit sheer numbers that make it difficult to put on a quality contest... and to some degree provide for the safety of those involved.

Ag Mechanics has a qualifying system so that the top 24 teams... I'm not opposed to the top 15 teams... can compete in the "championship" round.

Small Engines uses Theory Test and Parts ID to qualify for Problem Solving and Troubleshooting to determine the State Champion.

Many of you disagree with this practice and my argument is: "The NCAA uses an entire basketball season to see who has 'earned' the right to participate in the brackets."

There's plenty of opportunity for your Ag Mechanics team to qualify with seven

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# Officers' Corner

## California Ag Teachers Have Best Job in World

By Jake Dunn, CATA President-Elect

As a CATA officer, one of the benefits is the opportunity to travel. We attend the regional meetings across the state, the western region NAAE, National NAAE Convention, and even the National FFA Convention, representing our organization at many levels. My favorite part of all this traveling is seeing how our colleagues across the state and nation conduct the business of teaching agriculture to our students.

This year I have been able to travel out of state twice to see how things go at a national level. My latest adventure had me traveling to an entirely new place, Orlando, Florida. This was my first trip to the other sunshine state. I was invited to attend the Team Ag. Ed. Summit. I was really excited to see what this new format would have to offer.

This summit brought together teachers, teacher educators, state staff, National FFA staff, National FFA Alumni, and state association leaders — a very diverse group, but all sharing the common goal of student success. As I jotted down my thoughts on the plane ride home, one thing

keeps jumping out at me: I am truly blessed to be an agricultural teacher in California.

### Summit Themes

The themes of this year's summit were not new to agricultural education; in fact, they are the pillars that we live by or the three circles we live in. The themes were SAE RE-NEWAL, Transformational Leadership, and Academic Integration.

Starting with the latter, I think it is safe to say that we are light years ahead of most of the nation in academic integration. We are academically integrated, sometimes maybe to a fault. We provide the students in our programs the opportunity to earn graduation

and CSU/UC credit in earth science, biology and fine arts while also pursuing the awesome opportunities awaiting them in blue jackets.

So I will not linger on academic integration as long as you promise to keep the agriculture in your ag biology, ag earth and floral design classes. Keep in mind that in some states they don't even get graduation credit for their ag classes; they are still electives....

### SAE Renewal

I do want to touch base and possibly start a conversation about the other two themes. Starting with SAE renewal, a big point of our first day at the summit was that students learn

from experiences better than they do from books and tests. I was shocked, literally dumbfounded to have this brand new information passed down to us.

I am glad that they finally shared that this simple idea is one of the foundations of agricultural education because it works. The home project was what differentiated us from the other programs in vocational training; this is what we hang our hat on, I thought.

So anyway, I was really glad to hear that the research does back up the ideas behind what we do. This topic brought up some good discussion in the room, and I would like to pose these questions:

- ✓ Can you provide adequate project supervision to the 100+ kids in your program?
- ✓ Do we need more support for our teachers in supervising projects?
- ✓ Are we training new teachers enough to handle the possible SAE's that they may have to supervise?
- ✓ Are all three circles in your teaching? Do they all get the same consideration?

I don't offer the golden key to answer all of these questions, nor do I even begin to claim that I do it perfectly or even close. I try to do the best job I can!

### Reflections

But I would like all of us to reflect on what we do, why we do it, and the benefits that it does bring to our students. In these tough budget times it is very difficult to maintain a project supervision period. It is hard to convince our administration that we need a period to go and supervise livestock,

## Keep Your Ass Out of the Water!

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major contests throughout the state to participate. Due to limited resources, limitations on facilities, and "waste of material" evidence at each contest, there has been some discussion by Ag Mechanics sponsors to have qualifying become part of local contests.

Merced is fortunate to be able to work so closely with our Welding Instructors we can take all comers. If we were to use Written Test/ID, Problem Solving and ??? to determine who gets to compete further, it would make our job of cutting and preparing such a mass undertaking so much easier and would waste much less material being cut, hacked and whittled on by students who have not been properly instructed on how to perform basic tasks.

We had students this year who didn't even know how to

prime and glue PVC pipe! Whose fault is that?

