WE GROW LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BY BILL VAN SKIKE (32), ALUMNI COUNCIL CHAIR

I just returned from the Alumni Council’s meeting at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Wow! What an experience! As many of you already know, the Alumni Council has been evolving over the past two years. We have made many changes in terms of structure, policy and procedures.

The new regional directors were on-board at our last meeting in February and began to work on their regional action plans. Of critical importance was the need to focus activities on recruitment for Class 48. The newly seated regional directors began reaching out to their local alumni and industry to cultivate leads for Class 48 prospects. Here is where the “wow” comes in. Foundation President Barry Bedwell (13) announced at our recent meeting at Cal Poly that we had more than 150 registrations that turned into 94 phase one applications for Class 48! Barry believes this to be an all-time high recruitment for the program. A big thank you to the regional directors and the members of their recruitment committees on a job well done! The groundswell of alumni support was nothing short of amazing!

Another interesting and equally impressive fact was that many of the 150 candidates who opened registration, but did not complete one of the 94 phase one applications, were counseled not to. Why would we ever NOT encourage potential candidates to apply? Well, it is simple. We really are working diligently to cultivate candidates so both they and the program can yield maximum production on the investment of resources into the program. This means going through a discovery process to see where each candidate is on their journey through life so that we can match experiences and knowledge with the best time to apply to the program.

As alumni, we have all experienced learning something at a class seminar, but seeing it entirely differently than others in our class—largely due to our life experiences. This difference in our perspectives allows for broader and deeper learning to take place and makes class engagement more enlightening and fulfilling for each fellow. We will be talking more in the future about what makes a good candidate. Just know this, growing leaders who make a difference starts with the right seed or breed, adding the correct amount of inputs over time and cultivating and nurturing until the right time to harvest. Help us to continue to sow the seeds of leadership so that we can continue to make a difference.
For Ag Leadership, summer is the time when the current class, for now Class 47, takes a break from the rigorous seminar schedule to ostensibly focus on what California agriculture does best; namely, the production of food and fiber for the state, nation and world. During the months of June through September, fellows can take the time to not only reconnect fully with their primary job responsibilities, but they can also reflect on what they have learned and the educational experiences related to the eight seminars they have already completed. For many, the realization that they have completed approximately two-thirds of the program is difficult to believe. The time seems to have a way of passing so quickly.

Summer is also the time when the foundation and the alumni volunteers, who put forth their valuable time and talent, concentrate on the renewal of this extraordinary leadership development program by selecting the new class. The process that leads to the selection of the 24 new individuals that will make up Class 48 is not a simple one or an exercise that is taken lightly. It starts immediately after the beginning of the new calendar year with the opening of the application period. That timeframe runs through May 1 and is closely monitored on a weekly basis by the foundation—particularly its program advisor, Dr. Charlie Crabb.

For Class 48, the foundation received an unprecedented number of applicants who completed the phase one process. The impressive number indicates that the interest level for Ag Leadership remains at a historically high level due in large part to the efforts of alumni from all around the state who worked diligently to put together recruitment events to further educate potential applicants. Of the 11 regions in the state for Ag Leadership alumni, 10 held receptions to encourage some of the best and brightest associated with California agriculture to apply. In addition, the word of mouth communication from alumni espousing the benefits of the program was instrumental. For every supporter of Ag Leadership and California agriculture, we owe a debt of gratitude to those alumni who put forth such a stellar effort!

Following the initial application period, comes the challenging task of insuring as many people as possible complete the more detailed phase two process so as to be considered for personal interviews. There is no time for a let up as responses are closely reviewed and logistics are set up around the state for the face-to-face interviews. There are a minimum of five interview sites that must be confirmed, schedules determined, panels put together and seemingly countless other details to be tackled.

Only through the efforts of our director of education, Dr. Michael Thomas, as well as the deans of the four participating universities and alumni volunteers, does the process come together and function with an efficiency that has developed over almost five decades. The work ahead will be challenging. However, we have an excellent pool of candidates to choose from and the opportunity to put together 24 individuals that “fit” to form Class 48 is one to which we sincerely look forward. Thanks to the efforts of so many, we are confident that the new class will continue the tradition of “growing leaders who make a difference.”

THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF SO MANY, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE NEW CLASS WILL CONTINUE THE TRADITION OF “GROWING LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”
Karen Caplan was welcomed to the foundation board on May 12. Caplan is president and CEO of Frieda’s, Inc. The company markets and distributes exotic fruits and vegetables. As the daughter of entrepreneur Dr. Frieda Rapoport Caplan, founder of Frieda’s Specialty Produce, Caplan began working with produce at the age of 10.

