LEADERSHIP AND DIFFICULT DECISIONS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

BY JEFF ELDER (35), CALF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In view of the multi-faceted life changing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the board of directors of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation (CALF) has made the following important decisions.

1. Effective immediately and for the foreseeable future, at least until the August board meeting, no event that requires face-to-face, in person, meetings for the benefit of CALF will be scheduled. This includes traveling, fundraising, promotional events, class events, interviews, etc. While this has been the de facto policy, this announcement formalizes the foundation’s position going forward.

2. The 50th Anniversary Celebration will be moved to Oct. 28-30, 2021. Staff has already been working with hotels, venues and speakers and are receiving very positive cooperation. Our hope and expectation, based on initial input, is that this move will not cost the organization any deposits, fees or a major change to our original celebration plans.

3. The remainder of the program for Class 50 will be moved to the first half of 2021, if the situation is deemed to be safe to all participants. It is our hope that graduation ceremonies can occur in May 2021, but is of course dependent on the safety of all involved. It was important to the board that Class 50 be allowed to experience the full program in the manner it was meant to be delivered. Ag Leadership is a social experience with face-to-face interaction within the class, with content providers and attending venues such as San Quentin and the international trip. We felt strongly that we did not want to issue class completion certificates that represented something less than prior or future classes and Class 50 would feel shortchanged in any way.

4. All activity regarding Class 51 will be suspended until deemed to be safe with the intention of an inaugural session occurring in October 2021. Again, it was determined that it would not be prudent or in the best interest of the organization to move to virtual interviews or virtual classes. And it would not be safe to do otherwise at this time.

5. The search for and transition to a new CEO will continue as scheduled. The search committee, chaired by Mike Young (35), is making good progress in identifying and reviewing candidates in cooperation with the firm of Kincannon & Reed. Nobody affiliated with Ag Leadership is happy to see these changes implemented. However, it is the opinion of the board that current events dictate that these decisions are necessary and prudent. The staff and leadership of Ag Leadership is committed and determined to continue to work steadfastly for the betterment and improvement of the program. We will use this reduced activity level to effectively on-board and transition to a new CEO, review the program content, transition to new program coordinators and content providers where needed, and make sure the 50th Anniversary Celebration is worthy of the excitement that is building toward this historic milestone. We do not want to lose any of the momentum the program has gained over the last 10 plus years.

We thank all of you for your continued support and interest in Ag Leadership. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to all who have suffered personal or financial hardship due to the pandemic. As terrible as this crisis has been, it does highlight the importance of California agriculture to the country and world and the importance of good leadership. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, any of the directors or staff. Thank you.
At their May 8 meeting held via video conference, the board of directors for the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation faced a daunting list of challenges to discuss in connection to its flagship Ag Leadership Program and impacts due to the COVID-19 crisis. Chair Jeff Elder (35) called to order the focused gathering of all 15 directors by reviewing the many areas of uncertainty caused by the pandemic. The state of California was completing its seventh week of the shelter-in-place order with no definitive direction as to when that order might be lifted and in addition, there was no indication if our partner universities would be welcoming students back for the fall semester.

Because of social distancing requirements, Class 50 held both its April seminar scheduled for Cal Poly Pomona and the May seminar set for Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, virtually via video conferencing. While Director of Education Shelli Hendricks and core faculty members Dr. Peggy Perry (9) and Dr. Bob Flores did an outstanding job in delivering valuable and impactful leadership lessons, everyone, including the board of directors, realized that the Ag Leadership experiential model requires face-to-face contact and long-term virtual learning would not be the solution to help us achieve our mission and vision.

Also discussed was the logical postponement of our much anticipated 50th Anniversary Celebration that was scheduled for October of this year. While there was certainly hope that such large gatherings could take place in late summer or fall of 2020, the reality that many of our major sponsors had let us know that contributions this calendar year would be limited to COVID-19 related causes, made the decision to postpone to 2021 relatively more palatable.

The challenge was understood to be finding a timeframe that was comparable to what was planned for this year and one that would work to ensure the maximum number of alumni attending as possible. While the board voted unanimously to postpone the event to Oct. 28-30, 2021, continuing uncertainty followed the meeting and discussions were subsequently held as to possible changes in venue and structure. At the time this edition of Horizons went to press, final decisions as to those potential changes had not yet been finalized.

In reflecting back on these seemingly crazy and even bizarre times, I believe we should all feel fortunate to not only be involved with this exceptional leadership program, but to also have leaders in place at the board level to make the very difficult decisions that had to be made for the protection of the fellows, faculty and staff. We can truly see the positive impact of these “leaders who make a difference” and to all those individuals and everyone associated with the Ag Leadership family, I say thank you for your support.

“I BELIEVE WE SHOULD ALL FEEL FORTUNATE TO NOT ONLY BE INVOLVED WITH THIS EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM, BUT TO ALSO HAVE LEADERS IN PLACE AT THE BOARD LEVEL TO MAKE THE VERY DIFFICULT DECISIONS THAT HAD TO BE MADE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE FELLOWS, FACULTY AND STAFF."

-Barry Bedwell
Due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the California Ag Leadership Foundation’s (CALF) board of directors has made several decisions. Read on to learn more.

EVENTS
No face-to-face or in-person events for the benefit of CALF will be scheduled. This includes traveling, fundraising, promotional events, class events, interviews, etc.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION RESCHEDULED
There has been much discussion about the 50th Anniversary Celebration which was set for October 2020. There has been considerable speculation that large gatherings of the type we are hoping for, which will bring five decades of Ag Leadership alumni together, will not be permitted this calendar year.

