AG LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Recognizing Outstanding Leaders

We grow leaders who make a difference.
LEADERSHIP IS GENEROUS

BY JEFF ELDER (35)
Calf Board of Directors

It was a Wonderful summer.

As you may have heard, the foundation received an extraordinary and generous pledge of support from Stewart and Lynda Resnick, co-owners of the Wonderful Company, in the amount of $25 million. This pledge will result in the creation of the Stewart and Lynda Resnick Wonderful Legacy Fund. A pledge of this magnitude from two true visionaries and icons of the agricultural industry further confirms to me a shared realization within the agricultural community of the value and need for the California Agricultural Leadership Program. From all of us who have benefitted so much from the program, you have our deepest gratitude.

This gift in no small way pushes us closer to realizing our goal of $25 million in endowments. The personal goal I’ve set for myself is to have the endowment funded or pledged to the $25 million mark before the graduation of our 50th class. I’m hopeful and confident that the commitment from Mr. and Mrs. Resnick will motivate other individuals and companies to step up their support for CALF and help make that goal a reality.

Starting in 2010, the CALF board created and implemented a strategic plan. This plan was the cornerstone from which the program and the foundation have been re-erected. The time has come for the board, with many new members, to put on our visionary hats and develop a new blueprint. This winter, we will reconvene for another two-day session to update our strategic plan. The venue and the professional facilitation have generously been donated by board member Ejnar Knudsen.

Major points of discussion at the retreat will include the following.

1. To ensure that we are continually improving the program. The board will work closely with the CALF Education Team to see that it is provided with the resources and support necessary for improvement.

2. To reach our fundraising goals. One of our topics will be the implementation of the Fellowship Sponsor. This new sponsorship category will allow a company or individual to sponsor a fellow through the program.

3. Move beyond our mission statement, “We grow leaders who make a difference,” to our vision statement, “California agricultural leaders united as a catalyst for a vibrant industry.” This can only be accomplished with further contact with not only our Alumni Council, but also by connecting with those alumni who have drifted away from the program.

I’m expecting some great discussions and outcomes from this planning seminar to help guide us for the next half decade.

And again, a sincere and heartfelt thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Resnick, The Wonderful Company and those wonderful board members who have served this organization so well and have communicated the value and vision of the organization, both internally and within the industry.

Read more about the Wonderful Legacy Fund and Fellowship Sponsors on page 4.
By the time this edition of Horizons arrives in your mailbox, we will be well into the fall season and the days, as well as the temperatures, will be changing rapidly. Hopefully, harvest for many of California’s more than 400 crops and commodities will have been completed successfully and most importantly, profitably. A large number of growers and processors will be looking to take a respite from the hectic days and nights of the season before their thoughts turn toward the upcoming crop year when the process begins once again to repeat itself.

For Ag Leadership, the new “crop” has already begun with Class 48 fellows going through their inaugural seminar in Clovis during the second week of October. The new fellows were not only introduced to the curriculum that “grows leaders who make a difference,” but also to each other. Much like any first day of school, there was an amount of nervousness that was readily apparent among the 24 fellows as they got to know their classmates. For many, the question as to how and why they became members of Class 48 certainly crossed their mind. They will soon understand, if not already, that the process does not happen by chance.

The spring and summer of 2017 brought an exceptionally large number of applicants for the Ag Leadership Program. This was due, in large part, to the very positive perception of the value of what the program offers, which in turn is owing to the outstanding work of the CALF director of education and the core faculty members as it relates to the curriculum and its presentation. The result was that, in summary, there were certainly many more qualified candidates seeking participation in Class 48 than the 24 slots that were available.

So, how does a class come together? In short, a class is created through the experience, knowledge and judgement of dedicated alumni. This year, there were 10 interview sites spread around the state, each with four to six alumni who listened, asked questions and otherwise evaluated each candidate to determine which individuals should be passed on to the final selection process. During that last process, usually two alumni representatives from each interview site then discuss all candidates with the goal of putting together a class that “fits” well.

The decisions that are made then are less about fitness for the program and more about the fit and balance. All of the candidates reviewed at that last session are qualified. The final selections become more about the make-up of the class of adult learners and how the various individuals balance. The outcome focuses on the perceived contributions individuals can make to the total learning experience, both for themselves and others.

Invariably, there are capable applicants who are not ultimately recommended for inclusion in a particular class and the efforts of faculty and staff are then directed to encouraging those individuals to stay enthusiastic about Ag Leadership and to reapply in the future. And as I have often pointed out, I was one of those candidates who was unsuccessful the first time around – and I was so glad that I tried again.

In the final analysis, classes come together with much thought due to those aforementioned devoted alumni. We are extremely grateful for their work in helping grow leaders to benefit California agriculture. Each individual in Class 48, as well as all those fellows who preceded them, should therefore take comfort that they were definitely selected for the right reasons and now is the time for them to grow into those leaders who will make a difference.
Calf Announces New Donor Category: Fellowship Sponsors

The board of directors of the California Ag Leadership Foundation have approved the creation of a new donor category that will be identified as a Fellowship Sponsor. The idea of investing in leadership development is not new. Many companies, organizations and individuals have invested tremendously in the foundation’s programs. However, in an effort to broaden the support base and to secure a more stable source of revenue to cover operating costs, the foundation has agreed on a model for giving that will not only benefit the foundation but also appropriately recognize the donor and their value to the foundation’s mission. The level of annual contribution is set at the estimated cost to put a fellow through the program—$55,000.

By becoming a Fellowship Sponsor, a donor will be helping to: create opportunities for emerging leaders, sustain the industry’s leadership pool, invest in the educational infrastructure and provide lifelong leadership learning opportunities.

The foundation firmly believes that the Fellowship Sponsors deserve to be recognized for their leadership in supporting the industry, thus a robust donor recognition program has been developed which demonstrates the foundation’s deepest gratitude. Membership will be limited to 24 donors on the Ag Leadership Round Table. The donors in this category will also enjoy the ability to actively interact with directors, faculty and fellows.

Investing in this long-term approach provides a Fellowship Sponsor a tremendous opportunity. Sponsors will be closely identified with a positive and productive program which is universally recognized as being beneficial to California agriculture and all citizens of the state.

One point that is made clear to potential donors is that due to the competitive nature of the Ag Leadership Program selection process, there can be no guarantee of assumed admission into the program for any reason. However, Fellowship Sponsors will have the benefit, given their intimate interaction with the program, to better identify potential candidates from within their companies and organizations. The opportunity to train mid-level management personnel in specific leadership development techniques will make for a more productive member of the sponsor’s team as well as assisting California agriculture.

The foundation is extremely grateful to those companies which have already contributed to becoming Fellowship Sponsors—The Zenith, Almond Board of California and Taylor Farms.

For more information about the foundation’s Fellowship Sponsor program, please contact Barry Bedwell at bbedwell@agleaders.org or (831) 585-1030.

Stewart and Lynda Resnick, co-owners of The Wonderful Company, have pledged $2.5 million for the creation of an endowment fund to benefit the California Ag Leadership Program.