After graduating with a degree in agricultural economics and business management from the University of California, Davis, Caplan joined Frieda’s full time. Learning the business from the ground up, she worked in just about every department at the company, from packing boxes to sales and marketing. At the age of 30, she was promoted to president and CEO. In 1990, Caplan and her sister purchased the company from their mother. With Caplan at the helm and her sister by her side, Frieda’s became the nation’s leading marketer and distributor of specialty produce.

A well-respected leader in the produce industry, Caplan was the first female chairperson of the United Fresh Produce Association, a national trade organization representing the produce industry. She also served as the first female president of the Southern California-based Fresh Produce & Floral Council. She has been chair and vice chair of the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee and a board member of the Federal Reserve Bank, Los Angeles chapter. She currently serves on the board of Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County.

Caplan’s insights on the produce industry, leadership and food trends are featured in publications such as AndNowUKnow.com and the Shelby Report. She is a frequent keynote speaker and panelist, including appearances at Bitten LA, THRIVE AgTech and the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit.

John Muller Fellowship Fund

A fellowship fund has been created to honor John Muller (8) for his service to the agriculture industry and his community. Muller’s past service includes the Half Moon Bay City Council, chair of the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, Society of American Florists, Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service and a member of CALF’s board of directors. He was also instrumental in generating support for the Washington, D.C. Educational Fellowship Program.

Donations may be sent to California Agricultural Leadership Foundation, John Muller Fellowship Fund, P.O. Box 479, Salinas, CA 93902. If you prefer to make a pledge using installments, please contact the CALF office at (831) 585-1030.

Update on Class 48 Selection

We are pleased to announce that there is another excellent pool of candidates for the next Ag Leadership class. Applicant screening committees will meet in July to interview candidates who advanced to phase two. If you are interested in being added to our list of potential screeners for subsequent years, contact Judy Sparacino at Jsparacino@agleaders.org or (831) 585-1030.

Thank you to everyone who helped recruit candidates for Class 48!

Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast Committee Thank You Event

Ag Leadership alumni from Regions 6 and 8 gathered on April 11 at the home of Loren Booth (27) in Orange Cove to honor those individuals who made the Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast the No. 1 fundraising event for CALF.

Recognition focused on Gus Collin (3) and Adin Hester (3), who were instrumental in the formation of the committee and event that benefits the California Ag Leadership Program. More than $1 million has been contributed to the foundation since the inception of the popular event. In addition, the dedicated work and contributions of the event’s committee members, Bill Adams (32), Fred Lagomarsino (19) and Cliff Dunbar, chairman and CEO of Buckman Mitchell Insurance, were acknowledged with grateful appreciation. CALF is fortunate to have such supporters who make a difference.
10 YEARS OF SERVICE

This spring marked 10 years of service by Judy Sparacino at CALF. In May 2007, she began working part-time at the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation as the program coordinator. She became a full-time employee in May 2008. Her current responsibilities include assisting the director of education with all program-related activities. She also works closely with the four core faculty members on logistics of all program seminars. In addition to her program responsibilities, she also works with the Alumni Council on events such as the Washington, D.C. Educational Fellowship Program.

Thank you Judy for your commitment to CALF!

BOB GRAY HONORED

Former CALF President and CEO Bob Gray was admitted into the Education Foundation of Yuma County’s Hall of Fame. The Estelle Dingess Award, which was presented to Gray in April, honors an individual educated in the Yuma County school system who has made a significant impact outside of Yuma County.

Gray was presented with the award at the Yuma County Teacher of the Year and Education Awards Banquet after being nominated by Tom Tyree, Yuma County Superintendent of Schools.

“This is the most prominent award that we give,” said Tyree. “The person who receives it has made a significant impact outside of our community. He was nominated for the award because of his credentials and what he’s accomplished. He’s very well respected and thought highly of in our community.”

This is the first time in the award’s history that it has been presented to someone in the agriculture industry.

“If you look at the people who have received this award in the past, it’s been people prominent in medicine, law, military and athletics,” said Tyree. “Yuma has never selected someone from the ag industry—that was very significant because he is someone who clearly deserves the recognition.”

In his acceptance speech, Gray explained that although he had studied in the areas of English and literature, he ultimately chose to follow an agricultural career path.

“Bob noted that as a young man, to help pay for school, he earned money by working ag jobs in the summer time. He gained a respect for the industry and the people in it and that ultimately led to his career in that area,” said Tyree.

Congratulations, Bob!
“ELDER HARRIS QUESTIONED WHAT WE, AS A SOCIETY, ARE DOING TO AFFECT CHANGE. HE EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO HAVE A STRONG, INTELLIGENT MIND AND A TENDER, EMPATHETIC HEART.”