In our case, the primary question is not whether large events will be able to be held in October but rather, in addition to ensuring the safety of all involved, will we have the anticipated financial support from sponsors and donors to make our event a success. At this time, a number of those supporters have informed us that they will only be focusing on COVID-19 related causes this year. Therefore, the board has made the very difficult decision to postpone the 50th Anniversary Celebration until October 28-30, 2021. Please watch closely for further information as it becomes available.

CLASS 50 ACTIVITIES POSTPONED
The remainder of the program for Class 50 will be moved to the first half of 2021, if the situation is deemed to be safe to all participants. It is our hope that graduation ceremonies can occur in May 2021, with the safety of all involved in mind. It was important to the board that Class 50 be allowed to experience the full program in the manner it was meant to be delivered.

CLASS 51 RECRUITING POSTPONED
All activity related to Class 51 will be suspended at this time. Our hope is to restart the application process in January 2021, with the intention of an inaugural session occurring in October 2021.

Meanwhile, we encourage you to take this opportunity to speak with potential candidates and encourage them to continue to invest in their own professional development and to demonstrate leadership and community service where it makes sense and is safe to do so. When the application system is re-opened, applicants will have the opportunity to update and resubmit their phase 1 and 2 applications.

CEO SEARCH
The search for and transition to a new CEO will continue as scheduled. As understood at the time of his hiring, Barry Bedwell (13) has announced his intention to retire at the end of this year. A search committee, led by Mike Young (35), is making good progress in identifying and reviewing candidates in cooperation with the firm of Kincannon & Reed.

WASHINGTON, D.C. EDUCATIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
At the recommendation of the D.C. Exchange selection committee and the Alumni Council’s executive committee, the foundation’s board of directors made the difficult decision to postpone this year’s D.C. Exchange. The program will be held in the fall of 2021 and will remain in Regions 3, 4 and 5. Thank you to everyone who is involved in D.C. Exchange for their commitment to ensuring that all participants are safe and that a high-quality educational program is organized.

LOOKING BACK 10 YEARS
Following are some foundation-specific news highlights from 2010:

• April / The CALF board convened for a three-day facilitated synthesis exercise planning session, where three core strategies emerged and a new mission (“We grow leaders who make a difference”) and vision (“California agricultural leaders united as a catalyst for a vibrant industry”) were adopted.

• April / In a proactive move to support the strategic plan – and generate more financial resources for the goals and objectives of the plan – the CALF board issued itself a fundraising challenge to raise $100,000 by June 9. The Otis Booth Foundation pledged to match that amount if met. In the end, $200,000 was raised.

• April / The CALF office moved from Sacramento to its current Salinas farmhouse location.

• June / CALF hired TMDCreative to assist with CALF’s communications overhaul.

• September / For only the third time since the program began, a formal review of program content was conducted.

• October / Horizons transitioned from an eight-page newsletter to a 16-page magazine.
The 26th annual Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast was held on Feb. 13, in Tulare. The event, which was emceed by Loren Booth (27), drew 740 attendees and raised $114,000 for the Ag Leadership Foundation.

“The success of this year’s event is due to the hard work and planning of the committee, this year led by Doug DeGroff (29), who met many times to make sure this extraordinary event went off without a hitch—which it certainly did once again," said CALF President Barry Bedwell (13).

The history of the popular breakfast can be traced back to Ag Leadership alumni, starting with Gus Collin (3) and Adin Hester (3), who later teamed up with Fred Lagomarsino (19), to join with the local insurance community, led by Buckman-Mitchell, to create a partnership with the larger insurance industry for a fundraiser to benefit Ag Leadership.

"Part of what makes the event exceptional is that it’s a tradition, much like the tradition of the California Ag Leadership Program," said DeGroff. "We bring in a great speaker, we have a great meal and have it attended by some great people!"

The keynote speaker at this year’s event, Ross Bernstein, entertained and inspired the audience by delivering an inspirational address about leadership. He spoke about well-known leadership principles and included case studies from his many years covering sports.

“The concepts he discussed are simple, but not easy,” said CALF Board Chair Jeff Elder (35). “He encouraged the audience to find what they are passionate about and take stock of their effort to maximize that passion. The best part of his speech was tailored to the audience of agricultural leaders. After spending a day touring the San Joaquin Valley and visiting farming operations, he was able to list the challenges faced by agriculture in California.”

Thanks to generous sponsors — such as Republic, Gallagher, Insurance Company of the West, Chubb Agribusiness, Berkshire Hathaway, Western Growers, Travelers, Rural Community, State Fund, Nationwide and especially Zenith, as the platinum sponsor — this year’s return to the Ag Leadership Foundation was again more than $100,000. Since its inception, more than $1.8 million has been raised for Ag Leadership from the event which contributes 6 percent of the foundation’s annual budget.

“The Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast was again a stellar event,” said Elder. “We owe a great debt of gratitude to the sponsors and the volunteers who make this event possible.”

"THANK YOU, SINCERELY TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS AND ALUMNI ON THE COMMITTEE! THEY MAKE THE CHAIRPERSON LOOK GOOD! THEY ARE THE REASON THIS PROGRAM IS SUCCESSFUL! A LOT OF THE PLANNING IS ON ‘AUTO PILOT’ BECAUSE SOMEONE STEPS UP AND GETS THEIR PART DONE! EACH PERSON, ON AVERAGE, BRINGS IN $5,500 NET.”

