

THE **harvest**

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO • COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE MAGAZINE • 2014



Bell Scholars

pg. 10

First Bell Family
Presidential
Scholarships Awarded
to Two Freshmen

FOOD FOR *thought*

From the Dean's Desk



I have the honor of serving as interim dean following the retirement of Jennifer Ryder Fox, who led our college since 2006. Although part of working for the University is attending meetings and always has been, this new role has taken it to another level!

While my previous position as associate dean gave me insight into the complexities of managing a growing college with a limited budget, I've developed a far greater appreciation in the last few months for the leadership it takes to advocate for one's college while working to build a greater collective university. I'm grateful to Jennifer for laying the groundwork for her successor to continue strengthening our college. The changes to our programs during the past several years, based on the collective effort of our staff, students, faculty, and administration, have resulted in a growing respect and appreciation for agriculture throughout the University.

I'm also grateful for the talent and dedication that our faculty and staff bring to work every day. While the job of a dean is an important one, it's really the faculty and staff who deliver the educational program that makes students choose and love our college. And believe me, they are choosing us! Enrollment in the College of Agriculture grew by double digits once again over the past year, and we currently have over 800 students.

Why are they choosing Chico State? You'll get a good idea in the pages of this magazine. They are choosing us because of faculty like Rich Rosecrance, Jake Brimlow, and our newest additions, Kasey DeAtley and Hossein Zakeri. They are choosing us because of the opportunities offered to and taken advantage of by the likes of Taylor Herren, Natalie Oelsner, Natalie Holmberg-Douglas, and Amie French. Two of the students in this magazine, Holly Hockett and Jase Northrup, received a major scholarship to attend Chico State. Students like Holly and Jase could (and did) get offered scholarships anywhere they applied, but they chose us because they were inspired by the faculty, staff, and students they met when they visited.

It's been a great experience serving as dean of this college for a few months, but I'm anxious to welcome a permanent dean so I can get back to doing what I love: teaching, interacting with stakeholders, and coordinating efforts at the farm. Whoever gets the job of dean will be glad they, too, chose this place!

Best,

Handwritten signature of Dave Daley.

Dave Daley
Interim Dean

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WHAT'S GROWING ON

Student Wins at Cured Meat Competition



Senior crop science and horticulture major Peter Suden was named reserve champion in the collegiate category of the California Association of Meat Processors (CAMP) cured-meat contest. The contest was in conjunction with the annual CAMP convention and

tabletop tradeshow held at CSU, Chico Feb. 21–23, 2014. Approximately 150 attendees representing more than 30 small California meat processors were on hand for educational seminars, tours, student contests, and the cured meat competition. Suden, who has worked at the CSU, Chico Meats Lab for two years, won reserve champion with his entry called Peter's Sausage. The sausage combined cranberry, walnut, and apple flavors.

CSU, Chico Student Wins California Beef Ambassador Contest

CSU, Chico junior Jillian Casacca won the California Beef Ambassador Competition held in San Jose on Saturday, April 26, at Emma Prusch Farm Park. The Humboldt County native first competed at the county level



before advancing to the state competition, which consisted of a mock media interview, a written issues response, and a mock consumer demonstration.

Casacca owns a small herd of registered and commercial Black Angus cattle, which she plans to expand in the future. She is majoring in agricultural business and minoring in animal science, and she is active in the Young Cattlemen's Association. After graduating in 2016, Casacca hopes to move back to Humboldt County and begin working in the area of agricultural business, particularly in the loan and appraisal sector.

Chico State Young Cattlemen's Association Hosts Inaugural 5K at University Farm

The CSU, Chico Young Cattlemen's Association (YCA) hosted its inaugural Beefin' It Up 5K at the University Farm on Saturday, April 26. YCA President Cain Madrigal said the idea for the 5K came to the club's officers during a class lecture.

"We were talking about how much more aware consumers are getting about what they eat and where it came from, and we want to share the beef community's story," said Madrigal. "We want people to know where their beef comes from and to incorporate it more into their diets knowing what it took for ranchers to get that steak onto their plate."

The event provided 60 participants with information on heart-healthy diets that include beef consumption.



Star Students and Club of the Year Announced

On May 7, the annual student lunch was held by Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox to celebrate the conclusion of the semester and to announce the 2014 Star Students and Club of the Year for the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture. Every year faculty from each of the four degree areas of the College of Agriculture nominate one student to showcase as a Star Student. The 2014 Star Students are listed on the next page, and each star student is profiled on the College of Agriculture website at www.csuchico.edu/ag/about/star-students.

This year, the Chico State Young Cattlemen's Association was chosen as the College of Agriculture's Club of the Year. The group received

Animal Science Students Compete in Academic Quadrathlon



Four students from CSU, Chico competed in the Academic Quadrathlon at the Western Section American Society of Animal Science annual meeting in San Angelo, Texas, June 23–24, 2014. Glenn Blakey, Spencer Downey, Austin Fischer, and Kate Moore tied for second in the grueling two-day competition, which included a laboratory practicum, written exam, oral presentation, and quiz bowl. Moore also placed fourth in the undergraduate poster competition, where she presented her research on the effects of brewer's yeast on growth performance and carcass measures in feedlot finishing steers.

"This was a highly motivated group," said animal science professor and coach Kasey DeAtley. "They put an incredible amount of effort into studying and preparing for the competition on their own and as a team."

It was the second time CSU, Chico has fielded a team in the regional competition. Other teams competing included Montana State, Oregon State, New Mexico State, BYU – Idaho, and the University of Wyoming.

a \$500 award from Superior Ag for its efforts in community service, agricultural literacy, and recruitment of new members.

"Between their inaugural 5K run and their monthly tri-tip sandwich sales on campus, the Young Cattlemen's Association has made public outreach and education a centerpiece of our mission," Fox said. "We are proud of all of our student organizations, but this year YCA stood out."



Report Details Ag's Economic Contributions

Nearly one in five jobs in northeastern California, and 16 percent of all economic activity in the region, is connected to agriculture, according to a report issued by the Agribusiness Institute at CSU, Chico. The report, written by agricultural business professor Eric Houk, covers economic activity in Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, and Yuba Counties in 2012. "The Contribution of Agriculture to Northeastern California's Economy in 2012" provides baseline documentation for a three-year project to quantify the significance of agricultural production, processing, and related industries to the overall economy of northeastern California.