### Liability for Unprepared Student

Again, my discussion is not to demean your students or embarrass anyone. However, this has become a very viable issue. One unprepared student gets hurt and then the questions will begin: "Who trained him?" "Where's all of her paperwork?" "Do we have releases?"

I judged a welding contest recently and had students who at least opted not to try to use the cutting torch because they told me they had never used one before.

Why bring them to a contest in which you KNOW ahead of time what they have to do? If they had tried and had gotten badly burned, who will pay the price for that one? All it takes is once and the amazing field days and contests we take

for granted will become extinct.

### Evaluate Students

I ask you all to honestly evaluate your students before bringing them to a field day to compete:

- ✓ Are they knowledgeable?
- ✓ Do they possess the basic skills required?
- ✓ Are they aware of safety procedures for the tasks at hand?

If you or they can't answer "yes" to these and other questions, then I respectfully ask that you please stay home so we, as contest advisors, don't have to answer a lot of questions regarding an incident that could have been prevented with some prior planning and preparation at home.

One of my favorite movie quotes by Donnie Astricky in *Gone in 60 Seconds* states, "If I can't swim, I keep my ass out of the water!"

Can your students swim? ☼

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# Officers' Corner

## Stepping Out and Stepping Forward!

By Steve DeRose, CATA Secretary

My title probably sounds familiar to most of you as it's similar to a theme the National FFA used a few years back. Over the past two years it has been very visible to me as I've traveled up and down the state, that California's agriculture educators are doing just that. Never was it so apparent than at the recent Educating for Careers Conference I attended in Sacramento.

I've been attending this conference for many years now and it provides the perfect platform for ag teachers to "Step Out and Step Forward." One of the reasons I've enjoyed it so much is because it gives you the opportunity to interact with administrators and other CTE and academic teachers from around the state.

### Professional Development

Now, there's no question that ag teachers are the BEST, but it certainly doesn't hurt us to mix, share ideas and build relationships with other educators outside of the aged family. In addition, the number of professional development ses-

sions provided were numerous and had something for everyone that could help improve your classroom instruction and/or strengthen your program.

The first year I attended this conference I ran across a handful of ag teachers. Over the years, the numbers have steadily increased and this year I couldn't attend a session, walk the halls or go to dinner without seeing several ag educators at each and every turn.

The round table discussions taking place at the conference had strong CATA representation and kudos to all who sat in

those chairs. It's important for us to move beyond our own individual classroom and department walls.

### Principles

We all know that the better we understand our students, the more effective we can be as educators to get them to learn and reach their potential.

The same holds true for those not in our classrooms — and to win them over to our way of thinking, why not follow the same principles we use with our students?

I understand this may be uncomfortable for many of us, but in my opinion it is a neces-

sary act in order for us to continue to educate and reinforce the importance of the agriculture education model to those both within the educational system and those outside of it.

### Responsive to Change

A few years ago I was fortunate to attend a leadership session presented by Leon Panetta. One of his quotes used that day I think is very appropriate for the times and challenges we are now facing.

He said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent,

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## California Ag Teachers Have Best Job in World

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work experience, and other projects when our counterparts are squeezing 40-60 students into their classrooms.

Class sizes have been growing as the budgets keep shrinking; this is the reality of where we are and probably will be for the foreseeable future. With these big numbers, it is hard to manage projects, but it can be done.

All students have an agriculture project and all students have an agriculture record book. These statements I can say yes to: Are all the projects hogs, steers and lambs? No; in fact very few are, but all have something to call their own, and something to keep records of. Again I was shocked to find out that some states don't even have a record book! How is that even possible? How do you earn a degree without a book? A Proficiency Award with no numbers to back it up? Again, I am lucky to be an agriculture teacher in California.

### Transformational Leadership

The final piece of the summit was the idea of transformational leadership. This is a relatively new form or newly recognized form of leadership, first introduced in the 1970s.

I was not very pleased with the lack of definite definition of transformational leadership, so I came up with my own working definition: A transformational leader is one who changes the lives of their followers for the better — people in your life who make you feel good about yourself, make you get out of your comfort zone, make you better than you thought you were.

I hope that your goal as an ag teacher is to do this for your students and colleagues. Our job gives us the opportunity to get to know our students better than any other teacher on campus. Our "windshield time" or "barn time" is where we connect and can affect these kids in a positive manner.