-Doug DeGroff

Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast Committee

Juliet Allen (27)  Deborah Hurley (21)  Ian LeMay (48)  John Schaap (39)
Hugh Bello (31)  Deborah Hurley (21)  Darrin Monteiro (47)  Erin Turner
Fred Berry (20)  Nomie Kautz (30)  Soapy Mulholland (25)  Ray Van Beck (37)
Tricia Stever Blatter (34)  Lynn Knudson (20)  Cindy Myers (22)  Laura Pires (49)
Loren Booth (27)  Mark Krebsbach (48)  James Neeley (26)
Mandy Critchley (37)  Fred Lagomarsino (19)
“THIS IS A HISTORIC TIME IN OUR WORLD’S HEALTH AND IT IS IN CRITICAL TIMES LIKE THIS THAT LEADERSHIP PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN SUPPORTING UNITY AND HUMANITY WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES.”
-National Seminar Blog
In early March, the fellows of Class 50 began their national seminar experience in Sacramento, followed by Atlanta, Ga. and Washington, D.C. The seminar provides a valuable extension to the study of state and national issues during the first year of the program.

In Sacramento, the fellows met at the Agricultural Council of California with Emily Rooney (39) and Tricia Geringer (43), who shared their strategies for working collaboratively on issues facing agriculture. From there, they visited the California Department of Food and Agriculture where Secretary Karen Ross discussed her leadership journey. At the lieutenant governor’s office, fellows enjoyed a surprise visit by Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis. They were joined for lunch by Lauren Hajik (48), who spoke to the group about the legislative and lobbying cultures in Sacramento. The fellows also heard from several senators and assembly members who shared their leadership strategies.

“We rounded out our evening at the Sutter Club for Ag Leadership’s Agricultural & Government Leaders Reception. The resounding theme of the day was the art of listening. When people with opposing views can come together and listen, there is a creation of shared meaning resulting in more opportunity for collaboration. When we listen, we can learn from others and the more we learn, the more informed decisions we can make. In order to develop into the best versions of ourselves, we must remember to listen. After all, there is a reason we were born with two ears and one mouth.”

-National Seminar Blog

During a meeting with the director of the Department of Pesticide Regulation, fellows candidly discussed the issues his office handles. They also met with the director of the governor’s water portfolio program, who spoke about the long-term vision for California water and about her need for exposure to information about water in relation to the state’s agriculture industry. From there, fellows met with Sen. James Nielsen (5), who led the group to the Senate floor, to learn about his leadership roles and passion for agriculture. During lunch at Kahn, Soares & Conway L.L.P., George Soares (4) talked to fellows about his thoughts on continuing to move California agriculture forward.

“During an outbreak, (or crisis, or other stressful time) people look to credible trustworthy sources and people often remember the first thing they hear during an emergency—even if it is wrong. The trust is essential, particularly when dealing with topics that are connected to us emotionally, have incomplete information and can be highly technical and difficult to understand. It is clear that the trust building has to happen before the emergency so that when the emergency comes, it is already there. In order to lead to action, advice needs to be specific, clear and complete. We challenge everyone to work towards being a source of credible information so that people trust and look to you when a question arises. We can do this in our home and work lives, with friends and on social media. This trust and relationship has to be developed and tended to, and we can do that by being the source of actionable information.”

-Blog

At the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), fellows met with scientists for Healthy Food Environments. There they learned about developing nutritional access by working with schools to buy locally and seasonally sourced food to reduce costs and improve healthy eating. They also participated in a discussion around foodborne diseases and outbreaks.

“The Incident Command Center is structured in a way that is flexible, scalable and adaptable to any specific incident. Teams are...
designed to do a specific task that is clearly communicated to them based on the leadership objectives.”

- Blog

While visiting with representatives at the Georgia Capitol, fellows learned about issues facing farmers and ranchers in the state.

- “Although there are certainly differences between Georgia and California, some of the challenges are the same, and were issues we discussed in Sacramento—promoting locally grown food in schools, cost of production, urban/suburban and ag interfaces. One of the strong themes, like in California, was communication and relationships. We, as agriculturalists, need to do a better job building relationships, understanding others and communicating what we do and the impact.”

- Blog

On the fifth day of the national seminar, scheduled plans changed due to precautions being implemented in light of COVID-19. The fellows quickly adapted and took the opportunity to experience more of Atlanta’s rich history and culture.

- “The opportunity to visit the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park was powerful. This park encompasses the King Center, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Freedom Hall, the Eternal Flame and the home where MLK was born and raised. In this Atlanta neighborhood that has been preserved for history, MLK began to move hearts and minds in his leadership as a catalyst for social change. Walking the same streets and listening to recorded sermons in his church, you could feel the passion and strength of his leadership all around you.”

- Blog

The Washington, D.C. portion of the national seminar started with a day filled with exploring the city. The fellows began by attending a service at the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church.

- “We experienced a worship service that was filled with song and grounded in culture, a sermon expressed through passion and love and a community built on trust. As a group, we felt the welcoming of smiles, along with a feeling of gratitude from the congregation. As individuals, we felt like family. We left this experience with our eyes open to spirituality and culture.”

- Blog

The fellows of Class 50 continued in D.C. with visits to Arlington National Cemetery and a nighttime monuments tour.

- “There is something to be said about the power of a memorial in the quiet of the night. We saw Lincoln sitting in his chair, surrounded by the impactful and history-changing words spoken during his presidency. Together, we walked through the World War II memorial searching for the great pillar of California and resonated on the sacrifices made through such a devastating war. The monuments and memorials are a must-see when in D.C. for anyone that has never been here before.”

- Blog

During their first business day in D.C., fellows learned about agricultural advocacy, current legislative issues and the importance of good leadership. The day began with meetings at the United Fresh Produce Association and the Russell Group. The seminar continued with a panel discussion which included four D.C. Exchange alumni, moderated by Darlene Din (35). A second panel discussion was made up of alumni of the White House Fellows program. The panelists recounted their experiences within their respective programs and how they have used the leadership lessons they learned to help them in their careers.