First-Place Finishes in Student Research Competition

Audrey Denney and Katherine Moore took first-place prizes home from the statewide CSU Student Research Competition at CSU, East Bay May 2–3. Approximately 220 graduates and undergraduates from across the CSU presented original research in 22 different sessions.

Denney, who received her master's degree in agricultural education later in the month, presented "Perceptions of Agricultural Sustainability Held by California Secondary Agriculture Teachers." Her research also addressed teachers' self-perceived knowledge of sustainable agriculture practices. She was mentored by agriculture professor Mollie Aschenbrener.

Moore, a 2014 animal science graduate, presented "Effects of Brewer's Yeast on Growth, Feed Efficiency, and Carcass Traits of Angus-Influence Steers." Her research suggests that yeast supplementation can be beneficial in a feedlot ration. She was mentored by agriculture professors Kasey DeAtley and Celina Phillips.

Denney competed in the Education/Combined category while Moore competed in the Biological and Agricultural Sciences- Undergraduate category.

Dean Receives Common Threads North Award

College of Agriculture Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox was one of four Northern California women, along with alumna Shelley Macdonald (Agribusiness, '93), to be honored with the Common Threads North Award at a luncheon in Davis on April 24. The Common Threads Award recognizes individuals whose exemplary and extraordinary contributions of time, energy, and resources have enhanced those around them. As the first female dean of agriculture in the CSU system, and one of the first in the country, Fox was recognized as a trailblazer for women in academia. Fox retired in June after nearly eight years with the College of Agriculture.



▲ 2014 Common Threads North Recipients, Left–Right: Jennifer Ryder Fox, Toni Scully, Shelley Macdonald, Tivyla Thompson

Quiz Bowl

Eight CSU, Chico agricultural business students participated in the Academic Bowl held at the annual Agriculture and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 26–29. The students representing CSU, Chico were Karen Flickinger, Jacob Hanson, Mary Hergstad-Franz, Michael Phillips, Ryan Scagliotti, Blake Shannon, Kim Tracy, and Cecilia Wilson. The team of Flickinger, Scagliotti, and Wilson made it to the quarterfinal round, the farthest a CSU, Chico team has advanced in the competition. The Academic Bowl is a double-elimination, Jeopardy-style competition that tests the competitors on their knowledge of agricultural business and economics.

Superior Ag/Tri Counties Bank Golf Classic



On June 9, the 19th annual Superior Ag and Tri Counties Bank Golf Classic raised \$43,000 to benefit scholarships and academic programs in the College of Agriculture. The tournament was held at the Butte Creek Country Club. Twenty-nine teams of six golfers each played in the tournament. The Zenith team of Kevin Reeves, Brian Peterson, Cain Medina, Ciaran Hoban, Mario Reveles, and Shawn Blofsky won the overall tournament. The raffle grand prize of a flight for four to Sun River, Oregon, for a game of golf went to Randy Hart.



Amie French

MAJOR:
Agricultural business

HOMETOWN: Copperopolis



Sarena Robertson

MAJOR:
Agricultural science and education

HOMETOWN:
Maxwell



Tina Candelo Mize

MAJOR:
Crops, horticulture, and land resource management

HOMETOWN:
Lodi



Austin Fischer

MAJOR:
Animal science

HOMETOWN:
Cottonwood

Take a Look at Our Star Students

Each year the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture recognizes one exemplary student within each discipline as a Star Student. To view the complete articles on all of our past Star Students, visit our website at www.csuchico.edu/ag/about/star_students.

Standout

Agriculture Students Receive Campuswide Recognition for Leadership and Excellence

Taylor Herren

Taylor Herren is arguably the most recognizable student on campus. Last April, for the second year in a row, Herren was elected president of the Associated Students (AS). It was the first time in more than a decade that an AS president has sought and won reelection.

“We have some really big initiatives going, from renovating the student union and starting a new leadership center, to changing the culture around Labor Day and building the reputation of our campus, and I wanted to see these things through,” Herren said of her decision to run again for president.

Herren graduated in May with a degree in animal science and has since entered the master’s program in the Department of Biology, focusing on genetics. She would eventually like to continue on to a PhD program and perhaps become a college professor.

Herren’s exceptional contributions to the CSU, Chico campus were recognized during the University Awards Reception on April 8, 2014, in the Bell Memorial Union,

where she walked to the podium not once but four times to receive awards for her leadership and service. Those awards were the Mac Martin Excellence in Leadership Award, the CSU, Chico Advisory Board Outstanding Student Service Award, the Outstanding Student Leader Award for the College of Agriculture, and, finally, the Outstanding Student Leader Award for the entire University.



Natalie Oelsner

Taylor Herren was not the only College of Agriculture student to receive the Mac Martin Excellence in Leadership Award during the University Awards Reception on April 8. Senior agricultural science and education major Natalie Oelsner also received the award, which is named for Mackay “Mac” Martin, who managed the Associated Students from 1947–1976.

Former College of Agriculture Outreach Coordinator Audrey Denney nominated Oelsner for the award, saying, “Natalie is one of the most dynamic, talented students I have had the opportunity to work with. Others are drawn to her magnetic personality, and she always inspires those around her to be their best selves.”

Those qualities will make a difference in Oelsner’s future career. She wants to become an agriculture teacher and, ultimately, a teacher educator. “I’m really into curriculum writing and I want to be involved in teaching the teachers,” Oelsner said.

Oelsner remains active with the California FFA and National FFA organizations, presenting at conferences and workshops around the country. She manages tabulations for the CSU, Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day, made it to the final round of the American Farm Bureau’s Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet, and played on the Chico State women’s rugby team until an injury sidelined her, at which point she took up coaching the Chico Wild Oaks High School rugby team.

Oelsner’s dedication to service, as much as her academic success, led the University Scholarship Committee to select her for the prestigious Lt. Robert Merton Rawlins Merit Award, which comes with a \$3,000 scholarship.



Students

Anyone who thinks agriculture is a man's world might be surprised by the demographics of the College of Agriculture this fall. Women make up 60 percent of the college's students as well as more than 85 percent of the students majoring in animal science.

Four of the College of Agriculture's most accomplished students over the past year were women, who among them racked up nearly a dozen awards and achievements.

Natalie Holmberg-Douglas

Natalie Oelsner was joined in receiving the Lt. Robert Merton Rawlins Merit Award this year by Natalie Holmberg-Douglas. Holmberg-Douglas is a senior from Penn Valley, California, double-majoring in animal science and biochemistry. Holmberg-Douglas hopes that her dual majors will give her an advantage when applying to veterinary school. Her grasp of chemistry has undoubtedly proven advantageous to the College of Agriculture, which hired her to provide free chemistry tutoring to her fellow agriculture majors.