At the summit there was a panel of people from each of the different groups represented sharing stories about the transformational leaders in their lives. Most, if not all, of these people spoke of their ag teacher, or another ag teacher who had a profound impact on their lives. In my life there have been many of these leaders.

I am here today as an ag teacher because of my ag teachers, Bill King and John De Jong, both of whom fit my working definition of transformational leaders, not just for me but countless others in the Petaluma community.

### First-Hand Evidence

I got to see first-hand evidence of this impact recently when Mr. King invited my wife and I to the Petaluma FFA Dinner Dance. I truly enjoyed the opportunity to visit with Mr. King, Mr. De Jong, Darol Fishman and many others who I have not seen in many years.

But the thing that really touched me the most was to

watch the countless number of people who came by the table to say hi to Mr. King and Mr. De Jong, evidence of the leadership and the impact that these two men had on an entire community over a period of 25 years they taught together at PHS plus the combined 69 total years of service.

Joe Sabol once gave me an apple and asked how many apples that one represented? That number is infinite if we do our jobs well and plant the seeds for our students to be successful.

California ag teachers... we have the best job in the world. If we use the three circles and allow our students to have experiential "real world" educations, we will be transformational leaders; we will make the lives of our students better.

You are an ag teacher by choice. Choose to be the best you can be. Someday someone will thank you for the positive impact you had on them! ❁

# Officers' Corner

## The Other Magic Word

By Cindy Rohde, CATA Treasurer

Do you remember when you were a kid and your parents were always asking you, "What's the magic word?" This was soon followed by, "Now what's the other magic word?" As I sit here working on this article, one of my teams is sitting across from me deep in discussion over the writing of a field day thank you note. This got me to thinking how powerful the magic of a thank you note is, not only for the receiver, but the giver as well.

### Magic for Giver

It's easy to see the magic of getting a thank you note. It makes all of us feel good to know that our efforts or kindness were noticed and appreciated. The magic of giving thanks might be more subtle, but maybe it is even stronger for the giver.

When we take the time to say thank you in a note, we get to relive and appreciate the event and enjoy the kindness shown to us all over again! Nothing like a blessing counted to make your day.

Call me old fashioned, but practicing gratitude is a fine art that never goes out of style. It takes a little time and effort and unfortunately is all too easy to put aside in our busy world.

My wise parents knew this and made sure my brother and sister and I practiced our gratitude until it became a lifelong habit. For that, I am forever thankful.

### Life Lesson

Trust me, I'm far from perfect on this, but I believe thank

you notes are one of the life lessons we need to teach our students that is much more important than what comes out of a standard or a textbook.

Over the years, writing thank you notes has become a habit for my teams, like saying the pledge in the morning or putting on safety glasses out in the shop. And so, as my team sits in front of me, the magic happens again.

The older kids teach the younger ones what to write; they smile over the good time they had; and even if things might have not been what they expected or things didn't go their way, they remember that someone took the time out of their busy lives and worked hard to give them the opportunity to compete. For that they are truly grateful — magic and mission accomplished.

### Important Effort

In these hard times, it is more important than ever to thank the people who support our students, our programs and ourselves, and what a wonder-

ful chance to show our students the power of that other magic word.

As I wrap up my first year as a CATA officer, I want to thank all of you for the encourage-

ment, support and kindness you have shown me. It means so much to me and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Have a great rest of the year and see you at conference! ☼

## Thank You CATA

By Larry Wright, CATA Past President

I have been thinking of the time I have spent in CATA state office. These past five years have gone by quickly. It only seems like yesterday I was elected. I want to take this last time as a CATA state officer to thank this organization for giving me the opportunity to serve. I remember telling you at the time I had a passion to be of service, and I got that chance because of you — the membership.

Thank you, Dick Piersma, for doing me the honor of placing my name before the membership. I greatly appreciate your kindness, brother Piersma.

Thank you to those who helped make this happen for me, and provided this opportunity to serve. I have learned so very much serving as a CATA officer, as I was involved in the different regional activities and meetings interacting with members of this organization and learning from those experiences.

I remember what Will Rogers said about learning: "A man learns by two things. One is reading. The other is association with smarter people," and that is what I have gotten from all of you. This organization has people who will always help anyone; all we need do is ask.