-CLASS 47 NATIONAL SEMINAR BLOG
In early March, Class 47 fellows traveled to the East Coast for their national seminar. The experience included meetings with top-level government, business and community leaders who provided a valuable extension to the study of state and national issues. The national seminar was also an opportunity for the fellows to study leadership throughout the history of our country and to promote engagement at community, state and national levels.

The seminar began in Maryland with a visit to Intersection of Change in Baltimore. The fellows of Class 47 met with Elder CW Harris, pastor and founder of Newborn Community of Faith Church. Intersection of Change is a nonprofit that provides support and leadership to the socially and economically disadvantaged Baltimore communities of Sandtown-Winchester and Upton.

Harris shared his philosophy of social service and the value of empathy, the strength of their community and about a lifetime of service in community development.

> “Elder Harris questioned what we, as a society, are doing to affect change. He emphasized the need to have a strong, intelligent mind and a tender, empathetic heart.”
- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

The fellows also learned about rebuilding community space in Baltimore. They met with business leaders and a community affairs representative to tour several neighborhoods to discuss business development in the area. They also visited the Sagamore Development Company (SDC) and the Under Armour campus. SDC is owned by Under Armour founder Kevin Plank and his business partner, Marc Weller. Fellows met with the vice president of SDC and learned about urban planning, landscape, architectural, social, economic and environmental impacts and context of the Port Covington urban development project.

In Annapolis, the fellows heard from Sarita Condie, a fourth year midshipman preparing to start her military career as a surface warfare officer this May. Condie—who is also Jill Scofield’s (47) niece—shared some of the challenges and difficulties faced by a Midshipman in their first years.

> “Day three began with a poignant and meaningful visit to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis. This service institution educates approximately 4,400 midshipmen each year— young men and women who begin their naval service careers upon graduating. The teenagers who start out are tested every day physically, mentally and emotionally. This has made her stronger, and is something that sets midshipmen apart from traditional college students. They enter as 17 and 18-year-olds, and leave as future leaders of our country.”
- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

In Gettysburg, fellows learned about the history of the area by discussing how decisions made under the stress of conflict tested team dynamics and personal conviction. With the help of a licensed battlefield guide, fellows learned about one of the most contentious times in our nation’s history and the influential leaders involved in the conflict. The guide led fellows through several critical decisions and interpersonal interactions that were key to the outcome of the Battle of Gettysburg.

> “Our initial case study focused on the personalities and communications between Confederate Generals Ewell and Trimble as they decided whether to advance on Cemetery Hill, which at the time was sparsely protected by Union forces. The combination of General Ewell’s indecisiveness and General Trimble’s aggressive tendencies contributed to poor communication during a critical timeframe. This scenario highlighted the value of effective communication as this scenario ultimately led to the confederate forces losing an opportunity to change the outcome of this battle and possibly the war.”
- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

The fellows also discussed the impact our nation’s leaders have during times of conflict.

> “The strongest personality guiding the nation during this difficult time was Abraham Lincoln. President Lincoln addressed the nation on several occasions attempting to unite and heal a divided nation. Class 47 reviewed and analyzed, line by line, a few of the most impactful public addresses to the United States of America—Lincoln’s two inaugural addresses as well as his Gettysburg Address. The exercise and day culminated reviewing the inaugural speech of our nation’s newest president.”
- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

On Sunday, the fellows of Class 47 attended a service at the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church led by the Reverend William Lamar.

> “We were welcomed with open arms by the congregation and church leadership. Today’s service was a special celebration of worship, unity and personal identity that fell on the first day of Lent. He submitted to us the
In Washington, D.C., the fellows met with three White House Fellow alumni who served in the White House over the past few presidencies—two in the vice president’s office and the third in the Department of Defense.

“They shared with us many of their experiences during their service, and challenged us to think about many of the ethical concerns that arise in politics and leadership. Ethics and leadership are closely correlated, and an ethical organization develops from an ethical leader. Compromise was also a key element of the success that they experienced in their service. Ethics creates trust, trust creates relationships and relationships allow for compromise. These connected principles have been building over the past several days and were really hit home today.”

- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

At the National Defense University, fellows discussed global food security, technology, innovation, research, human capital challenges, globalization, regulation and trade with students at the Eisenhower School.

“The members of Class 47 found a great deal of value in the interaction with the students of the Eisenhower School, and the Eisenhower students valued the interaction with us as well. It is interesting the difference in how the two groups view agriculture. We view agriculture through the lens of our businesses, our lives and our passions, while they view it through the lens of strategic importance to the nation, which is ultimately their passion.”