- “Our evening was capped off with an extraordinary tour with Rep. Jim Costa at the U.S. Capitol. Our tour included time on the House floor, Speaker’s gallery and Statuary Hall. Rep. Costa shared stories of the history of significant statues, artwork and symbolism within the Capitol. He shared private areas for House members, including stories
of private offices where Harry Truman learned he would be the next president of the United States and where crucial conversations were had on controversial issues. This tour lasted late into the evening and culminated our first official day in D.C. with the importance of the history and significance of the work being done in this city. We are extremely fortunate to be immersed in this experience and this profound experience has not been lost on any of our fellows. We are excited for our next few days and embracing more of the D.C. culture as we learn more about the work of the various agencies within our government.”

- Blog

At the office of the United States Trade Representative, fellows met with the assistant trade representative, who shared her extensive experience on complex trade negotiations and the cultural dynamics that come along with working with international trade partners. Fellows also met with the deputy director of the Office of Agricultural Policy, where they learned about the importance of building alliances and strategies for maintaining partnerships. At the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the associate director of the Office of Public Liaison to the White House talked about serving as a communication conduit between the White House and the U.S. agriculture industry. During a meeting at the USDA, fellows learned about the interactions between the USDA and Congress and how policy decisions are influenced.

- “To close out the night, we joined CALF’s chairman of the board, Jeff Elder (35); chairman of the D.C. Exchange, Chase Hurley (35) and many other program alumni at the D.C. Exchange Reception. The reception helped us see the power of building our relationships with federal public servants, we felt like we bridged a gap.”
- Blog

The final day of the national seminar was filled with meetings on Capitol Hill. Some of the day’s topics included timely issues impacting agriculture, such as water and immigration. Fellows also gained valuable insights during discussions about election security, foreign interference, bipartisan efforts and healthcare.

- “It was an amazing day that tested our patience and provided phenomenal insight into the complex process of how D.C. shapes policy.”
- Blog

As the fellows prepared to travel home, they reflected on the opportunities they had experienced over the course of their 12-day national seminar.

- “The program’s legacy led us to meetings, tours, exposure to social issues and access to our state and federal governments that reached far beyond our expectations. There is so much on our minds as we return home to our families and work while processing the experiences we’ve had on this journey.”
- Blog

“OUR TRAVELS TOOK US OUTSIDE OF OUR COMFORT ZONES WHILE EXPANDING OUR MINDS TO THE OPPORTUNITIES WE HAVE TO AFFECT THE FUTURE OF OUR INDUSTRY. WE WERE REMINDED OFTEN THAT JOINING THE CONVERSATION IS JUST AS CRUCIAL AS LISTENING, ESPECIALLY WHILE ENGAGING GROUPS WITH DIFFERING VIEWS.”
- National Seminar Blog
The California Agricultural Leadership Program (CALP) operated for many years as individual universities planning and executing seminars on behalf of the program. The origins of CALP’s Education Team emerged in the late 1980s when Tim LaSalle (6) became president of the Agricultural Education Foundation (the former title of CALF).

One of the first collaborations I (Dr. Perry) recall was in the early 1990s when we were considering how to introduce the new class, at the inaugural, to the way the four campuses worked together to address issues, each from a specific viewpoint.

Prior to LaSalle’s appointment to the helm of CALF, the curriculum for the program was delivered by the four universities somewhat independently, with general topic areas assigned. UC Davis was to deliver programming on international issues and economics; at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, it was communication and education; Fresno State presented on topics related to government and politics and Cal Poly Pomona explored social and cultural issues along with world religions.

When the AIDS crisis was beginning to touch every community in the state, we felt it was an excellent vehicle to demonstrate how the program content fused together. We each sought out experts who would present to the class. UC Davis focused on the medical and economic implications of the epidemic; Fresno State brought a political activist to challenge our beliefs; Cal Poly San Luis Obispo explored the communications challenges and Cal Poly Pomona created an experiential exercise involving an exploration of the personal loss associated with AIDS and other severe illnesses. These sessions were difficult to hear, uncomfortable, even shocking—all important aspects of the Ag Leadership experience! This package of content brought the reality of an important societal issue to the fellows and demonstrated how the program would be an amalgam of differing perspectives. And the topics go way beyond agriculture!

The deans of agriculture at each of the institutions were responsible for their part of the program. The deans did not develop the seminar programs, but they were charged with assigning the role of campus coordinator to a member of their faculty. The deans of agriculture at the four campuses met quarterly to oversee the education program and to assess its effectiveness. The faculty members (campus coordinators) developing and delivering the seminar rarely met face-to-face. Each university had their assignment and went about preparing their part of the program with little or no consultation. As one might expect, there was always some friendly competition among the universities, and maybe even a little rivalry. The competition was to get the best ratings at whatever the cost. In some ways, it kept the seminars entertaining, but it also resulted in some distortion of the leadership content.

LaSalle realized a need to bring the campus coordinators (as the core faculty members were called at the time) together to discuss the program’s curriculum and coordinate the components to the overall program. The goal was to sequence the learning and infuse more theory into practice. LaSalle organized the meeting of the campus coordinators in Templeton, Calif., the location of the foundation office at the time. Of course, the campus coordinators welcomed the opportunity to come together to coordinate efforts in delivering the program. The initial meeting turned into an annual event, and was the impetus in developing a stronger team—a more cohesive group.

The Education Team alternated retreat locations. Palm Springs, San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, Templeton, Sacramento, Fresno and Rumsey are but a few of the locations where the Education Team met for their retreat. There were many instances when the group was hosted by Dr. Joe Sabol and his wife, Jill, at their home in San Luis Obispo. The annual Education Team retreat not only focused on programmatic content and concerns, but it often became a horticultural extravaganza for the group. Dr. Sabol’s property is full of fruit trees, a vegetable garden, dahlias, owls and more.