Jim Shanks, or as I like to think of him, "my bodyguard" — what can I say — you have been a constant source of help and advice, and a person I could count on. Thanks, Jim.

To all the members of the Executive Committee — current and past — who I have

worked with, thank for your patience and help. Darol Fishman, Jake Dunn, thank you for being supportive and for your leadership.

To the members of the North Coast Region, thank you for your continued support and help. From day one you have been a great resource — Mr. Fales, Mr. Meyers and Mr. Polly — thanks gentlemen. To P.J. LoCoco — what can I say, but thanks for everything.

The Solano/Alameda Section — I am very grateful to all of you; without your support and friendship, nothing would have been as enjoyable. John, Bill, Nick, Heidi, Joe, Kristine — thank you all. When I started at Rio Vista, Mr. Keith Smith was the man — then Chuck Parker, Dr. Brad Dodson, Dr. Lloyd McCabe, and currently Mr. Hugh Mooney. Thank you for your continued mentoring, support and friendship; these are priceless to me.

The FFA center staff — Katie, Tina, what a pleasure you have been to work with and just to be around. You both have added so much to my experi-

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## Stepping Out and Stepping Forward!

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but the one most responsive to change."

The recent participation at the Educating for Careers conference is one example of our response to these challenging times. My congratulations to those of you who "stepped out" to take part in educational discussions with other CTE, math, English, social studies and science teachers, and the various administrators in attendance

representing all types and sizes of school districts.

Also, special congrats to those of you who "stepped forward" as a presenter, to share your experiences with those under and outside the agriculture umbrella in an effort to help ALL students. The examples you cited and professionalism you displayed made me proud to be a part of ag education, and especially the CATA. Let's continue to set the pace! ☼

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## One of Those Requests

Patti Williams, Orange High School Agriculture Dept.

As ag teachers, we all get the odd phone calls and e-mails from time to time asking if someone can help out on our farms. You know the ones: "I want to help with the animals, supervise students," etc.

So you give them the basic answers; you know the ones: "join the booster club," "buy an animal at the fair," "come to our annual fundraiser," "sponsor an animal," "make a donation," etc. And usually they leave with a smile and you never see them again.

Then, once in a while, you get a request from someone who really wants to help and it takes you by surprise.

### Request

Last December, I got one of those requests. Frank Frappier wanted to learn about agriculture as a possible occupation. He came by and we spoke for a while. Eventually, the conversation ended with the question, "So, what can I do to help out?"

So, I gave him the typical answers and added in the one thing I really needed: a sturdy sheep shelter in the pasture. He listened, said, "You said something about a shelter?" He asked more, so I told him what I needed. He said his father had retired from construction and they might be able to help us out. I told him what I wanted and he left with a smile and said he would get back to me.

Being the "been there, done that" kind of person I am, I thought, "Well, I won't see him again."

### Surprise

Much to my surprise, the next day, I got an e-mail asking for the dimensions of the shelter and that his dad was working on it.

The next day, his father, who had a fully detailed spec list of a shelter with an estimated cost of over \$800, asked me to write a prospective donation request letter for supplies. I thought, "HA! No way is this ever going to happen. I surely will not ever hear from them again." But, I sent the letter

anyway and promptly put it out of my head.

Time passed and on the last Friday of Christmas vacation, I got a phone call from the school secretary. She said there was a man who needed to get in the farm to store the sheep shelter supplies. My comment was "WHAT? They actually got it all?"

I went to the farm and met Nelson Frappier, the retired contractor — an all-business, straight-to-the-point, serious, professional, get-the-job-done type of man. He and his laborer showed up with shingles (better than the ones I put on my own home), said he would be back with more and were going to pour concrete on Saturday. I thought, "Pour concrete? My gosh, it is a sheep shelter. But okay, go to it."

### Construction Begins

The next day, Mr. Frappier, son Frank and laborer, Alberto, came and construction began. Concrete was poured, forms were set and magic was made. They spent a week with us. They worked hard, took pictures and easily became a part of the Orange FFA family. My students had fun learning and helping out as we all pitched in.

I watched as Mr. Frappier, the quintessential professional superintendent of his job, all business, straightforward and polite in every way, started to have fun. He laughed, smiled and joined in the silly banter. He, in a wheelchair, would speed around the arena and pasture, smiling and laughing at the animals that were very interested in him. It was easy to see that Mr. Frappier was enjoying himself.