Meetings in Washington, D.C., continued with CEO of the American Chemistry Council, Cal Dooley (13), Congressmen Jimmy Panetta, Devin Nunes (29), Jim Costa, Jeff Denham and David Valadao. The topics of discussion included policy making, immigration, water, the farm bill and trade. Fellows also met with Senator Diane Feinstein and her staff to discuss water issues and bipartisanship.

“A message that resonated is to take a risk. As farmers, we take risks every day in our operations, but we must also take risks to develop relationships with people and policy makers who influence our operations. Take a risk to get to know our neighbors, city council members, county supervisors, state legislators, members of congress and senators and build a relationship to shape outcomes that benefit California agriculture for the future. We are grateful for the opportunity to meet with all of those who represent California in Washington D.C. We thank them for the sacrifice that each has made to serve our country, our state and California agriculture.”

- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

The national seminar ended with the D.C. Exchange reception at the USDA. Fellows met with CALP alumni, D.C. Exchange applicants and members of the Oklahoma Agricultural Leadership Program.

“This adventure has forever impacted us, and taught us valuable life and leadership lessons. The best way to make a difference and voice our issues is to engage with a larger audience. This means serving within our industries, pushing ourselves outside our comfort zone and taking time to engage with our leaders at a local, state and national level. We realized that Democrats and Republicans have far more similarities than differences. We all want what is best for those we represent, but in order to have true bipartisanship we need to compromise. If we are constantly working on building our relationships with one another it will be much easier to compromise because we should be able to truly understand others’ points of view.”

- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

In Washington, D.C., the fellows challenge of being acutely self aware. A concept that our group related directly to the lessons of Ag Leadership. Attending the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church was our primary leadership lesson for the day and an integral part of our D.C. experience.”

- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

The seminar continued with discussions about how trust and compromise are critical components to progress. During their meetings with experts on immigration law, the class learned about how labor issues differ from the East Coast to the West Coast.

“An overarching leadership lesson that our whole class gleaned was the need to compromise for progress to be made. Immigration reform has been under the microscope since the 80s, with relatively little progress for California agriculturalists due to a lack of understanding of the true need for all regions. Initially, immigration reform was drafted to minimize economic hardships caused by a shrinking workforce, and over time, it shifted to becoming primarily a social issue. Now, with a reduced labor force and increased labor costs, immigration is an especially complicated issue for both economic and social reasons.”

- Class 47 National Seminar Blog

“The members of Class 47 National Seminar Blog

We view agriculture through the lens of our businesses, our lives and our passions, while they view it through the lens of strategic importance to the nation, which is ultimately their passion.”
How many times have we heard alumni of the California Agricultural Leadership Program say, “It’s not just about the learning, it’s about the connections?” The California Agricultural Leadership Foundation is built on connections with core faculty, classmates, presenters, foundation supporters and alumni.

At the last Alumni Council meeting on May 12, we took a thorough look at the topic of alumni connectivity. We discussed how the Alumni Council can create more opportunities for alumni to connect with each other, with the foundation, with the current classes and with others outside of the foundation. In addition, the regional directors shared some of the events that have been held over the past few months throughout the state.

The Alumni Council has 11 regions across the state which help to better connect alumni at the local level. Each region was asked to host a recruitment event for applicants and individuals interested in applying to the program. The directors reported on their events and shared the connections made between recruits and alumni. They spoke about the opportunities created for alumni to mentor, the stories shared by alumni about their take-aways from the program and the bonding between alumni over the common experience of the program. There were many great examples of connectivity between alumni and future fellows.

The second area the regions have been working on is creating fundraising opportunities. The foundation’s board has set goals for this year and the Alumni Council is working on supporting these goals through outreach and events. Many regions have established fundraisers that continue to support the foundation and the directors talked about the opportunities that are planned in their regions.

From dinners, to book clubs, to happy hours, to gatherings at industry meetings—alumni are staying connected. Regional directors shared many events they have hosted as well as upcoming activities. Great ideas flowed in the afternoon during an alumni connectivity brainstorming session—camping with alumni (like the all class reunion), social hours, topic based social dinners around the state, Life-Long Leadership Learning (L4) seminars with live and webinar opportunities, welcome dinners for fellows in each region, bon voyage socials before the fellows leave on trips and gatherings after commencement to welcome new graduates as alumni were discussed. Then there were the travel ideas: regional tours for alumni, gatherings at the four campuses that are social and educational and even discussion about international trips exclusive for alumni.

We also discussed the seating of the 50th class. A celebration is in order! The group is looking into planning an event that would include class reunions, learning opportunities, reflections and memory sharing, fundraising and a gala. There is also interest in creating a 50th anniversary book—the Alumni Council will be looking for photos, stories and mementos to fill this “coffee table” book.