Chairman of CALF’s board of directors, Jeff Elder, said the pledge, which will be paid over the course of five years, will result in the formation of the Stewart and Lynda Resnick Wonderful Legacy Fund. It is patterned after the existing JG Boswell II Legacy Fund and the Franklin Otis Booth Legacy Fund, which have been enormously beneficial to leadership development within the agriculture industry.

“We are immensely grateful for the extraordinary generosity shown by Mr. and Mrs. Resnick and their continued recognition of the value of our Ag Leadership Program,” said Elder. “The creation of this endowment fund will not only bring us materially closer to our goal of $25 million in endowments, it will have a tremendous positive impact for all of California agriculture and help perpetuate the work of growing leaders who make a difference.”

A number of individuals associated with The Wonderful Company have graduated from the program and those graduates represent one of the prime reasons why the Resnicks and The Wonderful Company decided to confirm their exceptional support.

“We believe in the educational, community development and wellness programs we’ve implemented across California’s Central Valley, so Lynda and I are proud to support and be associated with Ag Leadership, whose mission and vision are vital to the prosperous future of California agriculture.”

...A NUMBER OF OUR KEY EMPLOYEES HAVE BENEFITTED TREMENDOUSLY FROM THE CALF CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM, SO LYNDA AND I ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT AND BE ASSOCIATED WITH AG LEADERSHIP...
“In our democracy, we govern either by leadership or by crisis. If leadership is not there, make no mistake, we will lead by crisis, and right now we largely govern by crisis.”

The foregoing quote is by former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta during his June 2016 Life-Long Leadership Learning (L4) presentation to Ag Leadership alumni and friends in Salinas. Some leadership questions related to this quote and worth considering are:

- Where do we find extraordinary leaders who have the ability to lead rather than wait for a crisis to arise?
- What characteristics are found in those who lead well when the unexpected worst-case scenario erupts?
- How does a leader step up to deal with a time-sensitive crisis such as a food safety issue with a pending recall or a water crisis when the stakes are high, the risk of potential losses are great and tempers flare?

We don’t really teach about crisis leadership in the California Ag Leadership Program—or do we? We may not speak directly to the issue of crisis management in the 17-month program, but an intentional look at the tools needed in such a crisis may reveal that we are focused on many of the right topics to prepare for handling a catastrophic event.

A large-scale emergency requires the person in charge to lean into the fray at the moment and lead with poise and confidence. Let’s examine for a moment what that might look like. It would require a steady voice, a person who can effectively assess the situation and display confidence in an ever-changing situation.

One important character trait needed is a willingness to lead. A disastrous incident is not a time for a leader to sit back and wait for others to step in. A leader must assess the important facts in a volatile situation, respond appropriately and closely monitor the situation. This requires a compilation of skills that are taught in the first few seminars. Some of the skills include understanding self, understanding others, efficient communication and conflict resolution.

“Ag Leadership is life-changing for sure,” said Pezzini, president and CEO of Ocean Mist Farms. “It helped me develop as a leader. I came out of the program with lots of opportunities to get involved and I took that in stride.”

In 2013, California was in the middle of the driest hydrology on record, reservoir storages were very low and predictions indicated that if the drought continued into 2014, water supplies in the state would be disastrously low. The week before Class 43 graduated, White’s district received a notice from the United States Bureau of Reclamation detailing a historically unprecedented and unbelievably low allocation. The day after his graduation, White learned that it was doubtful whether any water would be delivered through the Delta to his district.
Another important trait is quick processing of information. That may include getting accurate information from capable and trusted colleagues. Do you have a team around you that you can trust in such a situation? Think about it, where would you go for immediate information and support? Have you delegated to others in such a way that your team would be able to provide that type of support? Trust is a key issue. Surround yourself with people you can trust. Build currency with those individuals so you can cash in when information is vital to the quick action that is needed in a crisis.

The program may not address all crisis management issues directly as part of a skills based tool kit, but as you think about it, we offer the depth of understanding and the foundation for the tools that are needed. Former CALF President and CEO Bob Gray often described the Ag Leadership Program as an investment in human capital and leadership from the inside out. Within that internal journey, one can find the leadership skills necessary for crisis management in a deeper way than a management program can provide.

Going back to the Leon Panetta quote, our goal would really be to avoid crisis management by leading with vision. Vision, along with honesty, integrity and accountability may help the leader plan ahead to avoid many crises. But the unexpected may still happen. In either case, the skills learned through the experiential Ag Leadership Program should help us make it through the storm.

“Water in California has been the very definition of conflict since about 1992,” said White. “Being the irrigation district manager of a district that possesses some of the oldest and most secure water rights south of the Delta in California, I was especially eager to better prepare for conflict resolution and leadership under stress.”

White also noted that when he applied to Ag Leadership he was committed to arming himself with the tools he would need to be successful in his career.

“I entered into the Ag Leadership Program with the eager expectation to gain the tools that I personally needed to accomplish the goals of my growers and district over the next 10 years,” said White. “Class 43 helped me gain those tools at just the right time.”

When asked what characteristics are found in those who lead well when the unexpected worst-case scenario erupts, Pezzini and White identified several important qualities.

“Willingness to lead, having good and competent people around you and being a quick processor of information,” said Pezzini. “I would also add the ability to change your leadership style based on the situation. Typically in a crisis you must be directive. Yes, emotional intelligence and empathy are always with you, but most importantly in a crisis situation you have to be able to get things moving in a short amount of time—and under pressure. You must know when to switch gears to get things done.”

“Ag Leadership taught me that leadership is in many ways simply serving others,” said White. “It is important to first understand a given situation, then, only after achieving understanding, should you formulate a proposed plan of action and then commit to over communicating the issues and plan of action to those whom we serve.”

Pezzini credits the Ag Leadership Program with giving him the tools he needed to lead during a crisis.

“Ag Leadership gave me the awareness to know the different leadership styles and a sense of when to change styles—even under great pressure,” said Pezzini. “It takes a true belief in what you are doing to overcome a crisis. Being genuine, passionate and persuasive all come from within. You can’t fake these. Ag Leadership fostered the development in myself to uncover that belief of purpose.”

So how does a leader step up to deal with a timely crisis when the stakes are high, the risk of potential losses are great and tempers flare?

“You must have a very clear vision of what the end goal is,” said Pezzini. “The strategy might change, the vehicles for accomplishing the goals might also change depending on the circumstances, but the end goal is clear. In my case, at times we didn’t know exactly how we were going to get there, but I knew we had to keep working on a path. Ag Leadership gave me that sense of purpose even if the path forward was yet to be defined.”

“Surrounding yourself with a great team is also vitally important,” said White. “Making sure that any organizational issues are solved promptly during non-crisis times is key. Any unresolved issues going into a crisis will be magnified and could result in the failure of an organization.”

When it comes to leading during a crisis, Pezzini and White agree that Ag Leadership helped them realize they had the confidence to lead.

“I would say leadership under crisis takes courage,” said Pezzini. “As I dealt with the 2006 spinach crisis, I wondered to myself if I was indeed doing the right things. Even though I was not alone, there were times I felt I was the last man on a deserted island. But deep down, I knew something had to be done—and by luck or circumstance I was the person to do it.”