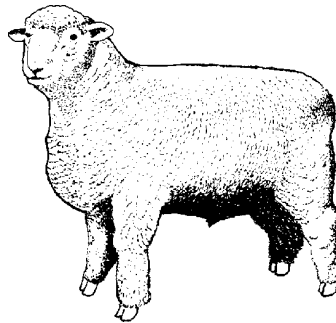
The project in itself ended up being a wonderful experience for my students, myself,

Mr. Frappier, Frank, Alberto and all involved. And to top it off, our sheep have the Taj Majal of shelters. It is built to code and will be standing through every earthquake in the city of Orange!

Little did I know how much an odd request from a member of the community would turn into such a wonderful and fruitful adventure.

### Personal Note

On a personal note, my fa-



ther retired as a superintendent for a very successful heavy concrete construction company. He built sheep shelters, wash racks, drains etc. at Orange, Buena Park and Valencia high schools while I was a student and teacher.

He loved his work and helping out at the schools. I look at my father's jobs with pride each day and know that my students have many things because of my father and his work. He passed away two years ago.

As I watched Mr. Frappier tears came to my eyes as he worked. I saw my father's pride in him as he shared his expertise with us. My heartfelt thanks go to Mr. Frappier, Frank and Alberto for the wonderful shelter they built for us at Orange High School. My Dad would be proud! ❀

## Officers' Corner

### Thank You CATA

(Continued from page 6)  
ence and life that I can't thank you enough, God bless you.

Kerry Stockton, without your constant help and support, I would have been lost. You are always upbeat and positive. I can't imagine the organization without you. I look forward to the time that we get to work and fellowship together.

Thank you, thank you, and thank you.

Jim Aschwanden, executive director. Thanks for living the Code of Ethics for CATA. Jim, you are a true leader, a person with a vision, and a forward thinker. You have always made

yourself available to all members of CATA and to those of us who have served on the governing board—what a resource. The commitment you have made and the relationships you have with those who can cause change on our behalf goes without question. Thank you for putting up with me; it has been a pleasure to have worked with you. Please know I value our friendship.

Well, I see that the old clock on the wall is showing my time is almost up, so I will say again how much I have enjoyed my time as a CATA state officer. May God bless each one of you. Take care and be safe. ❀

# News and Views

## Help Me, Help You

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, California Department of Education

As you are reading this, it has been four years since I made the move from the classroom to the state staff. There are things that I miss about teaching, like the students, project visits and the fair. There certainly are things that I do not miss, like dealing with the critics, administration and school board. I disliked those things before the budget cuts.

Now I have little stress comparatively. Now I spend my days explaining to districts what “zero flexibility” means. I hear from teachers who complain about late fees for registration and on good days teachers ask me to help them with something.

Our state FFA leadership programs continue to provide opportunities for our students, thanks in a large part to annual state funding. Every day it crosses my mind, “what if that funding was gone?”

### State Budget

I assume that most of you have heard Jim Aschwanden discuss the prospects for the state budget.

I think that we all just take it for granted that Jim will protect us. I cannot think of anyone I would rather have in Sacramento working on behalf of agricultural education. He has developed tremendous relationships with decision makers in Sacramento.

If you had the opportunity

to hear Jim discuss FFA funding during your regional meeting, you learned that nearly 20 percent of California FFA’s annual budget comes from SB 70 and AB 8 funding. Unless you have been hiding under a rock, you know that the State of California budget is a mess. Our Governor has collected cell phones from employees to save a few million.

The AB 8 and SB 70 funding goes beyond just FFA. All CTSOs receive similar funding. It totals more than twice what is estimated will be saved by eliminating the cell phones. I doubt the people in the Governor’s office know much about those funds, so they could be easily cut. How would we make up the difference?

### Cal Ag Plate

Last year at the State FFA Convention, the then-Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture, A.G. Kawamura, announced the Cal Ag Plate program and shared the opportunity to create a permanent funding stream for the FFA.

All that needed to happen was for 10 percent of our members to get one person to order a plate and the program would be put in motion.

Many thought that it would be easy to reach that goal in a year. I am sure that the reasons are many why there have been so few chapters making an effort to reach our goal.