"Natalie is a hardworking, bright individual with an excellent work ethic," said animal science professor Patrick Doyle. "She's committed to her studies but finds time to tutor students in chemistry as well. She constantly receives praise from faculty, staff, and students alike for her dedication to the program and to our campus."

Holmberg-Douglas has served as the chair of the forestry contest for the CSU, Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day for the past three years. She's also active in the chemistry department club, SAACS, as secretary. She has worked with faculty in the chemistry department on a biomedical chemistry research project studying Grb7, a protein that has been linked to various cancers. She has also interned with Look Ahead Veterinary Clinic in Oroville.

Holmberg-Douglas' accomplishments have been recognized beyond her own campus. In July, she was notified that she had been selected as the Robert and Dorothy Talty Family Trust Scholar, a CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement. The award came with a \$6,000 scholarship.



Amie French

A list of outstanding students in the College of Agriculture in the past year would not be complete without Amie French. French graduated in May with a degree in agricultural business and a full-ride offer to Purdue University, where she has since entered the graduate program in agricultural economics.

French, a 2013–14 Lt. Robert Merton Rawlins Merit Award winner, hit the ground running when she entered CSU, Chico as a transfer student from Modesto Junior College. In the spring of 2014, she served as president of the professional agricultural sorority, Sigma Alpha. She also was a member of the agriculture honor society Alpha Zeta, served as the CSU, Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day Poultry Contest chair, competed on the Food Marketing Team, and competed in the Agriculture and Applied Economics Association's quiz bowl. In addition, French assisted in research projects conducted by the College of Agriculture including analyzing the local pecan market to look at the demographics of consumer preference among local and state markets.

Through perseverance and devotion to her school work, French maintained a 4.0 GPA through high school, junior college, and her time at CSU, Chico. While remaining active in extracurricular activities, French's dedication to academics allowed her to pay for her entire undergraduate education with scholarships and grants. In addition to the many scholarships she received over the years, in 2013–14, she earned the Wes and Jane Patton Student Advancement Award, which is given each year to one student who is traveling to present research or visit graduate schools. With offers from Purdue, Colorado State, and Kansas State, French took full advantage of the award to visit all three schools before finally deciding on Purdue.



Farm Report

A Look at What's New at the University Farm



\$50,000 Donation Supports Installation of Electronic Feed System

The College of Agriculture received a donation of \$50,000 from Green Valley Enterprises and Alturas Ranches to install six GrowSafe feed units at the University Farm. GrowSafe systems collect individual data to monitor feed intake and animal behavior. Each steer is tagged with an electronic ear tag, which tracks and records feed intake each time the animal eats. The system automatically calculates intake by monitoring the weight of feed in the bin before, during, and after each animal eats in a herd setting. Having individual intakes for animals in a pen allows operation managers to identify more efficient animals compared to herd mates and also help manage potential health issues, identifying animals that go off feed.

“The GrowSafe system has revolutionized our ability to conduct feed intake research on an individual basis in a herd environment at the University Farm,” said Professor Patrick Doyle.

Professor Kasey DeAtley added, “We used to have to separate the animals into individual pens, feed them by hand, and collect and weigh leftover feed. It was time intensive and not really feasible for an extended period of time. The GrowSafe system gives students the opportunity to be on the forefront of beef cattle feeding technology in breed research.”

Barry Swenson, owner of Green Valley Enterprises and Alturas Ranches, made the donation in support of research comparing the growth performance, feed efficiency, and carcass traits of commercial and Lowline Angus-influenced cattle.

A Window on the Rumen

For the first time in nearly two decades, heifers fitted with rumen cannulas are giving students, researchers, and visitors to the University Farm a look inside the bovine stomach. Rumen cannulas are porthole-like devices that allow access to the rumen. The cannulas were fitted to four heifers at the University Farm Beef Unit in a procedure approved through the CSU, Chico Animal Care and Use Committee and conducted by a trained faculty member and veterinarian while several classes observed.

“It was incredible to be able to be a part of a procedure like that and to see and experience it firsthand,” said Cain Madrigal, a student research assistant who graduated in May. “It’s days like that when we get to apply what we hear, learn, and study in our classes that make the College of Agriculture stand out. Even more incredible than the actual experience of the procedure is having those heifers out at the farm for students to study.”

Madrigal was the first to use the cannulated heifers as part of a collaborative research project, collecting rumen fluid throughout the spring semester to study the digestibility and suitability of spent brewer’s grains as a winter feed supplement.

Animal science professor Kasey DeAtley says the heifers will provide tremendous opportunities for research, teaching, and community outreach.

“We can actually see how feed is utilized during digestion and investigate various feedstuffs to determine how to feed them most efficiently,” she said. “This type of research will help producers make decisions about whether or not to feed certain byproducts, what time of year to feed them, and at what cost.”



New Almond Varieties Tested at University Farm

The newest almond orchard at the University Farm will serve both growers and students for decades to come. Together with the California Almond Board and the University of California Cooperative Extension, the College of Agriculture planted a 30-acre almond varietal trial on Krymsk 86 peach-plum hybrid rootstock last February with assistance from a number of industry supporters including Durham Pump and Fowler Nursery. The varietal trial, which will test 30 almond varieties, is replicated in Stanislaus County on Nemaguard peach rootstock and in Madera County on Hansen 536 peach-almond hybrid rootstock.

Interim Dean Dave Daley, who manages the University Farm, said the almond varietal trial will serve as a long-term teaching laboratory for a number of different courses, such as fruit and nut production, orchard management, and plant protection, while also meeting the goal of service to the agricultural community. “The location of the orchard allows easy access for growers to come learn about the different varieties, and we’ll all be learning simultaneously as we begin to collect data on the new varieties,” he said.

Daley said that as the orchard comes into production, the income from its crops will help the College of Agriculture deliver what is by nature a high-cost educational program. “It can cost a lot to operate a high-touch, hands-on learning laboratory like the University Farm, so we rely on the income generated from our money-making enterprises to reinvest in equipment and facilities that benefit all of our students,” he said.