Bringing the campus coordinators together was the start of what has become a critical element in the delivery of the curriculum for the Ag Leadership Program. Since that time, the four faculty members have met...
regularly throughout the year, including a summer “Ed Team Retreat” where deeper discussions take place. The person assigned to convene the group was the director of education, essentially the person who manages the entire program. Seminar evaluations, year-end meeting insights and exit interview commentary are the primary elements considered in determining if adjustments to the program are needed. The team also deliberates on the potential educational value of national and international destinations that often result in the identification of travel seminar itineraries.

At one point it was decided that for the core faculty to be at their best, they should be supported in approved professional development opportunities. One of the earliest opportunities came when the Education Team attended a Franklin Covey workshop in Southern California. The workshop was based on the “7 Habits of Highly Successful People.” The entire Education Team participated.

Another example was the addition of a ‘ropes’ type of experience, which has evolved into a team building exercise at the November seminar at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. In the early 1990s, adventure courses or ropes courses, became popular in leadership development practices. The Education Team considered the value of this type of experience for the Ag Leadership Program. We assigned ourselves the task of experiencing a ropes course on our own and came back to discuss our findings. I (Dr. Perry) remember clutching a poll on a crosspiece 30 feet above the group with Dr. Julian Whaley, the campus coordinator at Fresno State at the time. We were definitely outside of our own comfort zones! The result of our mutual explorations was the addition of this physical element which challenges the new class to find out how to communicate and solve problems most effectively.

In hindsight, several benefits emerged from this collaborative effort. Where the program might have been viewed as a series of somewhat disconnected experiences at the various campuses and travel seminars, it has now grown into a program with significant integration and reinforcement of learning from the inaugural seminar to commencement. What started back then has evolved into continual incremental adjustments and improvements. The dialogue continues. In addition, several very significant curriculum reviews and realignments have taken place. The most recent major changes to the program occurred in 2011 when the new CEO and president, Bob Gray, was hired. The outcome of a multi-day stakeholder gathering was the 17-month program of today. The previous program was 21 months long and
did not include the coaching piece. The individual coaching component was introduced and supported by Dr. Pat Lattore, an educational consultant to the organization. At each stage, the Education Team posed ideas, considered suggestions from outside experts and worked out the details to bring new experiences to class fellows.

A component of the Education Team has long been to include the input of current and former fellows in the discussions. At first, several members of a current class and recent graduates were invited to join the Education Team to gain insight into what was working well, what could be improved and what might be added. This practice has developed into a formal arrangement whereby the Alumni Council designates two individuals to sit on the Education Team to represent the fellows and provide valuable feedback.

If you ask the faculty on the Education Team what they value the most, you are likely to get a common response. Campuses tend to have good-natured competitions in athletics and academics. How is it that four members from four different institutions are able to come together to benefit CALP? CALP is one of the rare instances whereby colleagues can work together to promote leadership development and serve aspiring leaders. It is an opportunity to collaborate, cooperate and sustain a program valued by every member of the Education Team.

The Education Team is likely to say that serving in this capacity has been a highlight of their careers. For over 30 years, the CALP Education Team has sustained the essence of the program experience throughout changes in foundation structure and leadership. New members are welcomed and integrated to ensure that the quality and impact of the California Agricultural Leadership Program continues to thrive.

HOW IS IT THAT FOUR MEMBERS FROM FOUR DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS ARE ABLE TO COME TOGETHER TO BENEFIT CALP? CALP IS ONE OF THE RARE INSTANCES WHEREBY COLLEAGUES CAN WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SERVE ASPIRING LEADERS.
We spoke to six alumni in May about their experiences with COVID-19. Read on to learn about how agricultural leaders are navigating these difficult times.

**How has COVID-19 affected your organization?**

Fortunately, our leadership implemented a remote-work model approximately nine years ago. Our transition to 100 percent remote-work was seamless. The workflow has not been interrupted and the level of output actually increased.

**How are you using what you learned from Ag Leadership to help you through the situation?**

Our industry leaders always look to the California Rice Commission staff for consistent leadership. We are quick to respond with accurate information relative to the industry members by addressing their collective needs. I automatically increase communication during challenging times at work. Resorting to an all-inclusive approach in my communication style has proven effective.

The transition to video meetings has heightened the need for facilitative meetings. Our committee and board meetings are always organized with agendas and materials. We also provide agendas and meeting materials for internal workgroup meetings. However, the video conferencing platform creates a real need for organization. The video meetings are productive with a facilitator “directing traffic” or “refereeing” by identifying the agenda item, sharing documents on the screen and calling out to attendees for participation. We conclude by outlining the action items, setting the next meeting date and providing a meeting summary. Sounds simple, but I hear of stories about unorganized video conferences that drone on what seems like forever and where nothing is accomplished.

The model of video conferencing with our internal workgroups will continue after the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order is lifted. A well organized video conference accomplishes in one hour what typically takes half a day after calculating travel, parking and meals, in addition to the meeting and the social talk before and afterward. The video conference model is a great example of working smarter and not harder.

**How has COVID-19 affected your business?**

We were just finishing our winter vegetable harvest in the desert when the onset of measures were implemented to slow the spread of COVID-19, and it was devastating. We left hundreds of acres of leafy greens unharvested in the field. Fifty percent of our business was gone in an instant.