Just imagine if every farm in California ordered just one Cal Ag Plate. There are about 80,000 farms in California. If every farm had just one Cal Ag Plate, \$3.2 million would be generated annually.

Keep in mind that these funds must be used for leadership development and career development for agriculture youth. The funds cannot be used to pay the debt for the FFA Center.

As you likely are aware, the California Department of Food and Agriculture has requested a one-year extension for the Cal Ag Plate program. If we do not get the minimum 7,500 plates sold by April 2012, this will be an opportunity lost. Then what?

### ‘Jerry Maguire’

Many of you have students who were born in 1996. That year, one of the most popular movies was “Jerry Maguire.” For those of you who have not seen the movie, let me tell you about it.

Jerry Maguire, played by Tom Cruise, was a sports agent who made some decisions that caused him to be fired by his firm. He was able to convince only one of his clients, Rod Tidwell, played by Cuba Gooding Jr., to stay with him. The movie also had a love interest, but that has nothing to do with the point of my story.

If we were to write a sequel

to the movie to apply to the Cal Ag Plate program, we would need to recast the stars. Jim Aschwanden would play the Jerry Maguire role and the Rod Tidwell role would be played by agriculture teachers.

### Help Me, Help You

The scene that we would focus on would be the one where Jerry Maguire tells Rod Tidwell, “Help me, help you. Help me, help you.”

Jim and others have been sharing the message to the profession on how this program can protect the future of the California FFA in perpetuity. Help me, help you.

If state funding from AB 8 and SB 70 continues, would it not be great to use the Cal Ag Plate money to underwrite current conferences and reduce the cost to members? Help me, help you.

Conference costs will continue to increase because of the facility and meals costs. Would it not be great to be able to absorb those costs with additional funding? Help me, help you.

If we do not sell the minimum 7,500 plates by next April, what do we tell the agriculture industry that used their influence to get this program approved? Help me, help you.

It is time for all agricultural educators to get serious about the Cal Ag Plate program and do what should have already been done long ago. Sell 7,500 of them. Help me, help you.

We only need 10 percent of our members to find one person to order a plate. Help me, help you.

If every member who attends the State FFA Convention finds two people to order a plate, we will exceed our goal. Help me, help you.

We have been given the opportunity to help ourselves. Help me, help you.

## 2011 CATA Idea Show

The Idea Show Award program recognizes new ideas in the following areas:

- 1 Ag Production/Processing and Products
- 2 Ag Mechanics
- 3 Ornamental Horticulture
- 4 Natural Resources/Rural Recreation/Forestry
- 5 Ag Science/Farm Labs
- 6 Departmental Operations
- 7 FFA Operations
- 8 SAE
- 9 Working with Support Groups (i.e., Ag Advisory, Ag Boosters, etc.)
- 10 Floral Design
- 11 Ag Business

To enter, bring your ideas to Summer Conference and display them during the Farm and Idea Show on Tuesday afternoon. Selection of the top three entries in each area is done by

popular vote of those attending the Farm and Idea Show.

### Downloadable Files

We’re trying something new this year—presenters can bring *one printed copy* of any paper work to put on display and a copy of their information on a flash drive. We will then download onto a computer(s). Teachers will be able to upload any or all of the files they want from the show onto a flash drive they bring. No one runs out of handouts, no excess printing, no waiting to get something e-mailed, and we can save a tree (albeit a small one). Bring your flash drive and we’ll see you at the Farm and Idea Show! ❁



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## Meet California FFA Advisor Legend Harry Maddux

**Significant Student Achievements:** Harry Maddux coached 21 state, 49 state-winning proficiencies, 96 student teachers, 111 American Farmers, and 400 State Farmers.

### Golden Slate: What is student achievement?

(Harry Maddux): Student achievement is decided by each individual student as related to their personal goals, objectives and expectations. Achievement is the progression they make in reaching set goals. Reaching goals brings success, happiness and produces productive individuals.

### What is "winning"?

Winning is not necessarily being first in competition. It is the ability to reach personal goals and expectations. First is great, but you do not have to be the very top to be a winner. I have always felt that you must first lose to appreciate winning. What you learn on the way up, the work you put into it and how you apply — that is what makes a winner.