Connectivity works best when information is current. So the foundation and Alumni Council can keep everyone apprised of all these great opportunities, it is imperative that we, as alumni, make sure that the foundation has our most current information. Please contact the foundation office, check the alumni directory at AgLeaders.org or connect with your regional director to make sure your information is current.

So here is to 2017/2018 being filled with connectivity opportunities—recruiting, fundraising, gathering, learning and socializing!
Maxwell Norton (12) and Ken Oneto (25)

CALF graduates Maxwell Norton and Ken Oneto have been working with the Central Valley Farmland Trust (CVFT) to permanently protect working farms on good farmland in Central California. Ken and Maxwell are past presidents of CVFT, which serves landowners throughout the northern San Joaquin Valley who have a desire to permanently protect the land. Norton is a retired University of California farm advisor and Oneto farms south of Elk Grove. Both share a love of the land and are looking beyond the days when they will be walking the land that they are working to protect.

CVFT is engaged in the protection of productive farmland in the Central San Joaquin Valley by acquiring agricultural conservation easements (ACEs) from willing landowners on a voluntary basis and annually monitoring those ACEs to insure compliance with the terms and conditions; acquiring land through donations; working in partnership with private and governmental conservation agencies and organizations; working cooperatively with other land trusts; purchasing fee land and by engaging in public outreach and education to help promote farmland conservation and ag sustainability.

Maxwell Norton (12)

Q How has the California Ag Leadership Program impacted you?
A It brought me into contact with many people I would not have interacted with otherwise.

Q How has the California Ag Leadership Program impacted you?
A It opened my eyes up to other things in the world and helped me see that what we have here is so nice compared to what other people around the world are dealing with. It helped me understand that everyone deals with problems in different ways.

Q How do you think CALF impacts California’s ag industry?
A I think it is helping us to develop clearer messages.

Q What is the most significant thing you learned from the program?
A That the problems facing people living in cities are significant also and we need to consider that when making our case.

Q What is the importance of having a strong alumni network?
A I do enjoy talking to other alumni – it is interesting to hear what they are doing in the community.

Ken Oneto (25)

Q How has the California Ag Leadership Program impacted you?
A It has helped me to be more patient and to see and consider other points of view.

Q How does what you learned through the program help you in your professional life?
A It has trained me to keep considering the big issues that were beyond the problems at hand.
What is the most significant thing you learned from the program?

A. Everybody has a reason for what they do and it’s important to understand why they’re doing it.

What is your advice to someone who is considering applying to the program?

A. It seems like a big time commitment, but in actuality, time flies and it will all work out. When I began the program, it seemed insurmountable. But it all worked out and it was well worth the time that I invested.

How do you think CALF impacts California’s ag industry?

A. It exposes not only our leaders, but world and national leaders to issues effecting California agriculture. The program allows fellows to learn but also the interactions with national figures and international leaders is important.

What is the importance of having a strong alumni network?

A. Connections with fellow alumni gave me opportunities and opened doors with people who had common experiences and who had their minds expanded similarly to my own.

Nick Pasculli (27)

In early 2017, Nick Pasculli was honored by the Monterey Bay Business Hall of Fame for his 25 years of service to the agriculture industry and was also awarded the Ag Tech Innovator Award at the 2017 Salinas Valley Ag Tech Summit on Hartnell’s Alisal Campus. The award, presented by the Hartnell College Agriculture Business and Technology Institute, was to honor Pasculli’s continued support of the ag industry, as well as his success in cultivating a deepening relationship between technology and agriculture. Pasculli is founder, president and creative director for Salinas-based TMD Creative.

How has the California Ag Leadership Program impacted you?

A. CALP has impacted me in so many ways. The biggest perhaps, is that it opened my eyes, ears, heart and mind to the world around me. It made me realize the importance of interconnectedness and the interdependence we have on each other in our industry and on the human family as a whole. It has given me a passion for making a real difference in my community every day and in everything I am involved in.

How does what you learned during the program help you in your professional life?

A. My professional life is dependent on relationships with people—trusting, honest, authentic and openminded relationships. I truly believe that Ag Leadership had a tremendous impact on my ability to nurture lasting business, professional and personal relationships with so many amazing people. Relationships make life so amazing and drive me to be a better person.

What is the most significant thing you learned from the program?

A. I think the most significant thing I learned is how one person can make a significant change in the lives of others. We saw and learned about so many examples of that while in the program. ‘Be the change you want to see,’ is how I try to live my life. Being an example for my children, family, friends and the community at large. Recognize when there is a need and instead of just pointing it out, do something about it to fill the need or make the situation better for others.

What is your advice to someone who is considering applying to the program?