**What are you doing to adapt your business?**

Our core business will remain the same, growing leafy greens in the desert for winter harvest. Yet, I am unsure of at what level. Are we going to cut back 10 percent, 20 percent, or 50 percent? We are always evaluating new and different crop ideas and market channels, but future cash flow projections may keep us from dipping our feet in the water until we feel comfortable on our own recovery.
It is human nature to fill in the gaps in the absence of information. This is especially true during times of uncertainty, change and transformation. Whether global pandemic or social issues like systemic racism or mass incarceration, our Ag Leadership fellows and alumni are well-equipped to investigate, engage and actively listen. The alumni featured in this article demonstrate that these tools and resources are critically necessary, especially in turbulent times.

From my perspective, the leadership lessons in the curriculum, as well as from their own life experiences, are designed intentionally to challenge, stretch and equip the alumni community to lead in moments like these. Even during this time when the program is on hiatus, we will continue to offer learning resources and opportunities for dialogue. Our intention is to provide a forum for continuous learning, curiosity and exploration. We can all draw upon these resources to make a positive difference. It is imperative that we rise to the occasion and become the catalyst for a vibrant agricultural community.
How did you communicate with employees during the early stages of the outbreak?

We have a great team that was able to disseminate the information that we were receiving from the national, state and local levels. That information was presented to our management staff to take to their respective departments. In turn, we were able to properly inform our employees on how we were going to handle all guidance presented.

How are you using what you learned from Ag Leadership to help you through the situation?

Understanding that all people are different and that I needed to handle each person’s concerns differently. We became very flexible when it came to how people were dealing with this new reality.

How has COVID-19 affected your business?

We had to completely shut down the tasting room side of our business—just like restaurants and other retail businesses have had to do. We had to postpone all corporate events, retreats, meetings and weddings at our facility.

What are you doing to adapt your business?

We offer virtual wine tasting for consumer education and engagement. Also, we offer customers $.01 shipping, curbside pickup and local delivery within the greater Sacramento region.

How did you communicate with employees during the early stages of the outbreak?

It all started with honesty and transparency. We told our employees that we will do our best to keep them employed for as long as financially possible. At the same time, we made sure that our employees felt safe and comfortable when they did come to work.

How are you using what you learned from Ag Leadership to help you through the situation?

We’ve seen a lot of unproductive political discourse surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of complaining, we started to get involved early at the county level to create standards and safe conditions in an attempt to sell our products and somehow be ‘open for business’ without actually being able to host customers at our tasting room. This started with collaborating with our county supervisor and county health department.

How has COVID-19 affected your association?

The Grower-Shipper Association of Central California (GSA) is a trade association that works on behalf of over 325 members on California’s Central Coast. We have focused much of our attention since mid-March on our members’ needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to balance our regular public policy and educational programs.

What are you doing to adapt your association?

Some of the examples of services we and our members are providing right now related to COVID-19 have included an advisory in which we detail best practices for employees and employers, which we regularly update with our partners and post in English and Spanish. Additionally, we’ve partnered with a local hospital on the bulk ordering of masks and made direct requests of the state for masks for our members. These efforts combined have brought 1,750,000 masks into the Central Coast for agricultural workers at a time when mask demand is high and supplies are low. We’ve also facilitated a housing program for participating members with full wrap-around services (i.e. three meals/day, daily visits from a local hospital and more) for their agricultural workers who have tested positive themselves or who have been exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and need to be quarantined. Finally, we are partnering with local hospitals to provide in-field training on COVID-19 best practices, at work and at home, to agricultural employees.

How did you communicate with employees during the early stages of the outbreak?

We are a small staff, but we made sure people had what they needed to be able to work remotely, and that we were thoughtful regarding their needs as they transitioned to working at home with their families.

How are you using what you learned from Ag Leadership to help you through the situation?

The housing program we created requires a great deal of focus on the needs of our members, their employees and the local businesses we are working with to provide safe and comfortable housing. We are all learning how to manage our emotions and fears in this unprecedented time. Ag Leadership teaches us to meet people where they are and how important it is to appreciate the ways different people process information, situations and opportunities. We focused on making sure people’s needs were met, whether that meant that our vendors had extra personal protective equipment or that our residents had dedicated medical staff addressing their needs and more. Sometimes it was as simple as making sure we checked in when we knew a resident was missing their family. One of my favorite Ag Leadership sayings is “People aren’t everything, but they are the most important thing.” In this pandemic, carrying forward these various efforts, I’ve been reminded of how critical it is that we take care of others when they need it most. Simple actions can make all the difference.
How has COVID-19 affected your association?

Since a large portion of my role at California Citrus Mutual (CCM) is governmental advocacy, we’ve been extremely busy during COVID-19. We’re tracking legislation, regulation and all the latest guidance coming from the federal, state and local levels. It’s been a real challenge for us keeping up with all the changes. Government has never moved so fast.

What are you doing to adapt your association?

The majority of our staff is now working remotely. With communication being critical in our line of work, my biggest concern was keeping everyone engaged and on the same page in a remote environment. We set up a daily staff briefing and an all-staff text message string to encourage communication across the staff. We also transitioned our communication with our membership. We started communicating daily with the membership at first with e-blasts and then set up a COVID-19 resources page to catalog and update important documents.

How did you communicate with employees during the early stages of the outbreak?

Initially, my conversations were one-on-one to try and understand each of their concerns. As the concerns grew, we held a staff meeting to talk about where we were at as an office. I communicated that we would institute physical distancing in the office and that we would follow the recommendations coming from the federal and state officials as they come out. We also discussed the importance of our work for the membership during times like these and that each of us individually and collectively had an important role to play. We set our objectives for the organization as: 1) ensuring the health and safety of the employees throughout the industry, and 2) being able to continue to keep our businesses operating. Staff were asked to prepare themselves for the potential to be working remotely in the next few days. The very next day, most of the staff began working remotely and the entire office went remote when the statewide shelter-in-place order was announced.