“I found that keeping our growers, board of directors and decision makers constantly updated from a positive, but not overly optimistic standpoint was important,” said White. “I used the skills and confidence I gained through Ag Leadership to be supportive of others who were in leadership positions. I realized that helping them fully understand consequences of decisions was also an essential part of my job, especially during a crisis.”
Dennis Albiani (32) and Cannon Michael (39) were selected to receive the 2017 Profiles in Leadership Award by the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation (CALF) and the Ag Leadership Alumni Council. The awards were presented at the Class 48 Inauguration and Ag Leadership Award Reception and Dinner on Oct. 12 at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District.

The Profiles in Leadership Award recognizes alumni of the California Agricultural Leadership Program for their leadership actions resulting in the betterment of industry, community, business, government, education and/or the environment.

“"The foundation and its board of directors are thrilled that the Alumni Council made the recommendation to recognize and honor Dennis and Cannon with this prestigious award," said CALF President Barry Bedwell (13). "There are simply no better examples of alumni who work to benefit California agriculture than these two outstanding individuals—they are truly leaders who make a difference."
Dennis Albiani is vice president of California Advocates in Sacramento. He has been involved in CALF’s Agricultural and Government Leaders Reception, class visits to Sacramento, and the Washington, D.C. Educational Fellowship Program. Albiani is chairman of the California FFA Foundation, a member of the Farm Bureau Scholarship Foundation and an advisory board member for the Elk Grove FFA Chapter. As a father of four, Albiani is also active in his children’s 4-H, school and Science Olympiad activities.

“It’s a real honor to be recognized by such a prestigious group as the California Ag Leadership Foundation,” said Albiani. “It’s a testament to the program that they continue to promote lifelong learning and to continue leadership growth after graduation.”

Deanna van Klaveren, Albiani’s nominator and classmate, said he is a servant leader who supports family, community, education and agriculture.

“After Class 32’s commencement, Dennis didn’t slow down,” said van Klaveren. “Even with all of his commitments, Dennis finds time to serve others and is always willing to be present at CALF functions and activities.”

Albiani has been very involved in the California FFA Foundation. He currently serves as chairman of the foundation’s board. While serving as fundraising chair for a decade, the foundation’s annual fundraising increased from $80,000 to $900,000.

“He’s been really active in promoting and expanding the alumni activity with the California FFA Foundation,” said van Klaveren. “It’s been a big project and he’s created opportunities for alumni to be more engaged in FFA activities and to help with fundraising for the organization.”

Van Klaveren notes that Albiani’s service stretches across all aspects of his life.

“He supports our agricultural industry and our voice in California government, but he takes it beyond that and is very active in his community,” said van Klaveren. “He’s not just supporting us because it’s part of his job, he’s supporting us because it’s a personal life commitment that he’s made that reflects through his family, community, his activities and his support.”

The Profiles in Leadership Award creates opportunities to showcase leaders who have succeeded in large part due to their Ag Leadership experience and training.

“It’s important to recognize alumni like Cannon and Dennis because it’s an opportunity to show people how they’re implementing what they learned through the program and how they’re making a positive change for agriculture, our communities and their families,” said van Klaveren. “When we talk about our future vision of being a catalyst, that’s what these Profiles in Leadership awards do—they spotlight individuals who have become catalysts in their communities, for agriculture and for California overall. Both of these gentlemen reflect that directly through their support.”

Albiani said he relies on some of the tools he learned in Ag Leadership in his personal life.

“Ag Leadership quickly stretched me out of my comfort zone, forcing me to identify and prioritize my core values. I started to identify and rearrange the values I wanted to pass down to our children. By focusing on personal attributes, Ag Leadership provides customized tools for each to utilize.”

As he continues his Ag Leadership journey as an alumnus, Albiani said staying involved and connected is an important part of his life.

“Ag Leadership helped me build relationships,” said Albiani. “Post graduation involvement is a large part of maintaining those relationships that have endured since the time I graduated from Class 32. Continuing to stay engaged and involved is important for both personal growth and professional growth.”

**WE TAKE THESE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS FELLOWSHIP AND FROM THAT WE TALK ABOUT THIS HUGE IMPACT OF CHANGE THAT WE ALL HAVE FROM GOING THROUGH THE PROGRAM. DENNIS IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW THAT IMPACT INFLUENCES OUR COMMUNITY.**

-DEANNA VAN KLAVEREN
Cannon Michael, of Los Banos, is president of Bowles Farming Company. Michael serves on the boards of the Water Education Foundation, the San Luis Canal Company, the Henry Miller Reclamation District, the San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority, the San Luis Resource Conservation District, Cotton Incorporated and the California Cotton Growers Association.

“I am incredibly honored and humbled to be receiving this award,” said Michael. “It is gratifying to be stopped momentarily and to be recognized by one’s peers. Having a chance to acknowledge and appreciate those who provide me great support—my wife, children, co-workers and others—is also a real gift. I am grateful for the opportunity to share some of what I have learned—successes and failures—with the hope that I can help others with their journeys and the industry as a whole.”

Michael said Ag Leadership impacted him profoundly, both personally and professionally.

“The program helped instill the ideas of continuous learning, personal growth and community and family responsibility,” said Michael. “The experience helped me to realize that California agriculture is as important as I believe it to be. But without others understanding and appreciating our industry, the outlook for the future is extremely challenging.”

Michael’s nominator, Rachelle Antinetti (42), says his commitment to California and U.S. agriculture, water and the environment is second to none.

“Cannon’s ability to relate, interact and accomplish goals with a variety of environmental groups and government agencies is miraculous,” said Antinetti. “Class 39 and Region 4 are very proud to have this alumnus joining the many recipients of the Profiles in Leadership Award.”

Antinetti noted during the nomination process that Michael is looked up to by many in the agriculture industry and his community.

“I nominated Cannon because of his empowering and selfless style of leadership in California agriculture,” said Antinetti. “He was one of the first people I called when considering the Ag Leadership Program. He has always been supportive and I appreciate all he has done to be a role model for me and others in the industry.”

Michael’s involvement in his community and the agriculture industry were also an important part of his nomination.

“Cannon and Bowles Farming are very influential with the Merced County Food Bank,” said Antinetti. “Cannon hosts dinners with influential leaders and decision makers across the state. He interacts with folks who do not understand where their food comes from and invites them to his farm.”

He is also very active in communicating about agricultural water issues with elected officials and by contributing content to educational seminars.

“I am most recently inspired by his partnership with the Environmental Defense Fund,” said Antinetti.

In 2012, Michael began the restoration of a 6-mile riparian corridor that runs through a portion of the farm. He worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Center for Land-Based Learning, Point Blue Conservation Science and others to plan, survey, initiate and manage the project.

“My initiatives of building coalitions with diverse groups with differing views to work on challenging issues, like water, stem from my experience with Ag Leadership,” said Michael.

When it comes to his Ag Leadership involvement, Antinetti said Michael has supported the foundation in countless ways—but the most impactful to her was when he gave her the courage to begin her own Ag Leadership journey.

“For me, it was taking my call and encouraging me to apply,” said Antinetti. “He is always willing to give his time and serve others.”

Michael feels his experience in the program was life-changing and advises others to apply.

