**Mission:** Growing leaders who make a difference.
**Vision:** Leaders united to strengthen California agriculture.
**Values:** Integrity - Excellence – Respect

# Oral History Project

As we look ahead to the future of Ag Leadership, we also want to take time to capture where it all began. Through this Oral History Project, we are starting with conversations with Alumni from Classes 1–5 to hear their stories in their own words—what those early days looked like, the people who helped develop the program, what was happening in California agriculture at the time, and what this program meant to them. We will continue to reach out to early classes beyond 1–5 as we build out this project.

These conversations are meant to capture the heart of Ag Leadership in its earliest days so we can carry those lessons and perspectives forward.

**Interview Questions**

Start with name, Ag Leadership class, and a little bit of background, professionally or personal.

You grew up in _____and have spent your life connected to agriculture. What does this land mean to you personally, and how did it shape who you became?

What drew you to agriculture as a career/business? Was there a moment when you knew this was your path?

**The Early Days:**

- What do you remember most about the early days of California Agricultural Leadership?

- What was happening in California agriculture at that time that made a program like this important?

- Do you remember how you first heard about the program, and what made you decide to apply?

- Take me back to your first seminar or session — what do you remember seeing, feeling, or thinking?

- Who were the key individuals that shaped the early program or your class, and what made them stand out?

- What is a story about the early days that most people don't know?

**The Experience:**

- What part of the program challenged you the most? What did the experience look like?

- Can you take me to a specific moment during the program when something shifted in how you saw yourself, agriculture, or what leadership really means? Did it feel experimental or well established?

- How did fellows from different commodities and regions interact with each other?

- How did the International trip change how you see the world?

- Who was someone in your class who influenced you, and why?

- What is a memory from your class that still makes you smile?

**Personal Impact:**

- Looking back, what is the most concrete example of how Ag Leadership changed the way you lead , a decision you made, a relationship you built, or a risk you took that you wouldn't have before?

- Can you point to a specific decision in your career or life that was influenced by this program?

- What relationships from the program are still important in your life today?

- After Ag Leadership, what did you go on to do, and how did the program influence those decisions?

- If you had never gone through Ag Leadership, how might your life have been different?

**Impact on California Agriculture**

- How do you think Ag Leadership has influenced California agriculture over the years?

- Can you share examples of how Ag Leadership alumni have made a difference in California agriculture, and when you realized the strength of the alumni network?

**Legacy**

- Why do you believe this program has lasted for nearly 6 decades?

- Why do you believe it is important for alumni to stay engaged and give back to Ag Leadership?

- When you think about the founders of Ag Leadership, what do you think they would say if they could see the program today?

- What advice would you give to a future fellow of Ag Leadership?

- What do you hope your legacy will be within the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation and the agriculture community at large?

**The Future of Ag Leadership**

- What do you hope the program will still be doing 50 years from now?

- What challenges do you think the next generation of agricultural leaders will face, and how should they prepare?

**Closing Question**

In one sentence, what does California Ag Leadership mean to you?