How are you using what you learned from Ag Leadership to help you through the situation?

Understanding myself and others’ Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the single best tool that I use daily and especially in this situation. We all react differently and it has never been more important to be able to quickly understand and communicate effectively, both internally and externally.

How did you communicate with employees during the early stages of the outbreak?

It was important to me to communicate to my staff that my highest priority was the maintenance of their health and safety. Throughout the shelter-in-place order, we have kept communication up via daily emails, phone calls and texts. We have held weekly director calls to coordinate our efforts and touch base about individual work priorities. It has been a different operation to say the least, but I’m proud of how my staff has risen to the occasion.

How are you using what you learned from Ag Leadership to help you through the situation?

There isn’t a day that goes by during this pandemic where I don’t stop and think about what I learned during the Ag Leadership Program. From making sure that I’m communicating effectively with my team, prioritizing which emergencies need the most attention, to making sure that I’m focusing enough time on helping my family process through this odd time. All of these items are elements that I learned to deal with during the program. Understanding how to not get lost in the moment. Leaders during this time need to remain calm, focused and determined to get those who depend on them to a safer place. I would also say that the program’s network of alumni has been immensely helpful. I’ve relied on the relationships that I’ve formed through the program to outreach to others to share ideas, collaborate on advocacy efforts or just share common frustrations with elements of life that we are all dealing with.
I hope this message finds you all safe and healthy in these unprecedented times. As you all know, CALF has not escaped the reach of COVID-19. Many of the events and activities planned for 2020 have been postponed until further notice. While this is not ideal, CALF’s board, staff and Alumni Council (AC) are continuing to work to ensure a successful return of the program when this pandemic ends.

A sign of the ongoing work being done is the recently completed election for the AC’s regional directors. A lot of changes and realignments have occurred over the last five years and 2020 marks our return to elections. We were blessed to have four new regional directors join the AC in May. We held an AC on-boarding and virtual meeting in early May and I am happy to report that all the AC members are excited to get back to work on our many CALF related projects.

While we are officially on hiatus from in-person events, the Ed Team and Director of Education Shelli Hendricks are still hosting First Fridays. They are very well done and a great way to reconnect to the program and other alumni. For more information on First Fridays, reach out to your regional director or check the calendar at AgLeaders.org.

Until we talk again, stay safe and healthy.

The Alumni Council’s (AC) executive team is pleased to announce the incoming regional directors for Regions 1, 2, 5, 6 and 10. In accordance with the AC’s policies and procedures, an election was not held since there were not multiple nominees submitted for each region. The incoming regional directors participated in on-boarding in May and will be installed during the October AC meeting. The outgoing regional directors will offer support to the new directors during the transition time.

**OUTGOING REGIONAL DIRECTORS**

Thank you to all of the outgoing regional directors for their servant leadership. We are grateful to them for their commitment to the foundation and our alumni.

**Region 1**
Christine Ivory (41)
Regional Manager
Blue Diamond Growers
Live Oak

Thank you to Christine for her servant leadership. She helped improve the selection of alumni accessories and strengthened connections with the Colusa Farm Show Breakfast. We are grateful for her commitment to the foundation and alumni.

**Region 5**
Erik Jertberg (40)
CEO
AgPro Robotics, Inc.
Watsonville

We are grateful for Erik’s commitment to the foundation and our alumni. We thank him for his servant leadership in Region 5 during his time as a regional director.

**Region 6**
Vernon Peterson (41)
President
Abundant Harvest Organics
Kingsburg

Thank you to Vernon for his servant leadership. Vernon gathered volunteers and found venues for events and shared the good word of the foundation throughout the region. We are grateful to Vernon for his commitment to the foundation and alumni.

**Region 10**
Jason Schwartz (45)
Sr. Agricultural Standards Inspector
San Diego County
Oceanside

Thank you to Jason for his servant leadership in Region 10. We are grateful to him for his commitment to the foundation and our alumni.
**INCOMING REGIONAL DIRECTORS**

**Region 1**
Kelly Mora (48)
Co-owner
Heritage Ag Insurance Agency
Corning

Kelly’s agency specializes in providing risk protection for agribusiness and farm families throughout California. She has a genuine desire to serve and give back and make a difference for the foundation. Kelly has been active in her community and is chairing an event to promote and raise funds for the Honeybee Discovery Center called Dinner with the Queen Bee. Kelly has continued to support organizations, such as Glenn County Fair Heritage Foundation, Chico Children’s Museum and the California Nut Festival (just to name a few), where she has passion, desire and experience. Region 1 has been added to this commitment.

Contact Kelly
530-519-2383
Kelly@heritage-agency.com

**Region 2**
Steve Dodge (49)
Co-founder
Acuity Agriculture
San Francisco

Steve helped build an agricultural technology company that installs and maintains farm monitoring systems to serve the interests of farms across California. He also volunteers at various urban gardens to help bring food to people in need on a local level. Steve will bring his open-minded, out of box mentality and passion about agriculture to the position. As a new alumnus, he is looking forward to serving the region.

Contact Steve
805-341-4549
steve@acuityagriculture.com

**Region 5**
James Ewart (49)
Director of Winemaking
Delicato Family Wines
King City

James attended The University of Adelaide where he studied geology and physical and inorganic chemistry. He then went on to complete a post graduate diploma in viticulture, while practicing as a viticulturist for Thomson Fruit Growers in the Riverland of South Australia. He and his wife, Colleen, have a son, Keith (11) and daughter, Gillian (9). James is a member of the King City Rotary club, a leader in his son’s Boy Scout troop and is vice chairman of the board of trustees at the Mee Memorial Hospital in King City.