A. Just apply! I did twice before I got accepted—it happened at the right time for me and I suspect that is the case for others as well. Oh, and leave your ego in your desk drawer.

How do you think CALF impacts California’s ag industry?

A. Like the mission statement says, ‘We grow leaders who make a difference.’ That is what our state and nation need right now, people who want to make a difference while being openminded in trying to understand all sides of an issue. There is no better leadership in the nation—I am convinced of that. Almost 50 years, that says something about the foundation, the leadership and the participants. I think the success of California agriculture can be attributed to the type of leaders this program develops.

What is the importance of having a strong alumni network?

A. That goes back to my earlier comment about relationships. It is not just great to develop relationships, it is critical to maintain those relationships. The alumni network is a perfect way of fostering meaningful relationships that continue to make a difference for our industry, communities, state and nation. We become important in each other’s lives and we have shared in a common but different experience. There are not many programs you can say that about.

Continued on page 12
**Tim Vaux** (31)

Tim Vaux received the Significant Sig Award from the International Sigma Chi Fraternity. The award recognizes members who have achieved high levels of professional success. The award was presented at the Grand Chapter meeting on June 24 in Providence, RI. Vaux was unable to attend, but accepted the award at the Sigma Chi fraternity house at Fresno State on July 15.

The Significant Sig Award is one of the fraternity’s highest honors. It recognizes those alumni members whose achievements in their fields of endeavor have brought honor and prestige to the name of Sigma Chi. Vaux is president of The Vaux Group, consultants to the produce industry.

**Q** How has the California Ag Leadership Program impacted you?

**A** It provided me with a broader understanding of the world and not just my little space on Earth. I have a better understanding of how we are linked together in very profound ways. Former Costa Rican President and Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias hosted us in his home and asked us to pretend we are a non-white person living outside of the US and to look at America and our policies and behavior and consider if our outlook should change.

**Q** How does what you learned during the program help you in your professional life?

**A** I’ve been less timid about getting involved in industry matters. Before the program, I’d be inclined to join a trade association, as an example, and merely pay dues and attend an occasional convention. Now, I understand the usefulness of serving on committees and taking on other volunteer leadership roles.

**Q** What is the most significant thing you learned from the program?

**A** The value of critical thinking has allowed me to seek out other perspectives—similar to what President Arias taught us. So often in the past I’ve been inclined to associate with people who think the same way as I do about things. Now, I seek out other viewpoints before forming my own opinions.

**Rick Rhody** (45)

In June 2016, Rick Rhody was named CEO of Farmers’ Rice Cooperative (FRC). FRC is a grower-owned rice marketing cooperative with corporate offices located in Sacramento.

Prior to FRC, Rhody worked for Sun Valley Rice where he served in nearly every position from field staff to CFO. Rhody has a lifetime connection to the rice industry beyond Sun Valley Rice, from his youth in Rio Oso to summer college jobs working on a rice farm and hay ranches just outside of Chico.

**Q** How has the California Ag Leadership Program impacted you?

**A** The program has had a tremendous impact both personally and professionally on me. I think ultimately the program has helped to provide clarity and confidence as I navigate through life—family, career and community.

**Q** How does what you learned during the program help you in your professional life?

**A** I have really tried to embrace the concept of ‘servant leadership’. It was one of the early concepts we learned within the program and I believe it to be absolutely foundational to both the program and to
How has the California Ag Leadership Program impacted you?

A The program has a continued impact on me. During and after my time in the program, I faced the most challenges of my career. I would have survived without the program, but I’m sure it would have been a different struggle. I know that with the support of my classmates and the personal development I went through, I was able to achieve greater outcomes through each challenge. Oh, and I met my husband because of the program! That’s pretty impactful!

How does what you learned through the program help you in your professional life?

A I’m more effective in my role. I’ve gained confidence in my leadership style, strengthened my weaknesses and learned that conflict won’t kill me. Having a safe environment to grow in and a group that holds you accountable allows for a tremendous amount of professional growth.

What is the most significant thing you learned from the program?

A The most significant thing I learned in the program is that I’m not complete. I learned so much about who I am and who I want to strive to be. Really being aware of who I am and how I come across has helped me navigate through different situations that I would have avoided in the past. The confidence I gained has allowed me to tackle more within my company and even find a niche to educate outside of our industry.

What is your advice to someone who is considering applying to the program?

A Apply! Don’t hesitate. You’ll learn more about yourself and balance your skill set to be more effective in your personal and work life.

How do you think CALF impacts California’s ag industry?

A The alumni have a great impact in their communities and beyond. The Alumni Council helps educate through the D.C. and California Exchanges. These are great steps in educating people who have involvement in agriculture, but who don’t have firsthand experience in the industry.

What is the importance of having a strong alumni network?