### How do/did you motivate students?

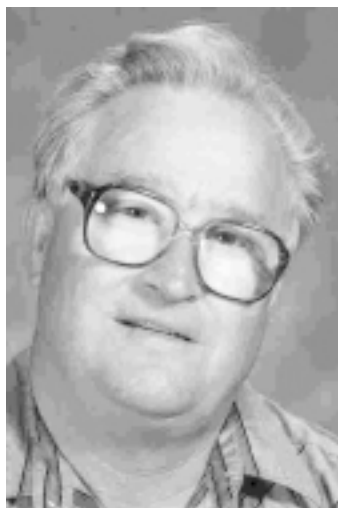
First, you must have the respect of the students. This is based on fairness and demonstrating a true concern for them as individuals. You build their self-confidence and show them they can succeed. Presenting opportunities to succeed provides motivation and it perpetuates itself.

### Who do you ask for help?

No one knows everything and you cannot be afraid to ask for help. I was fortunate in that I grew up in agriculture and had developed a rapport with individuals with a vast wealth of knowledge and skills in many phases of agriculture. I went to them for suggestions and help.

The best resource I had and teachers of today have, is other agriculture teachers, both current and retired. Utilize those resources. The teachers of my era were fiercely competitive, but eager to help other teachers in the profession.

You should always remember there is a difference between combat and competition! Just because you are competitive does not mean you are



*Harry Maddux,  
Retired Agriculture Teacher  
Chowchilla High School  
(1977–2001)*

adversaries. Developing camaraderie among fellow agriculture instructors benefits the entire profession.

Too many times competition becomes personal and inhibits the interaction between agriculture teachers and programs. ASK FOR HELP. It comes in many forms, but most people don't arbitrarily hand it out.

### What is a coach?

A coach is someone who provides information and techniques and motivates students to perfect their skill in specific areas through study, practice and perseverance. The coach critiques performance and provides constructive criticism and positive reinforcement.

### How do you coach?

First and foremost, students must be interested, enthusiastic and committed. It is essential to ascertain their skill level so you know where to start.

I introduce the basics and build from there. It is reinforcement for more advanced members and provides a foundation for less knowledgeable members.

Once basics are mastered, I begin to advance and hone skills using practice and a mentor system with the more ad-

vanced students helping the other team members.

It is important to build on experiences with explanations of the "whys" and "how comes." Keep an open mind and provide positive reinforcement.

### How do you supervise projects for success?

Take time with each individual student and their project. You must have a background and knowledge of the specific project. This may require homework on your part.

A link needs to be forged between you, the student and the parents. Set realistic expectations, formulate goals, outline and set up practices, and daily routines which include maintaining a current and up-to-date farm account/record book. There must be positive action on a continuous basis.

### Why didn't you ever quit or stop?

As I provided an example to my students, quitting was not an option! I may have altered my path, goal or objective, but I did not relinquish the journey. How could I and continue to tell my students not to give up?

### What is passion and how do you acquire it?

Passion is the intense interest in something and the desire to make it an integral part of your being. It influences your mind set and your behavior.

Passion reaps rewards which are not always material. Those rewards in agriculture teaching are not always tangible, such as champions, honors or personal accolades.

Nothing means more than to have a former student come to you years later and thank you for your help in shaping their lives and how you contributed to their success.

Encompassing knowledge and building on that will help develop that passion, but without an initial interest, passion will not grow.

### How do you prepare for practice?

Team practice is no different than planning and designing a successful classroom lesson. It must have an objective, you must plan and prepare, and it must contain learning activities.

At the conclusion, the student must feel they have successfully learned something and they must see how what they have learned is connected to the whole picture.

### Commitment — how do you get students committed?

Students must express their individual interest. I set up criteria, such as meeting times which require a definite effort on their part. Guidelines are established, are mandatory and are agreed upon by student, instructor and parents.

Parental support plays a big part in a student living up to a commitment. If it is missing, it often requires more effort on the teacher's part to provide the opportunity for that student to live up to the commitment. This applies to the classroom and to the FFA program and activities.

### How do you get students qualified and ready and/or elected to become a state FFA officer?

Start in the freshman year getting them involved in FFA activities. You may have to get them started by offering points or extra credit as incentives.

Positive reinforcement of their participation, getting to know their individual interests and strengths enables you to guide them toward areas related to those. Placing them in positions of responsibility and directing them toward leadership activities is essential.