Pomp and Circumstance

The College of Agriculture entered a new era of graduation celebrations in 2014 with its first stand-alone commencement ceremony in more than 20 years and the first hooding ceremony ever for the new master's in agricultural education program. The College of Agriculture's commencement ceremony was held in the early morning of May 17, 2014, in Laxson Auditorium. One hundred sixty-four bachelor's degree candidates and 13 master's degree candidates crossed the stage in front of a packed house of 1,200 family members and friends.

The hooding ceremony for the master's degree students, who began their program in 2012, marked the first class of graduates from the online master's in agricultural education program. Professor Mollie Aschenbrener coordinates the program and said that all 14 graduates will continue their careers in agricultural education.

"These were all working teachers who were able to take classes online at their own pace in order to advance their teaching careers," Aschenbrener said. "They chose to graduate with the College of Agriculture undergraduates rather than in the university-wide graduate school commencement, which I think made our ceremony even more special."

The commencement change was part of a larger campuswide movement toward smaller, more personalized ceremonies of one or two colleges to reduce the length of the ceremony and address concerns that commencement attendance had become too big to safely handle. The 2015 College of Agriculture commencement ceremony will take place once again in Laxson Auditorium at 4 p.m. on Friday, May 15. Tickets are required to attend. ■



On Board

Two tenure-track faculty joined the College of Agriculture in 2014, the first in five years.



Dr. Kasey DeAtley

Kasey DeAtley is a sixth-generation Northern Californian, having descended from a relative of John and Annie Bidwell who homesteaded in the intermountain area in the 1880s. She knew as early as the first or second grade that she wanted to work in agriculture and that she wanted to be a teacher. She never planned to attend CSU, Chico, let alone return to work here. DeAtley attributes a brief meeting with Professor Dave Daley, now interim dean, at the Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale during her freshman year at Lassen College with setting her path in motion.

“My community college instructor, Brian Wolf, introduced me to Dave, and I was really impressed with his interest in my background and career goals,” DeAtley said. “Then, eight months later at Opportunity Day, he remembered who I was. That was even more impressive. That’s what made me decide to come to Chico State.”

DeAtley transferred to CSU, Chico and graduated in 2005 with a degree in animal science. After graduating, she continued working with Daley as a research associate for a year and a half, during which time she was mentored by many faculty in the College of Agriculture who helped her discover her desire to become a college professor. She completed her master’s degree in 2009 at New Mexico State University followed by a PhD in 2012 in animal science with an emphasis in reproductive physiology and beef cattle genetics.

DeAtley teaches Agricultural Experimental Research, Directed Work Experience, Rangeland Resource Management, and also co-advises the Young Cattlemen’s Association. She and her sister, Kallie Graham (Animal Science, ’07), are working alongside their family to build their cattle enterprise, Two Doc’s Land and Cattle.

Dr. Hossein Zakeri

Hossein Zakeri came to Chico from the University of Missouri where he was a postdoctoral researcher studying water use efficiency and the drought tolerance of soybeans. Zakeri grew up on a farm in eastern Isfahan in Iran and attended an intensive agricultural high school that was similar in size to CSU, Chico’s University Farm. He received his BS in agronomy and crop breeding from the Isfahan University of Technology, MS in crop physiology from Tarbiat Modarres University, and PhD in crop physiology/cropping systems from the University of Saskatchewan.

Zakeri enjoys teaching above everything else, and he’s thrilled to be back in an undergraduate college. “This is something I’ve wanted to do for a long time,” he said. “I love teaching students, so I wanted to work in a college that really focuses on teaching.” This fall he is teaching Introduction to Plant Science and Production of Annual Crops.

Zakeri, his wife, and their two children, ages 11 and 7, enjoy spending time at the Chico Certified Farmers’ Market and look forward to exploring the region’s camping opportunities. Zakeri would like to get back into farming and is excited to connect with the North State agriculture community.



Bell Scholars

First Bell Family Presidential Scholarships Awarded to Two Freshmen

When Dan Giustina gave \$2 million to the College of Agriculture in 2013, he wanted to do something transformational that would create a legacy for his late friends Tom and Dorothy Bell, Claudine Bell, and Helen Head. The first two seeds in that legacy have been planted with the arrival on campus of Holly Hockett and Jase Northup this fall.

Hockett, an agricultural science and education major from Auburn, and Northup, an animal science major from Los Molinos, are the first recipients of the Bell Family Presidential Scholarship, a four-year, \$5,000-per-year scholarship for the highest achievers in each year's freshman class of agriculture majors.

Jase Northup grew up in a long line of farmers. His great-grandfather Everett Northup moved to California from Iowa at the age of 21 and became the ranch manager of the Rumiano family dairy and beef

operation in Vina. Meanwhile, his mother's grandfather Merrill Bauer sold the family's citrus grove in Orange County and moved to Los Molinos, where he turned a 48-acre hog farm into a dairy. Northup is the fourth generation of his mother's family to tend the farm, currently a prune orchard that he plans to convert to beef pasture.

Northup comes from a family of teachers on his mother's side, but he is the first in his father's family to attend college. While he had always excelled in school, he viewed education as a necessary hindrance to his goal of entering the workforce as quickly as possible. His junior year of high school, he started taking classes at Shasta College and began to realize his true potential. "In my first two semesters at Shasta College, I completed 12 units with a 3.5 college GPA. I decided to raise my expectations and set higher goals

for myself," Northup said. He was the first student at Los Molinos High School to exceed a 4.0 GPA in nearly a decade, and he holds the second highest ACT score in school history. Now rather than rushing through school, or contenting himself with an associate's degree, Northup is pursuing his bachelor's degree in animal science in hopes of eventually completing veterinary school. "I believe a career as a bovine and equine vet will allow me to work with other producers while also advancing my own herd quality," he said.

While Northup has an agricultural background that spans four generations, Holly Hockett was first introduced to agriculture when she was accidentally placed in an introductory agriculture class at Placer High School as a freshman. That experience changed her life. "The more I got into it, the more I really liked it," Hockett said. "FFA





and agriculture was a place I really belonged, and I loved the people I met through it. I started working at Echo Valley Ranch in Auburn, which opened up more doors for me as I got to know people in the community.” Hockett said she has been inspired by the people she has met through FFA, and she hopes to inspire others in the same way by eventually becoming a high school agriculture teacher.

“FFA and agriculture was a place I really belonged, and I loved the people I met through it.”

Both scholars have overcome substantial personal obstacles to get where they are, and each found not only the strength to endure their hardships but also the motivation that pushed them to higher levels of personal achievement. For Hockett, it was the difficulty of watching her parents’ marriage dissolve and her mother’s battles with addiction that drove her to focus on getting good grades and taking advantage of opportunities that came her way.