A A strong alumni network is critical to the sustainability of the program so future leaders have a chance to participate. A strong network begins at the regional level and requires a certain level of engagement and participation to provide the resources necessary for a sustainable program.

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What is the most significant thing you learned from the program?

A The concept of vulnerability and how important it is to embrace our vulnerabilities as a means to living life to its fullest. Interestingly, in his book, “The Advantage,” author Patrick Lencioni speaks to this concept in great detail. The basic premise is when leaders embrace their vulnerabilities, trust and buy-in flourish and teams achieve their greater potential. Personally, it can be a struggle as it requires keeping one’s ego in check and opening up to being your true self in front of others—not easy for many of us. For greater understanding of this concept, check out author Brené Brown’s YouTube videos.

What is your advice to someone who is considering applying to the program?

A Talk to as many alumni as possible. Everyone leaves with a slightly different perspective and it is important to see how the program has influenced others. Sports coaches will tell their players to “leave it all on the field” as a reference to giving 100% effort. Once committed and accepted, leave your ego at the door and go all in. You will be amazed how the experience changes not only yourself, but the group as well.

What is the importance of having a strong alumni network?

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Danielle Dupree McShane (43)

Danielle Dupree McShane was appointed to the board of trustees of the United Agricultural Employee Welfare Benefit Plan & Trust (UABT) in early May 2017. UABT provides health benefits to UnitedAg’s member organizations, which together represent more than 35,000 insured members. McShane is chief administrative officer for Salinas Valley-based Merrill Farms LLC.
The Ag Leadership Program has placed an increased emphasis on emotional intelligence in recent years. Some recent alumni events have also highlighted emotional intelligence. In 2013 and 2014, two leading emotional intelligence authors, Dr. Annie McKee and Dr. Daniel Goleman, made powerful presentations at CALF’s Life-Long Leadership Learning (L4) events on the campuses of UC Davis and Fresno State. In the fall 2014 issue of Horizons, I wrote an article demonstrating how the topic of emotional intelligence is incorporated in all of the first-year seminars. We continue to focus on emotional intelligence because as Dr. Goleman has described, “Emotional intelligence is the most essential element of leadership.”

As we continue to learn more about emotional intelligence, we try to keep updating our curriculum to reflect new ideas on this important topic. Emotional intelligence is distinct from intellect. In fact, there is no known correlation between intellect and emotional intelligence. Yet, emotional intelligence is directly related to success and leadership.

One researcher—Travis Bradberry—who gathers data on emotional intelligence in the workplace states, “Of all the people we have studied at work, we have found that 90 percent of the high performers are also high in emotional intelligence. On the flip side, only 20 percent of the low performers are high in emotional intelligence. You can be a high performer without emotional intelligence, but the chances are slim.” (More information about this at www.talentsmart.com).

So what is emotional intelligence? In preparation for the fifth seminar this past February, Class 47 fellows were asked to define emotional intelligence as part of an assignment to read and respond to an article by Dr. Goleman. A few of their summary comments are listed in the sidebars. I thought their descriptions were instructive. They were able to capture the essential elements of emotional intelligence in a few words.

Bradberry describes four main skills associated with emotional intelligence. The chart on next page places these four skills into two distinct categories. The two “personal competence” skills are about you. The two “social competence” skills are about how well you interact with other people.
Self-awareness is the ability to recognize your emotions and continue to be aware of them as they happen. Self-management is the ability to use the awareness of emotions to direct your behavior in a positive way.

Social awareness is the ability to pick up the emotions of others and understand what is really going on. Relationship management is the ability to use emotions to manage human interactions successfully.

The good news is that emotional intelligence can be learned. The trick is to learn how to moderate emotions so the emotional brain is not in control of behavior. Self-management requires controlling strong emotions, which for most of us is a life-long challenge. We all have an emotional reaction before our rational brain is engaged. As we practice moderating the emotional response, we can develop new connections and develop new pathways in the brain. Continued conscious efforts lead gradually to a more rational response to situations that easily bring on an emotional reaction. The brain is actually adapting to a new behavior. Neurologists explain this as neuroplasticity, which is to say, the ability of the brain to adapt and change.