Contact James
(831) 682-1235
jewart@delicato.com

**Region 6**
Heather Mulholland (44)
COO
Mulholland Citrus
Orange Cove

Heather is a fourth-generation California citrus grower. She is currently a member of the Region 6 committee and helps to facilitate the region’s social and fundraising events. She also serves on the 50th Anniversary Celebration program committee and is the liaison for Class 44. Heather is looking forward to helping promote alumni engagement and servant leadership while continuing to learn from new and ongoing relationships with Ag Leadership alumni, fellows, supporters and staff.

Contact Heather
559-618-2524
Heather@delite.com

**Region 10**
John Dmytriw (49)
Senior Business Specialist
Index Fresh, Inc.
Menifee

John’s primary role with Index Fresh is to ensure that growers receive the highest possible return on investment for the fruit they entrust to the company. He has been involved in the avocado industry for the past 20 years. As a newly minted alumnus, he can’t think of a more perfect way to begin giving back to the organization that has given him so much.

Contact John
909-972-2425
jdmytriw@indexfresh.com
Practices for how regions respond, recover and rebuild in real time, learn about regional strategies for sustainable and inclusive economic planning aimed at redressing inequities and to build a stronger, more equitable California. The event was hosted by the organizers of the annual California Economic Summit.

Loren Booth (27) was featured in a Western Growers article titled “Women on the front lines of leadership at Booth Ranches” about how making it a priority to identify and develop future leaders within the company has helped Booth Ranches navigate the pandemic.

Nick Pasculli (27) was featured in a June AndNowUKnow article titled “TMD Creative launches strategies for effective communication in challenging times.” The article focuses on the crucial steps TMD suggests industry members take in order to make sure their messaging comes across correctly.

Glenn Proctor (29) was featured in a May Western Farm Press article titled “Wine adjusts to evolving marketplace amid pandemic.” He gave a grower’s perspective about managing risk while being realistic about the current situation.

Cindy Jewell (30) left her position as vice president of marketing at California Giant Inc. to start her own business focused on marketing for the fresh produce industry. SCJewell Inc. will focus on a diverse set of clients as vice president of marketing at SCJewell Inc.

Jack Vessey (34) was featured in an April Reuters news report titled “California farmer plows under lettuce after coronavirus shuts restaurant market.” The article focuses on how COVID-19 upended the nation’s food distribution network—specifically Vessey’s Holtville farm.

Noelle Cremers (35) joined Wine Institute’s Sacramento office as director of environmental and regulatory affairs in March. She is representing the interests of California’s wineries on environmental regulatory matters, including water quality, air quality and sustainability issues.

Jon Munger (36) was featured in an April KCRA 3 news report about how rice farmers are changing how they approach planting and harvesting amid the virus outbreak.

Denise Godfrey’s (37) family’s Olive Hill Greenhouses donated thousands of plants to first responders and others who are fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Godfrey says the San Diego County greenhouse grower distributed bromeliads to individuals in the area to “help really brighten the days of those on the front lines fighting this outbreak.”

Garrett Patricio (38) was appointed to Gov. Gavin Newsom’s task force on business and jobs recovery. The task force will work to develop actions that government and businesses can take to help Californians recover from the COVID-19-induced recession.

Jose Aguiar (39) retired after working for 28 years as a vegetable crops small farm advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in the Coachella Valley in Riverside County.

Cannon Michael (39) was featured in an Audubon California article titled “How Bowles farming company supports people and birds—even during a pandemic.” In the article, he talks about the diversity of birds on the farm and the modifications and accommodations the company has made to keep employees safe during the pandemic.

Mike Wackman (24) and Lindsey Liebig (50) were featured in a June Ag Alert article titled “Water recycling project promises supply for farms” about the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District’s plan to construct new transmission and distribution pipelines to deliver recycled water from its treatment facility in Elk Grove to irrigation systems in southern Sacramento County.

Darrell Cordova (35) ended his two-year term as president of the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau. Jake Wenger (49) was elected in May to serve as his successor.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN YOUR LIFE?

PLEASE SEND ANNOUNCEMENTS OR NEWS TO:

liza.teixeira@agleaders.org
DONOR SUPPORT APRIL 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2020

$55,000 Driscoll’s & Reiter Affiliated Companies, LLC

$17,500 Union Bank

$10,000 Wells Fargo Bank

$5,000 Woolf Enterprises

$2,500 Limoneira Foundation Fund Jean and Bill Phillimore

$1,200 Ken Zimmerman

$1,000 Allied Grape Growers Bream Family Farms, Inc. Adrian Calixtro* Bob and Lisa Cherenson Jorge Cuevas* Tom and Ann Dungan James Ewart Jeana Hultquist Fidela Irigoyen Ralph Myers Wonderful Orchards*

$900 Gene Peterson

$525 John and Carol Gorter

$500 Jose Perez* Gregory Taylor* Lizet Vazquez*

$465 Jensen DeVaurs

$300 Bob and Anne Atkins Charlie and Jackie Crabb

$250 Lauren Grizzle

$200 Stephanie Gonzales

$100 Jane and Franklin Barnes Woody and Jane Barnes Robert and Nancy Cadenazzi

$45 Julie Johnson

$31.69 Amazon Smile

In-Kind EDB Diversified: $2,645.90 TMD Creative: $2,235

*Class 50 Giving
HORIZONS MAGAZINE is published by the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation for alumni, donors, supporters and friends. Phone: 831-585-1030 www.agleaders.org

Monitor and Manage Your Liquid. Assets.

With REDtrac’s platform, you can ...

- Monitor Soil Moisture
- Schedule Irrigation
- Monitor Flow Meters
- Monitor Weather
- Asset Tracking
- Tank Level Monitoring
- Monitor Water Wells
- Monitor Cost of Water