“No one in my family has earned a college degree,” she said. “When my parents split up and my mom had trouble supporting herself, it convinced me that I needed to pursue higher education and become self-sufficient.”

For Northup, who had always excelled academically, a series of traumatic brain injuries during his senior year of high school left him struggling with memory loss, migraines, and troubles with concentration. Where he had once planned to attend college out of state, he started

looking more seriously at Chico State, which afforded him the ability to be close to home with family and medical resources he could rely upon. As Northup contemplated whether to stay in California or move out of state, he decided to apply for scholarships just to see what would happen.

“I was doing something with friends one day, and when I got back to my car, I had three missed phone calls from my mom telling me that the dean at Chico State (Jennifer Ryder

Fox) had been trying to get ahold of me,” he said. “After speaking with Dr. Fox, I called my mom back, teasing her at first that the call had just been about my admissions. When I finally told her I had received the Bell Family Presidential Scholarship, she broke down in tears. It was pretty overwhelming after all we had been through in the past year to be given this incredible honor of being one of the first Bell Family Presidential Scholars.”

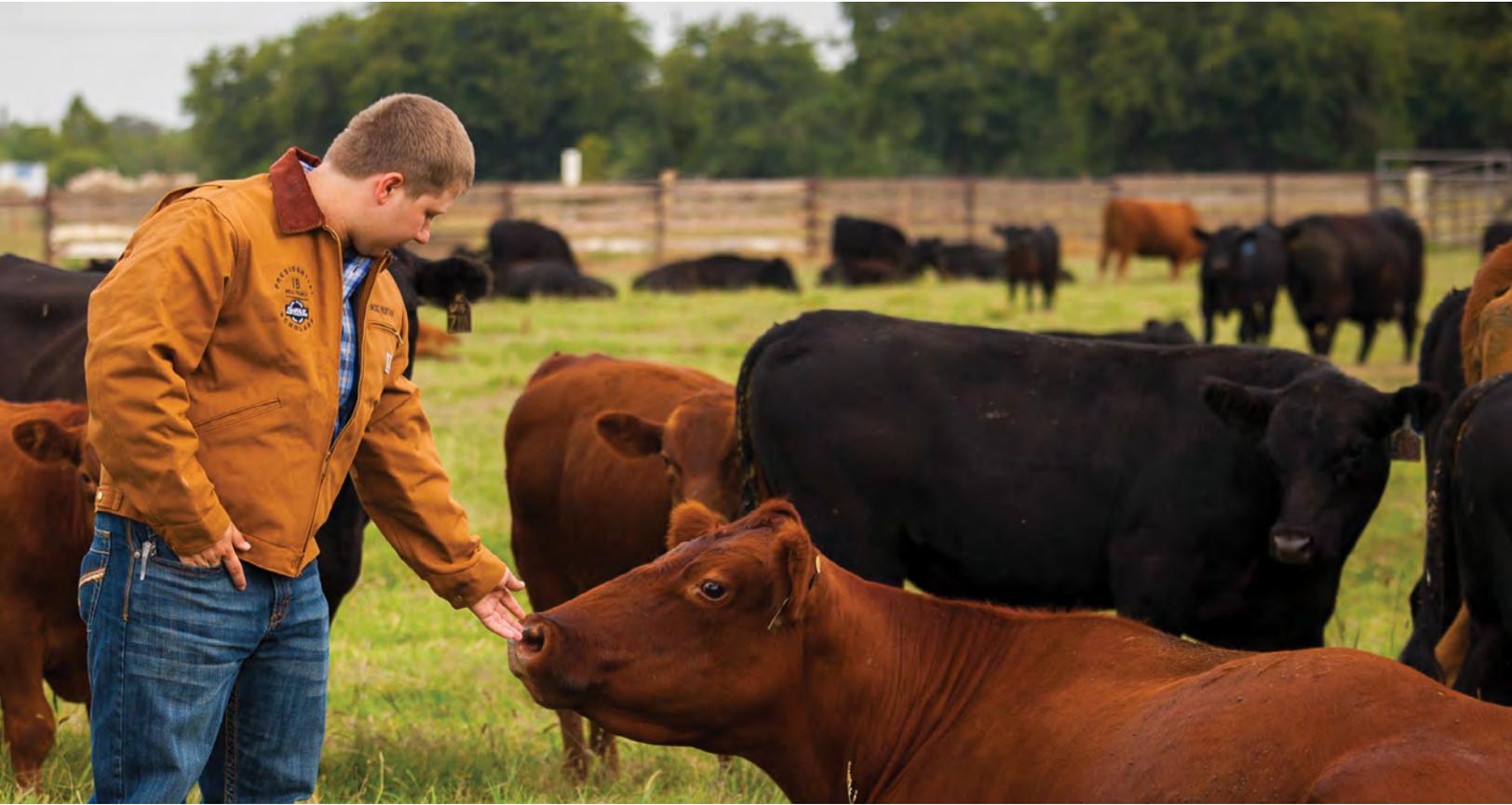
Though both students had the academic chops to go to any college they wanted, it was the personal touch they found at Chico State that helped them make their decision.

“The dean of the college called me personally to tell me I had received the Bell Family Presidential Scholarship,” Hockett recalled. “I was touched that she took the time to do that. You really know the staff will be here for you and help you along.”

Of course, the offer of \$5,000 each year for four years helped them choose Chico State as well. And that sort of influence with the best and brightest agriculture students in California was Dan Giustina’s goal when he established the Bell Family Presidential Scholarship Endowment. “Our higher education system is the envy of the world, and student scholarships play an important part in maintaining that level of excellence,” Giustina said.



▲
*Aerial photo of the Bell Ranch,
date unknown*



As a memorial to the Bell family, a scholarship is fitting because education and agriculture each played a large role in the Bell family history. Hugh Thomas Bell arrived in Butte County in 1865 and purchased his first parcel of farmland in 1875, where Bell Road now connects north Chico with Hamilton Nord Cana Highway. Hugh Bell and his wife, Eleanor, had eight children, including daughter Ada, who was among the first class to enter Chico Normal School in 1889, and son Ivison, who along with his brothers Frank and Fred remained on the family farm. Ivison's son Hugh Thomas, known as Tom, eventually took over and expanded the farm to include 16,000 acres of ranch land throughout Northern California and Southern Oregon.