“Throughout the two years, there are many highs, lows and challenges,” said Michael. “Facing them all together with your classmates is a unique experience that makes you grow together. Once you graduate, you realize that you are part of an incredible network of professionals that span the entire state.”
Kelly is an agricultural territory manager for Rehrig Pacific Company, a 103-year-old family owned and operated plastic injection molding company. She helps companies increase their food safety and sustainability scorecards through plastic harvesting totes, RFID (radio-frequency identification) tracking of pallets and metal detectable additives in the plastic assets.

Grant is the controller for Baglietto Seeds, his family’s fourth-generation field seed business that is a leading producer of seed and grain in Central California. He oversees the financial matters of the company in addition to other duties, including business and production planning, varietal development and plant operations. Grant also manages Seeds to the World, a nonprofit hunger-relief organization.

Eric is the president of Bream Family Farms, a third-generation citrus grower in Tulare County. The family has also farmed wheat, cotton, peaches, plums and olives. He is responsible for all farming and business activities. For his other businesses, Eric provides outside farm management and commercial services such as spraying, hedging, skirting and shredding.

Paul is the vineyard manager and viticulturist for Vineyard Professional Services, Inc. He has direct management oversight for nine vineyards totaling 500 acres of premium estate wine grapes in the Paso Robles AVA (American Viticultural Area). He provides nutrient and pest management advice on an additional 2,500 acres of wine grapes. Paul is a licensed pest control advisor and certified crop advisor.

Linsey is the executive director of the Imperial County Farm Bureau. She acts as a liaison with governmental agencies; manages the organization’s daily activities, including strategic planning, membership development and social events; and serves as the lead spokeswoman for the Imperial County agricultural industry. Linsey is a fourth-generation Imperial Valley native.

John is a sales manager for J.G. Boswell Company’s food and feed products group, which sells vegetable oils, dairy animal feed and other items to farmers, dairy feed companies and international customers. His responsibilities include developing opportunities to further utilize existing processing assets, logistics, inventory control, budgeting and market risk management. John grew up on a farm in Grimes.

Andrew is the fourth-generation manager for Fisher Ranch, a farm founded in 1917 by his great-grandfather that produces broccoli, melons, onions, alfalfa, wheat and cotton. He directs the daily operations, including the planning, growing and harvesting of all items. He also serves a supervisory role in the packing, cooling, shipping and marketing of produce items being prepared for shipment.
Lauren is an attorney and legislative advocate for Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP, a full-service law firm where she concentrates her practice in environmental and water law and policy. She drafts legislation and negotiates key policies impacting clients in the state Legislature and administrative agencies and represents the interests of the agricultural community on regulatory advisory groups.

Mark is the protein commodity manager at Western Milling, a diversified agricultural business that focuses on supplying commodities and feed to dairies and servicing farmers primarily in California and Arizona. He trades and manages the logistics for commodities that include canola meal, dried distillers grains, soymeal and corn gluten feed.

Melissa is the North Coast field representative for Western United Dairymen, California’s largest dairy trade association. She works with 120 dairy producers from Del Norte to Marin counties, assisting the mostly pasture-based farms with environmental compliance, pricing issues, labor relations and organic certification. Melissa grew up as a fifth-generation Ferndale farmer on her grandparents’ dairy.

Ian is the director of member relations and communications for the California Fresh Fruit Association, a voluntary organization that works on behalf of its members — growers, shippers, marketers and associates — on issues affecting their commodities. His main responsibilities are member recruitment and retention, which provide the association with the resources to continue its role as the primary public policy advocate.

Jazmin is the compliance and special projects manager at Pisoni Farms, a family owned and operated business that grows vegetables and wine grapes. She manages and implements the farming operation’s programs and policies to ensure compliance with all local, state and federal laws and regulations. She also assists with various projects that focus on sustainability.

Adam manages the operations for Wonderful Nurseries, the largest grapevine nursery in North America that produces over 10 million vines a year for the wine and table grape industry. This includes over 600,000 square feet of greenhouse space, 1,500 acres of land and its own shipping fleet. He is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations, shipping, inventory and production planning.

Jarrett is an engineer for the Central California Irrigation District, which provides water to more than 1,600 farms on 145,000 acres in the Central Valley. He is responsible for compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act on behalf of San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors and leads the technical effort for the Water Resource Management Plan. Jarrett also helps manage a small beef cattle operation.

Kelly is a co-owner of Heritage Ag Insurance Agency, which specializes in providing risk protection for agribusinesses and farm families throughout California. In her marketing and community relations role, she develops and shares the Heritage brand, a brand built on rural values, improving the client experience and promoting and protecting the agricultural community.
Barzin Moradi
Sacramento

Barzin is the branch chief for the Center for Analytical Chemistry at the California Department of Food and Agriculture. With its state-of-the-art analytical techniques, the center plays a vital role in ensuring the safety of the nation’s food supply and the environment. He plans, organizes and directs the activities of a multi-section laboratory system where highly skilled scientists analyze a wide variety of matrices.

Alejandra Navarrete
Lodi

Alejandra is a field representative for E. & J. Gallo Winery, the world’s largest family-owned winery with a portfolio comprised of more than 80 brands. She is responsible for sourcing wine grapes for programs within the winery’s portfolio. She works with growers to ensure quality standards on 6,000+ vineyard acres in the Lodi wine grape growing region.

Bryan Nickerson
San Juan Capistrano

Bryan is the business development manager for Western Growers, a 92-year-old agricultural trade association that represents California, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico growers, processors and shippers on state and federal regulatory and legislative issues. As part of the membership team, he promotes new memberships and the association’s numerous business products and services.

Punit Parmar
Capitola

Punit is the director of strategic planning and analysis and supply ops at Driscoll’s, the world’s largest supplier of fresh berries that has been family owned and operated for more than 100 years. He manages a team responsible for strategic planning and analysis, coordination of plant supply between nurseries and growers and designing and developing supply-related technology platforms.

Carissa Ryström
Chico

Carissa is a consultant with Morrison & Company, a firm delivering innovative solutions for food and agricultural businesses. She specializes in developing higher-functioning businesses and writing competitive grant proposals for agriculture-based clients. Carissa and her husband also farm rice in the Sacramento Valley and are fifth-generation growers within their larger family operation.

Jess Thomas
San Francisco

Jess is the co-founder and CEO of True Jerky, a startup snack foods brand founded in 2015 that offers beef and turkey jerky and other products. He sets the company’s overall business strategy and monitors its progress against the strategic plan. He also oversees product development, branding, capital structure and budgetary initiatives. Jess also participates in his family’s cattle ranch and co-founded a cow herd.

Joseph Vander Schaaf
Escalon

Joseph is a general partner in Vander Schaaf Dairy, a fourth-generation California dairy farm that is a founder of Valley Milk, a milk processing plant. He manages the day-to-day activities on one of the dairy locations and makes feed marketing decisions for the entire operation. He also produces almonds as managing partner of Johannes Farms, managing all aspects of that business.

Mitchell Yerxa
Colusa

Mitchell is a fifth-generation farmer at River Vista Farms, which has been run by his family in Colusa County for more than 100 years. It is a diversified farm that grows tomatoes, wheat, rice, sunflowers, cucumbers, cantaloupe, watermelon, squash, prunes, walnuts, almonds and pecans. He acts as a foreman involved with every aspect of day-to-day management of the farm and its 40 employees.
In 1970, Ag Leadership’s first class of 30 farmers and allied industry representatives were inaugurated into what would become the most respected and longest-running leadership development program of its kind. It would be six years before women were allowed into the program. In 1976, Ag Leadership’s first women—Judy Camarillo, Lyra Halprin and Jean Rotta—were inaugurated alongside their 27 male classmates to form Class 7.

As pioneers in Ag Leadership, Camarillo, Halprin and Rotta say they were proud to have earned their spot in the elite program. Although they came from diverse backgrounds and had different experiences, all three agree that the program was an impactful and life-changing opportunity.

Q: How did it feel to be in the first class that accepted women?

It was a tremendous privilege. It took a lot of guts for all the interviewers to pick three women who would be part of the class. When I read all of the stuff that the female alumni have done, I feel very strongly that the women have proved themselves to be a vital part of the Ag Leadership Program.

We blazed a trail. From a personal and professional standpoint, the California Ag Leadership Program has been unbelievably valuable to me and it has given me a perspective to raise my three daughters and given me a perspective in management. I’ve spent 40-50 years in personnel management and everyday I use something that I learned in Ag Leadership.

We came out of it with so much of a world view. When I look at what’s on the news and what’s happening, I understand it so much better because of the time I spent in Washington, D.C. and on our international seminar.

Q: What kind of obstacles did you encounter during your time in the program?

We were under a microscope. I’m sure that the powers that be were really worried about what women would do to the program. Would we step up to the plate? Everyone was watching, holding their breath. It was a risky feeling for them—the board, the interviewers. Maybe after a few classes they didn’t notice the women as much, but they darn sure noticed in Class 7.

In the 1960s I had done a lot of things where I was the first woman, so I knew that I would face a lot of the old time thinking. I was the first female ag appraiser for Bank of America and I was the first woman in the Mackay School of Mines. I was the only woman at the school and mining was very masculine. I had a professor tell me, “You got two choices lady, you can either drop this class, or you can get an automatic F.” A lot of the hard knocks I had were before Ag Leadership—so every time someone said something that was uncomplimentary, I took it with a grain of salt.

Q: What leadership lessons did you take away from the experience?

Number one was that there are no personnel problems, only management problems. Either you have picked the wrong person, you are not giving them enough incentive or you’re not giving them enough authority.
Q: Did the program impact your professional life?
Completely. Everything I do from a professional standpoint in management can go right back to what we learned in the programs that the individual universities put on. Those were absolutely incredible. It helped me take a look and realize what my failings were. There isn’t a day that I don’t use something I learned in Ag Leadership.

Q: How did the program impact your personal life?
That was a little tougher. When I would come back, I was exhausted and had learned so much. Your partner wants to know what you learned. Up until I was in Ag Leadership, I was always the one that everyone depended on at home to make decisions, the pressure was always on me to make everything happen.

It was a whole different world then when a woman stepped out of a family and came back changed. I don’t want to make that sound harsh, but it just changes a relationship. My then husband was used to having me there with him and all of a sudden I wasn’t there—it was tough. I won’t sugar coat it. That did cause me significant amounts of grief.

I think the women who come into the program now have it differently because it was a whole different world back then. Women have been through everything. Both the men and the women expect something different than we did then—it’s different expectations because of the fact that we were raised differently. It’s eye opening to see how in later generations, men are willing to take on a broader role at home.

Q: What is your advice to someone who is considering applying to the program?
I think whether they are female or male, prepare to go in with an open mind. If you’re at the top of the local food chain, this program will make you realize you are a small cog in a big wheel. I don’t care if you are a woman or man. Open your eyes, open your mind and let yourself learn.

Keep in mind that not all class members learn or grow at the same rate. The thing that impressed me was that I knew some people who had preconceived notions that were unbelievable. Regardless of how stubborn some people were, they did learn and they did grow. One of the things that Ag Leadership does—and it happened in my class—was that some people needed to have their eyes opened and I believe that when they went back to their communities they did not see it the same as they did before the program.

Q: What was the single most impactful part of the program for you?
The trip to the Soviet Union. We got there at the end of the Cold War and we took our preconceived notions over there. We started looking at things and learned and listened to the people. Things were very different. Your whole world view is different. What you learn and see is incredible.

Jean Rotta

Q: How did it feel to be in the first class that accepted women?
Ag Leadership was a very good experience for me.

However, that wasn’t the only thing that I was the first woman in. When Cal Poly San Luis Obispo went coed, I was the first there too.

Q: What kind of obstacles did you encounter during your time in the program?
It seems to me that my time in the program went all rather smoothly. I can’t think that there were any problems with my classmates or anybody that I was interacting with.

Q: What leadership lessons did you take away from the experience?
We learned how to work along with other people in and out of our industry and come up with ideas. It also helped me learn to speak forward about certain issues that might have been problems at the time. Ag Leadership helped me deal with problems with my own operation and problems that were affecting other people at the time. It gave me some background and maybe helped me learn to stand up and deal with and be proactive about important issues.

Q: Did the program impact your professional life?
Yes, I would say it did. It certainly helped me be a better spokesperson, whether it be with my CattleWomen’s association, or here in my immediate valley. It helped me help a lot of people with important projects and issues in our area.

Q: How did the program impact your personal life?
It helped me to intermingled with people that I might not have met before. When various projects came up that needed attention, it helped me to reach out about local and industry issues that were important.

Q: What is your advice to someone who is considering applying to the program?
I would certainly encourage them to apply because you get such a wide overview of state and national problems and issues and you can learn more about them and proceed in a way that may help make things better for lots of other people.

Q: What was the most impactful part of the program for you?
The program certainly helped me to be able to put my thinking cap on and come up with better questions for whatever the problem might be at the time. It also helped me to find better answers to the problems we were facing.

Lyra Halprin

Q: How did it feel to be in the first class that accepted women?
I was really proud. I was amazed that it took so long for women to be accepted, but that’s not a surprise—women have been wondering about that for years. I was 25 years old and I was a reporter for the Daily Democrat in Woodland, but I was also helping my sister and mother run our walnut ranch in Yuba City after the sudden death of my father. I applied to the program because I’d interviewed several local men who were in previous classes and they suggested that I apply.
Q: What kind of obstacles did you encounter during your time in the program?
It was like being dropped in the middle of a fraternity. People told me I’d taken the place of men who should’ve been in the program. To suddenly have women dropped into a group of all men—that was a huge thing. There were a lot of great guys in the program and I made a lot of friends, but it was rough.

I also think my experience was different because I came from a completely different background from most people in the program. Growing up I lived half the year in Southern California, where my musician mother worked, and then we all lived in Yuba City during the summers and other school breaks. I enjoyed Ag Leadership and particularly loved the travel. Because of my background and because I’d traveled before, I already had an international point of view. I was born six years after Auschwitz was liberated and had family members who died there, so I had such a different background. What I learned in Ag Leadership was more about farming, and what my classmates learned was more about the world.

Q: How did the obstacles impact your experience?
I was already progressive politically because of personal family experience. The program made me a stronger feminist. I wanted good job opportunities and when people told me I had taken a man’s spot in the program, I was stunned by that attitude. I did understand more about running our farm by learning from these guys, but I don’t think they saw me as a real farm partner, or maybe even Ag Leadership partner.

The two years in the program were an eye-opener for me and it was also a little discouraging. I was 25 and in a peak career-learning period. My interaction with the guys in Ag Leadership gave me a little preview about what I’d be facing down the road and gave me a lot to think about.

I also felt like a bridge between generations. I was in the second wave of feminists who wanted to work and shocked men by sharing power with them. We wanted a seat at the table and it was tricky at times everywhere for women, including in Ag Leadership.

Q: What leadership lessons did you take away from the experience?
I learned from exposure to people like the astronaut we met—Gerald Carr—who made me feel like I could do anything. I’ve never forgotten how I felt. He inspired me to be whatever I wanted. So exposure to people like that on a very personal level was fantastic. I’ve never forgotten that experience, which was a really significant thing for me.

On that same trip in the south, we went to Southern University near Baton Rouge, one of the historically black colleges and I was appalled to see how crummy the facilities were. Then we went to the big campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge that was predominantly white and it was a very different experience because it was richly endowed.

It was fun to be around people who were not afraid. I have never had trouble speaking out. I write a lot of letters to the editor, I have been a strong leader for various groups throughout my life. I think I was probably going to do those things anyway.

Q: Did the program impact your professional life?
I think it helped me especially since I spent most of my career writing about agriculture. The program helped me understand some farmers and ag industry people more. Ag Leadership has changed a lot though. I think there’s more for me to relate to now because it’s a more diverse program. It’s particularly inspiring for me to watch the women in the program now.

Q: How did the program impact your personal life?
Spending part of two years in a “fraternity” was an eye-opener. It challenged me on what I thought about being a woman and helped define me as a feminist. I understood more about what women all over the world face and helped make me more of an activist.

Q: What is your advice to someone who is considering applying to the program?
I think it’s a good program and I’m really glad it has evolved. It’s more of a reflection of California agriculture today, which is wonderful. Ag Leadership changed a lot in the 41 years since I participated. The program evolved and it’s wonderful. It’s more difficult when people refuse to change. But I don’t think that’s the case with Ag Leadership. We’ve evolved quite a bit and I’m proud of that. The program couldn’t have lasted otherwise. I love looking at the pictures and seeing that evolution. If you want to make a difference in ag, you have to reflect all of it.

The program is probably more interesting now because there is more diversity in general, and more women in particular. That’s a more realistic representation of our world. It was silly that there was ever a point when women weren’t allowed in the program. I’m sure we—the women—are part of the reason the program is better now.

I THINK IT’S A GOOD PROGRAM AND I’M REALLY GLAD IT HAS EVOLVED. IT’S MORE OF A REFLECTION OF CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE TODAY, WHICH IS WONDERFUL. AG LEADERSHIP CHANGED A LOT IN THE 41 YEARS SINCE I PARTICIPATED. THE PROGRAM EVOLVED AND IT’S WONDERFUL.

-LYRA HALPRIN

THE PROGRAM CERTAINLY HELPED ME TO BE ABLE TO PUT MY THINKING CAP ON AND COME UP WITH BETTER QUESTIONS FOR WHATEVER THE PROBLEM MIGHT BE AT THE TIME.

-JEAN ROTTA

WHEN I READ ALL OF THE STUFF THAT THE FEMALE ALUMNI HAVE DONE, I FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT THE WOMEN HAVE PROVED THEMSELVES TO BE A VITAL PART OF THE AG LEADERSHIP PROGRAM.

-JUDY CAMARILLO
This summer, the five fellows of the California Educational Fellowship Program’s (CA Exchange) Class 4 spent three days in Region 4 learning about agricultural sustainability and public policy in California. The program included one-on-one talks, small group discussions and site visits that fostered open communication and life-long relationships between leaders in the agriculture industry and each of the fellows.

“The Ag Leadership California Exchange program changed my perspective,” said fellow Brady Moss, who works for the California Natural Resources Agency. “I’ve grown accustomed to hearing about ag’s negative impacts on the environment—mostly fisheries—but this program helped me to also see the human side of ag, specifically the individuals, families and communities whose lives are embedded within and dependent upon the ag industry.”

The program allows for government representatives to participate in learning opportunities about issues facing California agriculture by taking them out of their offices and putting them up close and personal with agriculture and professionals in the industry. It is an experiential learning and leadership development opportunity that brings together representatives from California regulatory organizations with California agriculturalists.

“Working at the California Department of Food and Agriculture, I began the program with a particular insight about the state’s agriculturalists and our food systems,” said fellow Taylor Roschen. “However, the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation offered me so much more—namely, an on-the-ground, realistic perspective of what a farmer or rancher is tasked with every day. They’re bookkeepers, managers, businessmen and women, stewards...
of their land or operations, spokespersons for their products, and at the end of the day, still farmers or ranchers. Performing all of these functions simultaneously gives me such greater appreciation for how food gets to my community.’’

The goal of the program is to educate decision makers about current issues and complex challenges faced by California’s farmers and ranchers.

“I’ll be more sensitive to how policy decisions could negatively impact ag and how those impacts might be mitigated,” said Moss.

The program began with a train ride from Sacramento to Modesto and included a discussion about “Crucial Conversations” and an overview of the issues that would be presented during the next three days. The core leadership module for the day was improving communication, understanding what shapes perspective, how to avoid the pitfalls of groupthink, how to manage to consensus, values-based leadership and achieving inner excellence as a leader.

In Modesto, the group was welcomed at Modesto Junior College by CALF President Barry Bedwell (13) and professors. The fellows learned about agriculture’s value to the local and state economies; the economic relationship between agricultural customers, growers and buyers who supply products to the consumer; and the historical context, heritage and culture of Stanislaus County.

The second day of CA Exchange included tours of Foster Farms, Ratto Bros., Inc., G3 Enterprises, Louie Durrer & Sons Dairy and Frantz Wholesale Nursery. The day’s topics focused on poultry and food safety, preventing foodborne illnesses in animal agriculture, agricultural workforce issues, labor policy, immigration, the cultural influence of a workforce, pesticide usage, commodity transportation, nitrogen management, air quality and nursery production.

The final day of the program began at the Turlock Irrigation District, where fellows learned about water resources, flood control, ground and surface water, water conservation, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and water recycling.

“Beyond the wonderful tours and conversations with program alumni and agriculturalists in the Central Valley, I was humbled by how hard the farmers and ranchers we met work to make their operations sustainable,” said Roschen. “I was expecting, being from a regulatory agency, some animosity about our presence, but I was pleased to see how welcomed we were. Folks allowed us to have unbridled access to their operations’ inner workings, they were patient as we asked questions and were thoughtful in their responses. The operations we toured represent the ingenuity of California’s agriculturalists, effectively responding to drought and climate change, market pressures, regulatory oversight and at times, thinning profit margins. I have no doubt that they have the hardest jobs in our state.”

The program concluded with a synthesis led by CALF Director of Education Dr. Michael Thomas. During this time, the group discussed the importance of building relationships between policy makers and the agricultural industry. Thomas also discussed important leadership strategies that the fellows can implement in their roles.

“Thank you to all of the individuals and families that help put on this wonderful program,” said Roschen. “This includes the farmers, ranchers, nurserymen, dairymen and staff that took time out of their busy schedules to allow us to learn about their operations, the staff at the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation that kept my cohort and me directed and the families who opened their homes to us. This was a wonderful, once in a lifetime experience.”