There is hope for any of us to increase our emotional intelligence if we put forth the effort. We may think we are smart, but to be effectively smart, we need to focus on boosting our emotional intelligence. Effective leaders are those who understand their own emotions and have the ability to read the emotions of others.
RECENT EVENTS

THANK YOU

Region 8 Recruitment Event
March 28
Holly King (24)
Bill Van Skike (32)
Mike Young (35)

Region 9 Recruitment Event
March 29
Jason Cole (42)
Denise Junqueiro (42)
Scott Klettich (43)
Helen McGrath (43)
Ventura County Agriculture Museum

Region 3 Recruitment Event
April 2
Mike Campbell (3)
Steve Heringer (9)
Sarah Hovinga (46)
Don Klingborg (18)
John Palmer (23)
Kevin Steward (36)
Erik Vink (25)

Region 5 Recruitment Event
April 5
Erik Jertberg (40)
Danielle Dupree McShane (43)
Steve McShane (33)
Abby Taylor-Silva (45)

Region 1 Recruitment Event
April 11
Sandy Fiack (29)
Jon Munger (36)
Cherie Stephens
Jeff Stephens (24)
John Weiler (22)

Ag Leadership Alumni World
Ag Expo Breakfast Thank You Event, April 11
Loren Booth (27)
Mandy Critchley (37)
Gail Gray (22)
Debbie Hurley (21)
Cindy Myers (22)
Vernon Peterson (41)

Region 2 Recruitment Event
April 18
John Azevedo (37)
Andrea Card (38)
Nicole Hayden (38)
Cameron Mauritson (45)
Glenn Proctor (29)
Matt Stornetta (47)

Common Threads North Award Dinner, April 19
Manpreet Bains (43)
Nicole Darraq Bert (37)
Terry Bresler (30)
Colleen Cecil
Judy Culbertson
Sarah DeForest (39)
Stephanie Etcheverria (43)
Louise Ferguson (30)
Sandy Fiack (29)
Roberta Firoved (30)
Heidi Harris (43)
Megan Huber
Annie King (30)
Shelley Macdonald
Lynn Martindale (31)
Deanne Meyer
Elisa Noble (42)
Lynnel Pollock (14)
Sharowynn Wilson

Region 7 Recruitment Event
May 12
Erin Amaral (46)
Anthony Bozzano (43)
Cara Crye (39)
Chris Darway (25)
Steve DeRose (38)
Tom Ikeda (26)
Dan Sutton (40)
Brian Talley (30)
Classes 30-39

Ann Thrupp (32) spoke about the growing movement to rebuild food systems—locally and globally—to improve the health and well-being of people and the planet at Santa Rosa Junior College.

Michele Clark (37) was quoted in a March 24 Comstock’s article, “In land we trust” about the work the Yolo Land Trust has done for more than 25 years to protect Yolo County farmers and farmland from encroaching development and a May 4 Daily Democrat article, “Yolo Land Trust plants concern for local farmland” about Yolo Land Trust’s work to permanently conserve farm and ranch land.

Classes 40-47

Danielle Dupree McShane (43) was appointed to the board of trustees of the United Agricultural Employee Welfare Benefit Plan & Trust (UABT) in early May.

John Chandler (44) was selected as an Eisenhower fellow. The group of 26 fellows from 23 countries spent a seven-week fellowship in the U.S. engaging in a transformative exchange of knowledge and ideas with the leading minds in their fields.

Sarah Hovinga (46) wrote a blog post for Bayer Crop Science titled, “Human health and agriculture aren’t so different after all” about the similarities between human medicine and crop production.

Multiple Classes

George Soares (4) and A.G. Kawamura (20) were honored by the Huntley College of Agriculture at its third annual Spring Harvest Dinner in late April. Soares and Kawamura are the first co-recipients of the Hicks Agricultural Achievement Award, which honors individuals for their accomplishments on behalf of agriculture.

Sharan Lanini (16) and Dan Sutton (40) were elected to the LGMA Advisory Board in late March. They will serve throughout 2017 and 2018. Joe Pezzini (28) is among the outgoing advisory board members.

Paul Wenger (17), Glenda Humiston (25) and Jenny Lester-Moffitt (47) gathered at the farm of Russ Lester (30) just west of Winters, CA in early May for the signing of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the California Farm Demonstration Network. The purpose of the MOU is to memorialize the agreement between the University of California’s Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the University of California, Davis, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the California Farm Bureau Federation to collaborate in support of the planning, establishment, implementation, growth and continuance of the Farm Demonstration Network that is dedicated to the increased adoption of conservation agriculture, soil health and climate-smart systems in California.

Paul Wenger (17) was quoted in a May 10 Ag Alert article, “Network showcases innovation” about the signing of the California Farm Demonstration Network’s memorandum of understanding at Russ Lester’s (30) farm.

Fellows from the 2017 California Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Leadership Development Program—led by Heidi Harris (43) toured several agricultural operations. During the experience they met with the following CALF alumni: Steve Danna (26), Annie King (30), Manpreet Bains (43), Tricia Geringer (43), Anthony Laney (43), Danielle Dupree McShane (43), Rick Rhody (45) and Jenny Lester-Moffitt (47).
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