Giustina first met Tom Bell as a young man in Southern Oregon. The two held adjoining ranch properties, and Bell and his wife, Dorothy, took the teenager under their wings. Giustina began visiting the Bells in Chico and enjoyed riding around with Tom, just looking at cattle and discussing the ranching business. Giustina came to think of Tom and Dorothy as his second family, and they looked upon him as the son they never had, even adding a bedroom for him when they built their new home. He also became close to Tom's vivacious sisters, Claudine Bell and Helen Head, who both attended Chico Normal School.

The Bell Family Presidential Scholarship Endowment is not the only mark of the Bell family legacy at CSU, Chico but it is by far the

largest endowment bearing their name. Since 1987, the H. Tom Bell Endowment for Excellence in Animal Science has awarded \$44,000 in scholarship support to 64 students in animal science at CSU, Chico. Claudine and Helen followed their brother's lead with a series of planned gifts to benefit the College of Agriculture and the University Farm, which they loved.

Holly Hockett and Jase Northup are both keenly aware of their role in continuing the Bell family legacy. "On one hand, it's very humbling to know that it's up to us and the future Bell Family Presidential Scholars to carry on the Bell family name," Hockett said. "But it's also inspiring to know that someone believes in me enough to select me for this great honor." ■



▲
Tom Bell

Faculty Focus



Jake Brimlow

Ag Business Professor Connects Growers With Markets

Since joining the faculty of the College of Agriculture in 2009, agricultural economist Jake Brimlow's research interests have been diverse. He has studied the role of feed efficiency in breeding bull profitability at small consignment auctions, analyzed power alternatives for agricultural producers facing increasingly stringent air-quality rules for stationary engines, surveyed growers on the barriers they face to selling food locally, and worked to develop a food hub to open up intermediated food markets to small- and medium-sized producers. What may seem like a random collection of disjointed projects makes perfect sense when Brimlow describes his research interest.

"My goal is to increase the profitability and resiliency of farmers, and especially those in the small- and medium- size range, which have been declining in recent years," Brimlow said. "If my research can help point the way to reduced input costs and new market opportunities for growers, I feel good about the work I've done."

Since 2011, that work has focused on local food systems. Brimlow has collaborated with the Local Food Systems Program at the Northern California Regional Land Trust (NCRLT), the CSU, Chico Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion, and 3CORE on a series of studies assessing the barriers to local food markets in Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties. One of the things the research has found is that many farms in the region have a hard time fitting into traditional marketing channels.

"They tell us that they're too big to move enough volume through direct markets like farmers' markets but too small to sell profitably through wholesale channels," Brimlow said. "The challenges of transportation and logistics, food safety certification, and cold storage add up."

Those barriers are what Brimlow and Noelle Ferdon, managing director and director of local food systems at NCRLT, hoped to mitigate by founding the North Valley Food Hub (NVFH). Launching this fall, the NVFH is designed to serve as the connection between small- and medium-sized growers and intermediated market food buyers, like school districts, hospitals, and other institutions who want to source locally grown food but don't have time to develop, maintain, and facilitate business relationships with enough growers to meet their food buying needs. The online food hub at www.northvalleyfoodhub.com registers both growers and buyers and helps them contract with each other to buy and sell local food. Once contracts are made and the online market closes for that market period, growers drop their products at a central location at a set time, and buyers pick up their orders or arrange for delivery. The NVFH handles all payments, so buyers write

one check and growers receive one check, regardless of how many separate businesses they buy from or sell to.

The North Valley Food Hub is the culmination of several years of local food systems research conducted by Brimlow and Ferdon. Brimlow pursues research and business development projects for the hub and seeks funding to help support NVFH programs such as technical assistance and education for growers. He recently applied for a USDA grant to provide outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers by connecting them to new markets through the NVFH.

"If my research can help point the way to reduced input costs and new market opportunities for growers, I feel good about the work I've done."

Wherever his research leads, Brimlow finds ways to connect his work to students. "I use students as research assistants on grant projects, and my classes evolve as I learn from my research," he said. "I've added a new local food systems unit to the ABUS 101 class, my finance and price analysis classes explore the developing potential of local and regional food markets, and I have developed case studies out of my solar technology and breeding bull profitability projects. My academic and professional collaborators visit my classes as guest speakers to provide interdisciplinary and applied perspective to the projects."

His work is also influencing the career advice he gives students. "A shift happening in agriculture right now is that consumers are demanding more source-identified food, and the food system is adapting and responding to that new demand," Brimlow said. "This is creating new opportunities in all sectors of the agricultural economy, from farm service to production to distribution and marketing, and taking advantage of those new opportunities tends to require students shift their viewpoint a little bit."

Brimlow grew up in Humboldt County and earned his bachelor's degree in economics at CSU, Chico. During his graduate work at North Carolina State University, he studied the effects of conservation programs on the market value of productive farmland.

Brimlow received the 2014 Debut Principal Investigator Award, given to a first-time research project director from the CSU, Chico Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. ■

Faculty Focus



Rich Rosecrance

Plant Science Professor Earns Fulbright Fellowship to Turkey

Anyone who has ever had a class with Rich Rosecrance knows that his love of learning surpasses even his enthusiasm for plant physiology, which is substantial. So when Rosecrance gets the opportunity to study and teach in another country for a year, he takes it. The plant science professor spent the 2013–14 academic year as a Fulbright scholar at Cukurova University in Adana, Turkey, on the northeastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It was his second Fulbright grant in 10 years, having spent 10 months at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa in 2004.

Rosecrance and his wife, Wen, moved to Adana in October of 2013. He spent nine months teaching undergraduate courses in Cukurova University's Department of Horticulture on scientific methods, crop physiology, fruit production, advanced fruit science, and protected fruit culture. He also spent time consulting with olive growers, touring peach and apricot orchards, and conducting research on methods to initiate dormancy in apples. One of the highlights of his trip was delivering the keynote speech at the Turkish Horticulture Society's main conference in Antalya, which opened up doors for him to meet and visit growers and researchers around the country.

"People were incredibly warm and incredibly accepting," Rosecrance said. "I felt really accepted, both at the university and outside of it. People invited me to their homes, we went on trips with them—it was just a really friendly and welcoming place."

Rosecrance believes the experience will benefit his teaching and research at CSU, Chico for years to come. He said it opened his eyes to a whole new system of agriculture.

"In many ways they are dealing with the same climate issues and warmer temperatures that we're going to see more and more of," Rosecrance said. "They are looking at ways to decrease temperatures in orchards so that buds develop correctly and get enough chilling. To reduce heat loads in the orchards, many progressive growers are using kaolin clay sprays on their trees to reflect heat. They also use sprinklers to create evaporative cooling, and some grow their trees under shade cloth. Growers in California are also experimenting with these techniques to decrease heat stress in the orchard."

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and those of other countries. Approximately 800 Fulbright scholars receive grants each year on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. ■

2014 Distinguished Alumna:

Trena Kimler-Richards



Trena Kimler-Richards earned a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and teaching credential from CSU, Chico. She worked for the College of Agriculture as outreach coordinator for more than a decade, recruiting students and helping to build the agriculture program. As a high school and community college teacher, Kimler-Richards has sent countless students here. As a donor, she and her sister established a scholarship in the College of Agriculture to honor their late father. Trena Kimler-Richards is a Wildcat through and through.

She was born in Fair Oaks, California, and moved with her family to Auburn in the third grade, later moving again to Grass Valley where her parents bought a ranch. The Kimler family raised cattle and operated a 50-sow swine herd, sending 125 head of hogs to Victor Brand Meat Company each month. Her entrepreneurial parents owned and operated everything from Hallmark and candy stores to feed stores. Her brother, Greg, still operates Echo Valley Ranch and Feed in Auburn.

Kimler-Richards grew up showing her family's registered angus cattle in 4-H, FFA, and open junior shows. When she reached high school, she became

The College of Agriculture's 2014 Distinguished Alumna has seen and served CSU, Chico from just about every possible vantage point. It is her dedication to the College of Agriculture and her professional success in the agricultural education field that prompted the College of Agriculture to select her as the first woman to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award in agriculture.

extremely active in FFA, competing in various contests such as public speaking and parliamentary procedure and earning leadership roles including serving as a Superior Region FFA officer. But of all the activities she participated in, Kimler-Richards' greatest successes came in livestock judging. In 1977, during her junior year of high school at Nevada Union High School in Grass Valley, Kimler-Richards' team of three girls won every contest in the state of California and then went on to win the National Livestock Judging Contest, the first time an all-female team accomplished that feat.

When it came time to go to college, Kimler-Richards' livestock judging prowess opened doors for her all over the country. She received scholarship offers from numerous universities, including Oklahoma State and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, but none of them could assure her that she would have a spot on the team, until a conversation with the faculty at CSU, Chico, including Professor Wes Patton and livestock judging coach Ron Hutchings, sealed the deal.

"I asked them point blank, 'Will you judge a woman at nationals?'" Trena recalled. "Hutch said, 'If you earn your place, you're on.'"

That was the response she wanted to hear. Kimler-Richards made the livestock judging team her sophomore year at CSU, Chico and went on to earn second-place high individual at the Arizona

National Livestock Show. The team ended the year 13th in the nation, winning the sheep contest at the North American International Livestock Exposition.

Kimler-Richards made the most of her college experience, living on the University Farm and working at various times in the farm office, Beef Unit, and Meats Laboratory. She also chaired the livestock judging contest of the FFA Field Day for two years and then became chair of the entire field day.

"There are no barriers to success at Chico State," she said. "If you chose to get involved, you can. The best part of the Chico Experience is the faculty advising, which links students with faculty and gives them a mentor for their time here. If you are a doer, they give you the opportunities you need to succeed."

After graduating with a degree in agricultural business in 1982, Kimler-Richards worked briefly for a cable data company until Patton and former faculty member Dennis Hampton persuaded her to return to school to become an agriculture teacher.

She completed her phase-one student teaching at Fall River High School, and after completing the credential program, went to work at Red Bluff High School, where she and Jim Millar were hired to rebuild the agriculture program. Two years later, they had hired two more agriculture teachers, and in four years, the program had grown

to 580 students, the second largest agriculture program in the nation at the time. She taught at Red Bluff High School for seven years, meeting her husband, physical education teacher Laird Richards, while there.

In 1992, Kimler-Richards was offered a job as a part-time lecturer and outreach coordinator for the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture. She returned to her alma mater during a period of turbulence and uncertainty about the college's future. After narrowly escaping the chopping block in June of 1992, the College of Agriculture was given the charge to grow its enrollment, so Kimler-Richards spent the next 11 years recruiting students to join the College of Agriculture family. She visited high schools and community colleges, attended FFA conventions, built a team of student ag ambassadors, managed livestock show teams, and connected with teachers, parents, and prospective students.

“There are no barriers to success at Chico State—If you are a doer, they give you the opportunities you need to succeed.”

While working at CSU, Chico, Kimler-Richards went back to school and earned her master's degree in interdisciplinary studies with her final project focusing on how to recruit and retain students. In 2002, with a master's degree under her belt and her 5-year-old son, Kegan, entering kindergarten, she decided it was time to stay home and spend more time with her family. Never one to be idle, Kimler started buying, selling, and managing properties and working with her mother, Jeannie Gallagher, to build their fruit-flavored vinegar cooking sauce business, Antelope Creek Farms.

In 2008, Kimler-Richards entered the classroom once again when she was offered a part-time position teaching at Shasta College. In 2012, the position became full time. Kimler-Richards teaches a wide variety of classes such as Introduction to Animal Science, Agriculture Business, Agriculture Economics, Livestock Feeding and Nutrition, Agriculture Leadership, Range Management, Livestock Production, Sustainable Agriculture, and Agriculture Career Placement. She also serves as the coordinator for the agriculture and natural resources program and is the Shasta College Ag Leadership Club advisor.



Since Kimler-Richards joined the Shasta College faculty, Shasta has become one of the College of Agriculture's most connected and prolific feeder schools. As a high school senior, CSU, Chico agricultural business major Garrett Wallis debated whether to come straight to Chico or attend Shasta College first. After meeting Kimler-Richards and touring Shasta College, Wallis decided to start out at Shasta, and he's glad he had the chance to learn from her.

“She pushes student to achieve their full potential,” Wallis said. “She's really good at what she does and she expects the best from all of us.”

Wallis, who Dean Dave Daley describes as mature, hardworking, and dedicated, is the kind of transfer student that faculty in the College of Agriculture have come to expect from Kimler-Richards.

“I know that if they've spent any time with Trena, they've learned to work hard and push themselves,” Daley said. “They've received a great education at Shasta College, and they're ready for the rigors of our upper-division coursework.”

Kimler-Richards' distinction as an educator was affirmed in 2010 when she received the prestigious Teacher of Excellence Award from the California Agricultural Teachers' Association (CATA), in which she has been active throughout her career. Kimler-Richards worked her way through regional and state leadership roles and served as the president of CATA in 1997 while she was the outreach director for the College of Agriculture. She currently serves

as statewide advisor for the Collegiate Agricultural Leaders, a leadership and career development program for agriculture students in California's community colleges.

Beyond her professional achievements, she has given back to CSU, Chico as a volunteer and a donor. Kimler-Richards serves on the Red Bluff Ag Social Committee, helping to plan the annual alumni reunion and fundraiser held during the Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale in January. In 2001, she and her sister, Tamzen Stringham (Economics, '81), established the Gene Kimler-Echo Valley Ranch Memorial Scholarship to honor their father, who believed that higher education was the key to a successful future. Raised on a corn and cattle operation in Illinois during the depression, Gene Kimler experienced the devastating loss of the family farm and taught his children that education was the one thing that could never be taken from them. The Gene Kimler-Echo Valley Ranch Memorial Scholarship now helps one student each year achieve the goal of attending higher education with the promise of giving back to the community in the future.

Thirty years after earning her first degree, Kimler-Richards is still making her mark at CSU, Chico. She was honored as the College of Agriculture's 2014 Distinguished Alumna at a ceremony in the Bell Memorial Union on April 11, 2014. ■

Where Are They Now?

1960s

Glenn Hawes (Animal Science, '64)
Owner, Hawes Ranch & Farm – Palo Cedro
wanda@hawesranch.com

James Tachella (Agricultural Business, '69)
Owner, Tachella Family Farms – Brentwood
jamestachella@att.net

1970s

Steven Slezak (Agronomy, '70)
Manager, Lucich Farms – Tehachapi
SBS@LucichFarms.net

Roy Short (BS, Agronomy, '73; MS, Agriculture, '77)
Adjunct Professor, College of the Desert – Palm Desert
rshort@collegeofthedesert.edu



Joe DiVittorio (BA, Special Major, '75; MS, Agriculture, '82) recently retired after more than 35 years of federal service. DiVittorio was raised on his family's ranch in Northern California. While attending CSU, Chico, he was a student laboratory assistant for entomology with Dr. Judy Bollinger (1977) and for plant pathology with Dr. Jim Burleigh (1975). His professional career included natural resource, environmental, and biologist positions with the Forest Service; the U.S. Navy as a civilian specialist; and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation. At the reclamation bureau, he worked at the policy level with invasive species, aquatic habitat, pesticides, regulatory compliance, and budget. Joe sat on several national science-related advisory panels,

is a member of the American Society of Agronomy, and is a certified professional agronomist. He has authored, coauthored, contributed to, and presented many works. He is the lead author of an invasive species inspection publication that has become a standard for many organizations. DiVittorio is currently working on an invasive species project through the State University of New York. He is a 2010 winner of the Department of the Interior Green Challenge Award, a 2003 graduate of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Leadership Development Initiative, and a co-recipient of the 2001 Albert Gore Vice President's Hammer Award for Reinventing Government.

1980s

Drew Tritchler (Agriculture: Horticulture, '81)
Agricultural Biologist, Lake County – Lakeport
dtritchler@gmail.com

Brian Heinze (Animal Science, '82)
President and CEO, Willowood USA – Roseburg, Oregon
brianh@willowoodusa.com

1990s

Olivio Arios (MS, Agriculture, '93)
Associate Research Scientist, Dow AgroSciences – Corcoran
olivio.arios@gmail.com

Jean Nelson (Agriculture Communications, '94)
Real Estate Broker, John L. Scott – Bend, Oregon
JeanNelsen@johnlscott.com

David Gattis (Agricultural Business, '95)
Owner, Fresh Roots – Salinas
davidg@freshrootspro.com

2000s

Karling Skoglund (Agricultural Education, '07; Credential, '08)
Agriculture Teacher, Sonoma Valley High School – Sonoma
karlingskoglund@yahoo.com

2010s

Janell Rice (Agricultural Business, '10)
Animal Sciences Instructor, Oregon State University – Corvallis, Oregon
janell.rice@oregonstate.edu

Spencer Cooper (Animal Science, '11)
Northern California Field Support Manager, Tulare Ag Products – Oakdale
spencer@irrigationmatters.com

Ashley Koala (Crop Science, '13)
Certification Associate, California Crop Improvement Association – Davis
akoala@ucdavis.edu

Katharine Long (Crop Science, '13)
Management Trainee, J.R. Simplot Co. – Caldwell, Idaho
katharine.long@simplot.com

Jessica Neugebauer (Agricultural Business, '13)
Membership Coordinator, Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau – Yuba City
jessica@ysfarmbureau.com

Jenna Wirkner (Agricultural Business, '13)
Community Outreach Coordinator, Diestel Turkey Ranch – Sonora
jennaw@diestelturkey.com



Hans Herkert (Agricultural Business, '10) and Jillian Kehoe (Agricultural Business, '10) were married on Feb. 8, 2014, in Sonoma. The groom works as a pest control advisor for Growers Ag Service in Yuba City, and the bride is employed by Scott Laboratories in Petaluma.
hherkert@tremontag.com
jillianh@scottlab.com

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Farmers Rice Cooperative

Food Industry Foundation

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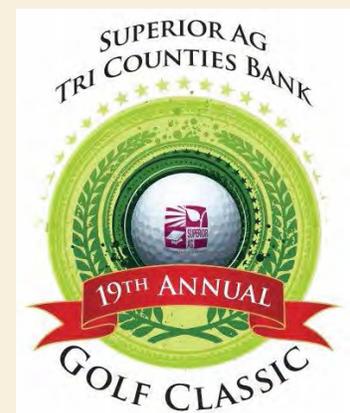
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UPCOMING events

- January** 20 Spring classes begin
- 24 Swine Day
- 30 Ag Social at the Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale
- February** 4 Alumni Breakfast at the Colusa Farm Show
- 7 Sheep and Goat Day
- 14 Invitational Parliamentary Procedure Contest
- 18 Career and Internship Fair
- 26-28 Grazing Conference
- March** 14 FFA Field Day
- 16-20 Spring Break
- May** 15 College of Agriculture Commencement
- June** 8 Superior Ag Golf Tournament

contributors

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