FELLOWS
Daljit Bains, Deputy Director, Office of Permit Assistance, California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development
Ana Lucia Garcia Briones, Senior Specialist, California Groundwater Program, State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights
Brady Moss, Assistant Secretary for Policy, California Natural Resources Agency
Ann Marie Ore, Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor, State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights
Taylor Roschen, Assistant Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture

THANK YOU!

PRESENTERS
Ron Alves, Modesto Junior College
Barry Bedwell (13), CALF
Tara Bennett, Foster Farms
Don Borges, Modesto Junior College
Marlies Boyd, Modesto Junior College
Chris and Ellen Durrer, Louie Durrer & Sons Dairy
John Evans, Foster Farms
Michael Frantz (36), Frantz Wholesale Nursery, LLC
Tou Her (45), Turlock Irrigation District
Ron Macedo (32), R.A.M. Farms
Anthony Ratto, Ratto Bros., Inc.
Yvonne Sams (45), G3 Enterprises
Mike Staack, Grizzly Nut LLC
Dr. Michael Thomas, CALF and CSU Fresno
Phil Waddell (29), Foster Farms

HOME STAYS
Lane Parker (24)
Scott Silveria
Fall is in the air! New fellows are beginning their journey as they are exposed to resources, information overload and experiences of a lifetime. Class 48 isn’t the only group learning and gaining new experiences. At our meeting in October, the Alumni Council learned from Patrick Ogle, executive director of The Bulldog Foundation’s annual fundraiser. Ogle, who has led the fundraiser since 1982, spoke about why volunteers are a tremendous resource. At this particular meeting, regional directors and regional fundraising champions joined us to learn from each other through an exchange of ideas and experiences. If you were unable to attend, but would like to learn more about the information that was shared, please contact the CALF office at (831) 585-1030.

Speaking of fundraising, none of our educational resources or the experiences we shared as classmates would have been possible if it were not for the generosity of others. Contributions help fund amazing activities and focused learning. I am excited to point out an example of an alumni fundraising activity that has supported our program.

The third annual NorCal Ag Leadership Sporting Clay Shoot was held in late August. This is a terrific example of a new alumni fundraising activity! Net contributions from the event to CALF this year exceeded $11,000. That is fantastic! Many thanks to the event’s chair, Steve Garland (44), and all the alumni who put on the fundraiser to help the California Ag Leadership Program achieve its goals.

The idea for the event came together when a group of alumni at Ag Leadership’s annual Agricultural and Government Leaders Reception in Sacramento were talking about fundraising events that other regions were hosting.

“We heard that there had been a clay shoot in the past and we decided to rekindle the event,” said Garland. “We thought it would be fun to put a committee together to support Ag Leadership’s cause—and that was the genesis of it. Now our event has momentum and that’s exciting!”

The event began in 2015 with 36 participants and the number grew to 52 participants in the second year. This year, 75 individuals joined in on the fun. Garland credits the event’s success to its committee.

“You have to put a strong committee together and that’s the strength,” said Garland. “The network and resources that they bring are key. Without the team that we put together, we wouldn’t have the success we do. I’d say you need a core group to make the commitment to stick together for five years to establish the momentum that it’ll need to succeed into the future.”

What other advice does Garland have for anybody considering starting a fundraiser in their region?

“Pick a date and an event and just commit to it,” said Garland. “It’s got to be fun and it’s got to be low pressure and in a location that’s easy to get to. You’ll never pick a date, location or event that reaches everybody, so you just have to shoot for a consensus and once you have it lined up, just go for it!”

Other great fundraisers this fall include the Region 9 Golf Tournament in September and Region 7’s Dean Brown Golf Tournament in November. What fundraising event is your region planning? Don’t know? Reach out to your regional director and ask what you can do to help!

It is amazing what we have been able to accomplish as an agriculturally focused educational organization. We create transparency and understanding in a world full of walls and silos. We encourage dialog and the patience to listen with the intent to understand what others have to say. We are the catalyst for change.

It is only through active engagement, listening and patience that we begin to help shape the world around us. Each class was exposed to the best learning tools of their time. With time, we utilize new tools and new information is taught to the current classes. Alumni have asked the Alumni Council to share the new information more recent classes are learning. CALF President Barry Bedwell (13), staff, the board of directors and the Alumni Council are working together to develop strategies for continuous development of our organization and its alumni.

Stay tuned for more information as we plan CALP’s milestone 50th anniversary as well as other regional activities. We hope to use these events to share what we have learned with our alumni.

ALUMNI COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Regional Directors
Region 1: Christine Ivory (41)
Region 2: Glenn Proctor (29)
Region 3: Manpreet Bains (43)
Region 4: Rachelle Antinetti (42)
Region 5: Erik Jertberg (40)
Region 6: Vernon Peterson (41)
Region 7: Dan Sutton (40)
Region 8: Bill Van Skike (32)
Region 9: Jason Cole (42)
Region 10: Jose Arriaga (44)
Region 11: Vacant

Executive Committee
Bill Van Skike (32), Chair
Melissa Duflock (40)
Deanna van Klaveren (32)
Mike Young (35)
RECENT EVENTS
THANK YOU

CLASS 48 SCREENING COMMITTEES
Wasco - July 6
Rick Burnes (41)
Gabe Cooper (44)
Dustin Fuller (44)
Melissa Heinrich (46)
Joey Mendonca (41)
Greg Wegis (39)

Cal Poly, Pomona - July 6-7
Cameron Boswell (42)
Helen McGrath (43)
Steve Pastor (27)
Dr. Peggy Perry (9)
Jason Schwartz (45)

Oakdale - July 11
Rachelle Antinetti (42)
Bob Cherenson (29)
Correen Davis (45)
Taylor Gennzoli (44)
Joel Kimmelshue (37)
Paul Parreira (44)
Yvonne Sams (45)

UC Davis - July 12-13
Dr. Helene Dillard, Dean
Steve Garland (44)
Sarah Hovinga (46)
Beth Knudsen (37)
Steve Kritscher (27)
Jessica Light (44)
Craig McNamara (28)

Denise Moore (46)
Paul Squires (37)
Ulash Turkhan (42)

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo - July 20-21
Erin Amaral (46)
Danielle Burk (43)
Charlie Crabb
Layci Gragnani (44)
Bill Hammond (40)
Jim McGarry (43)
Danielle Dupree McShane (43)
Justin Perino (44)
Dr. Andy Thulin, Dean
Ivor Wingerden (39)

Cal Poly Exchange - July 26-28
Derek Azevedo (45)
Barry Bedwell (13)
Jeff Boldt (40)
Gabe Cooper (44)
Sarah DeForest (39)
Dr. Helene Dillard, Dean
Steve Garland (44)
Randy Hopkins (46)
Heather Jackson (46)
Stephanie Mosier
Heather Mulholland (44)
Sal Parra (46)

Marcia Shafer
Rod Stark (29)
Eric Thor (44)
Dr. Sandra Witte, Dean

California Exchange July 31-August 2
Rachelle Antinetti (42)
Barry Bedwell (13)
Darlene Din (35)
Michael Frantz (36)
Tou Her (45)
Chase Hurley (35)
Ron Macedo (32)
Yvonne Sams (45)
Judy Sparacino
Dr. Michael Thomas
Deanna van Klaiveren (32)
Phil Waddell (29)

Final Selection Committee August 17
Rachelle Antinetti (42)
Derek Azevedo (45)
Barry Bedwell (13)
Jeff Boldt (40)
Gabe Cooper (44)
Sarah DeForest (39)
Dr. Helene Dillard, Dean
Steve Garland (44)
Randy Hopkins (46)
Joel Kimmelshue (37)
Jim McGarry (43)
Danielle Dupree McShane (43)

Heather Mulholland (44)
Steve Pastor (27)
Justin Perino (44)
Dr. Peggy Perry (9)
Rick Rhody (45)
Judy Sparacino
Paul Squires (37)
Dr. Michael Thomas
Ivor Wingerden (39)
Greg Wegis (39)

NorCal Ag Leadership Sporting Clay Shoot August 26
Dominic Bruno (46)
Denise Carter (38)
Sandy Fiack (29)
Steve Garland (44)
Tyson Huesser (45)
Tom Merwin (44)
Jon Munger (36)
Matt Neubert (44)
Rick Rhody (45)
Jane Roberti (45)
Blake Vann (46)
John Weiler (22)
Four members of the Borba family—including Mark Borba (9)—were honored at Fresno State’s Ag One Community Salute in July for their commitment to farming. The event raised $851,000 for the Ross Borba, Sr. Family Endowment, which supports Fresno State students pursuing Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology degrees. More than 700 individuals attended the event, which celebrated the family’s service to agriculture and the community.

Mark Chandler (18) was featured in an Aug. 9 Western Farm Press article titled, “Industry veteran sizes up Lodi crop prospects as about average in size and big in quality” about the 2017 wine grape crop.

Ann Kraemer (19) was featured in an Aug. 9 Western Farm Press article titled, "Reigning in the Syrah in the Sierra Foothills" about managing vine growth.

Donald Norene (20) was honored in October with the Award of Distinction from the UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences for working to rally industry support for UC Davis research.

Vernon Crowder (22) was appointed to the Fresno Public Safety Advisory Board by Fresno Mayor Lee Brand. The nine-member board was created to enhance trust, accountability and transparency and promote higher standards of service in the Fresno Police Department.

Louise Ferguson (30) received the Outstanding Extension Educator Award from the American Society for Horticultural Science for her strong leadership, research and extension programs for the tree fruit and nut industries.

Michael Kelley (31) became chairman of the Western Agricultural Processors Association in June of this year. He will serve a two-year term.

Marcia Wolfe (32) writes monthly articles for the Kern Valley Ag Voice newspaper. She has written articles about owls, pickles and other topics.

Lino Bozzano (38), vice president of vineyard operations for Laetitia Vineyard & Winery, was named Winegrape Grower of the Year by the California Mid-State Fair. The award recognizes dedication, stewardship, innovation and leadership demonstrated in the San Luis Obispo County wine community.

Steven Knudsen (41) was named vice president, business development officer for Rabobank N.A.’s North Coast area in April of this year. In this new role, he will focus on developing client relationships and helping businesses grow primarily in the vineyard, winery, ranching and specialty food sectors throughout Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino counties.

Chris Nichols (42) was featured in an August CNBC special report titled, “Cage-free egg trend creates pricing concern on both ends.” The video can be watched on the AgDaily website.

Sarah Hovinga (46) wrote a blog post for Bayer Crop Science titled, “Feeders Are Leaders: The Need for Constant Leadership in Modern Agriculture.”

Randy (14) and Brad (17) Lange were honored with the 2017 Grower of the Year Award by the California Association of Winegrape Growers. The tribute video honoring the Langes can be viewed on the American Vineyard Magazine’s website.

Steve McIntyre (21) and Cameron Mauritson (45) were featured in a Sept. 1 San Francisco Chronicle article titled, “Inside 2017 California wine harvest: Grapes look great, labor crisis looms.”

James “Jim” Shasky, 71, of Le Grand, passed away on July 27, 2017. He was born on April 12, 1946, in San Francisco, Calif. to the late Henry and Eleanor Shasky. Leaving the city at an early age for the country, he quickly fell in love with the life and people of the Le Grand area. After marrying a local, Mary Parker, he built a successful bee and cattle business. With his young family, he struck out for eastern Oregon to operate Shasky Angus, where many friends and family visited. In 1985, returning to California and making a career change, Jim managed several valley fairs including: Los Banos Spring Fair, the Big Fresno Fair and the Chowchilla Fair. With the final move to the family farm in Le Grand, almonds, walnuts and more than 100 varieties of stone fruit were planted. Shasky Farms became a permanent fixture at many local farmers’ markets. Jim never met a stranger, and loved spending time with family and friends. He enjoyed the outdoors and hunted big game all over the world. He volunteered countless hours to local clubs with a special passion for Friends of the NRA and Chowchilla Sportsman’s Club. Jim could often be found at the barbecue or in the kitchen visiting and feeding the guests.
DONOR SUPPORT  JULY 1, 2017 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

$200,000
The James G. Boswell Foundation
(University Grants)

$100,000
The James G. Boswell Foundation
The Otis Booth Foundation

$80,000
Taylor Farms

$10,000
Growers Express, LLC
Helena Chemical Company

$8,000
Rabobank, N.A.

$5,000
Bayer
Stanley Kjar, Jr.

$4,000
Monsanto Company

$3,000
Limoneira Foundation Fund

$2,141
Farm Credit West

$2,000
Class 10 Alumni, Tim O’Neill Memorial Fund
-Mike Bennett
-Lance Brown
-Ron Caird
-Steve Chrisman

-$1,200
Ken Zimmerman

-$1,000
Ron Caird
Church Brothers, LLC
John Giovannetti
Jensen Family Farms, Inc.
Kaweah Pump, Inc.
Pandol Bros., Inc. (Louis Pandol)

-$500
Bob and Anne Atkins
Pacific Premier Bank
RD Warden Co., Inc. (Donald Warden)
Stasi Seay

-$250
Hossie and Andrea Smith
Ivor Van Wingerden

-$225
Bill Lewis

-$200
Jackie and Charlie Crabb
Felix and Mercy Gomez

$100
Bitterwater Land & Cattle Co.
John Crossland
Jerry Diefenderfer
Pamela Emery
DeWayne Holmdahl
Bob Lilley
Peggy Perry
John and Maridel Salisbury
Wayne Cooper Ag Services, LLC

$90
Jeff Stephens

$75
Jason and Jacqueline Pucheu

$18.19
Amazon Smile

In honor of the marriage of
Mark Bassetti and Twila York
Bob and Pat Gray: $100

In-Kind
TMD Creative: $1,400
Allied Grape Growers: $820.80
Meredith Ritchie Communications: $650
Rick Rhody: $443.33
Al Scheid planted his first vineyard in Monterey County in 1972. Today with 11 estate vineyards, we are proud to craft wines that garner numerous gold medals and 90+ scores. While pursuing our goal of crafting the best wine possible, we honor our commitment to be excellent stewards of the land, enhance the well-being of our employees, and support our local community.