Participation in creed speaking, teams, projects encourages them to speak in front of others and develop communication and social skills.

Each year you build on their experience and continue to do  
*(Continued on page 15)*

# News and Views

## Meet California FFA Advisor Legend Harry Maddux

*(Continued from page 14)*

rect them with involvement in leadership activities and all aspects of the FFA program. This takes a commitment from the student, but it definitely requires time and effort from you as an advisor. Your support and direction sometimes requires stern measures for their best interest.

### **Who wins when a student wins?**

When a student wins, it is a win for everyone. The effect is how you as an instructor use that win. Certainly it brings recognition to the individual student, but you can broaden that by building on it as a reflection on the chapter, the school, the parents and the community.

Use your local newspaper, school newspaper, school daily bulletins, and remember a simple thank you letter to parents, school administrators and

individual teachers goes a long way in forging a positive support system.

Make sure the school board is aware of your activities and the successes your program is having. Don't assume they know.

### **How do you and your students acquire discipline?**

A basic set of expectations (rules) as well as consequences must be established and applied to every student. Fairness is an integral part of discipline. Once students understand what is expected of them and the ramifications of not adhering to those expectations and most importantly that they apply to EVERY student, there are generally few problems.

### **How do you gain/give respect?**

You gain respect by giving respect. Honest and fair treatment of each student is mandatory.

You may not particularly like a student, but you cannot deviate from the fair treatment of that student and likewise because one student is a terrific kid, you cannot give him/her preferential treatment.

Set standards for yourself and live up to them. Students are not dumb and you must lead by example. It is imperative that you establish a line... you are the teacher, not their buddy!

### **How do you build a tradition?**

Whatever the tradition is, it has meaning to the group. It has an emotional tie and it shapes behavior.

Those are elements to consider when establishing a tradition. When a certain act has a positive effect on the group and they buy into it and want it repeated, you have the start of a tradition.

It does not have to be some-

thing monumental, but it must have meaning and motivate in some way. It gives continuity, connection and a feeling of belonging to each individual.

### **How/why did you do "it"?**

Several factors influenced "it" (my entering the agriculture teaching profession).

First, my interest was agriculture and the family ranch could not support another income. Since I had a broad background in agriculture and I enjoyed working with young people I chose agriculture teaching. I was not the best student in high school, mainly because I didn't apply myself and fun was more important than grades. Because of my background, I felt I could have a positive effect on students and give them the benefit of my experience.

The more experiences I had teaching, the more convinced I

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## News and Views

### Meet California FFA Advisor Legend Harry Maddux

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was that I had made the right choice. The students fueled my dedication and were also a stimulus to learn more about phases of agriculture in which I was not knowledgeable. If I had students interested in vine pruning, I learned vine pruning. I ASKED FOR HELP from people who had expertise in that area.

It worked and our programs were successful and we produced winners, individually

and as teams. When you stop learning or wanting to learn, or quit teaching for your students, you will know you have lost "it."

#### Advice to other FFA advisors?

Simple advice... it is not an easy job! Take pride in it, in your students and in your program. If you are not enthusiastic about it, your students won't be either.

Be aware of the ramifications of your actions and words, and

above all treat each student with respect and fairness.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Many of your fellow agriculture teachers are ready and willing to share information, techniques and ideas with you, but you have to ask.

*Do not isolate the Ag Department from the rest of the campus.* This happens much too often. Establish a working relationship with the administration, counselors and other departments and staff members. This

will pay benefits to you, the Agriculture Department and your students.

#### Additional comments?

Agriculture teaching is a demanding profession. It is not an 8 to 5, five-day-a-week job. It requires dedication, tireless energy, understanding from your family and involvement in your program, your agriculture organization, in the community and, most of all, it requires commitment.

Your accomplishments are measured by the success of your students and nothing better measures that success than when a student returns, sometimes years later, and thanks you for making a positive difference in their lives. You never know how your words or actions influence a student, so take care with both. ❁

## Calendar of Activities 2011

May 7 .....	State FFA Judging Finals .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19 .....	Executive Committee Meeting .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19 .....	Pre-Conference Governing Board .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19-23 .....	CATA Summer Conference .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23 .....	Governing Board Summer Retreat .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23-25 .....	Agriskills Classes .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo