“A perfect storm” is how I’ve heard this year’s College of Agriculture situation described. A huge wave of new freshman and transfer students joined us this fall, but this wave of students crashed into the reality of an ever-declining state-supported budget. Make no mistake, we are thrilled to have so many students—approximately 550 this year, 50 percent higher than 2006—but the amount of state support each campus in the California State University system receives has been on the decline for most of the past five years. Our double-digit enrollment growth is a result of successful recruiting strategies and a nationwide trend toward higher enrollments in colleges of agriculture than previously experienced.

For Chico State, I feel confident that part of the reason we have so many new students is that the reputation of our faculty and staff is spreading, and students naturally want to be a part of something that is positive and growing. Through an academic reorganization effort that Provost Sandra Flake has initiated, we may have the opportunity grow our ranks even more if we are able to join forces with some logical departments on campus that also focus on the food chain and natural resource management. During the next couple of months, the campus will be evaluating a number of proposals to reorganize and reduce the number of colleges within the university. Our faculty, staff, students, and members of the advisory council and Superior Ag are actively engaged in the process to ensure that the eventual outcome will be one that builds collaboration, enhances student opportunities, is forward-thinking, and serves the dynamic North State agriculture industry.

We continue to look for ways to serve students, our stakeholders, and the North State community, and all indications are that we’re doing a good job in achieving that goal. As an example of that service, we have formed a close alliance with the Butte County Farm Bureau, and they’ve included a column in their newsletter from the College of Agriculture so that local stakeholders can be kept abreast of what is going on within the college. In addition, we continue to host multiple events at the farm, leading to about 18,000 visitors annually. And we have partnered with the California Olive Ranch, Nurtech, and Durham Pump, along with the Agricultural Research Institute, to plant a 10-acre, high-density olive orchard on the farm for research and teaching purposes.

We have almost “sealed the deal” for a new self-support, online “Master of Science in Agricultural Education” program, which you can read about on page 11. Lots of people have played a part in making this program a reality, but I want to give special recognition to the efforts of Assistant Professor Mollie Aschenbrener for her hard work and tenacity in steering this program through the muddy waters of academia! Dr. Aschenbrener joined our ranks this fall as an assistant professor after we completed a nationwide search to fill a tenure-track position in Agricultural Education. A former high school ag teacher, Mollie had been a member of our faculty as a full-time lecturer for three years, and she is well known and respected by her peers.

We have had some changes in personnel at the farm, too, but Associate Dean Dave Daley and his staff find ways to continue to serve students and community members alike. Livestock technician Gerald Darling and mechanic Jerry Miguel both retired within the past year or so after many years of service to the University and our students. We also said goodbye to Joe Limberg (crops technician), Brian Miller (crops technician), and Randy Long (meat’s lab technician), who all made the move to private industry. In spite of the decreasing number of farm technicians and declining state support, we make the adjustments we can and continue to provide an excellent hands-on experience for all students who take classes at the farm, whether they are our majors or General Education students whose only exposure to agriculture may be through their plant science or animal science 101 classes. There is no doubt that the College of Agriculture is here to serve students.

So, in the words of Tom Bodett, “We’ll leave the lights on,” and we invite each of you to stop by when you find yourself in Chico.

With warm regards,

Jennifer Ryder Fox
inside the harvest

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Students Compete in National Cook-Off

Kyle Daley, Taylor Hagata, Jaime Salyer, and Steven Tunzi, along with coach Randy Long, worked together to develop a raspberry Thai flat iron steak that earned them many compliments at the University Student Cook-Off at the National Meat Association’s Meat Exposition in Las Vegas, Nev., Feb. 13-16. The cook-off allowed only eight university teams to compete. CSU, Chico was one of the first eight qualifying entries, giving them the opportunity to compete against Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Fresno State, San Angelo State University, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, UC Davis, and University of Idaho, Moscow. Long said, “The team had an excellent product that received many positive comments. They also did a great job representing CSU, Chico at a national competition.” Although only the first-place team was announced, Long said, “By the compliments we received, I am confident that we placed in the top three.”

Chico State Competes at Regional Food Marketing Competition

The College of Agriculture sent two teams to the Western Collegiate Food Marketing Competition which was held at Fresno State March 11-12, 2011. The International team, consisting of Sara Spafford, Kirby Swickard, and Janice Bridwell, took second place with their marketing plan for the fictional company “Lucky Treasure Nuts” that targeted consumers in Hong Kong. The domestic marketing team, consisting of Elle Karno-Palic, Kendra Anderson, and Katie Lewis, created a marketing plan for the fictional product “Bidwell Smart Bites,” a healthy fruit snack that would provide the recommended amount of daily vitamins. It was targeted to those wanting to eat healthy snacks.

Karno-Palic and Spafford also competed in a new individual competition called Pecha Kucha. The competitors created a marketing plan for a product and presented 20 slides in 6.6 minutes on their plan. Spafford developed “Perfect Portion…meal containers that make eating easy” to help teach kids how to eat in the correct proportions. Karno-Palic developed “Fresh to go Snacks,” which were products that enabled consumers to get the USDA-recommended five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables.

Ag Student Receives American Quarter Horse Scholarship

Kate Daley, a junior animal science major at CSU, Chico, was recently named the recipient of the prestigious $25,000 Excellence in Equine and Agricultural Involvement Scholarship from the American Quarter Horse Foundation (AQHF). The foundation, located in Amarillo, Tex., awards scholarships based on academic achievement, financial need, and participation in equine-related activities. Since 1976, the AQHF has awarded $4.7 million in scholarships to more than 900 students. The Excellence in Equine and Agricultural Involvement Scholarship is the largest single scholarship awarded annually by the AQHF.

“Ag Facts” in Front of the College of Agriculture

Beginning in March 2011, the College of Agriculture took on a new project to raise agricultural literacy on campus. Kirby Swickard, a 2011 graduate in ag business, developed a message board in front of Plumas Hall where a new fun fact about agriculture is posted every week. The first posting informed passersby that California has been the number one food and agricultural producer in the United States for more than 50 consecutive years.

Ag Student Receives Two Prestigious Awards

Elizabeth Hurd, a junior in agriculture business, received two awards at the University Awards Reception on April 12, 2011. Hurd was one of only three CSU, Chico students selected by the CSU, Chico Advisory Board to receive the Outstanding Student Service Award. University President Paul Zingg surprised Hurd in one of her classes to announce her selection for the award, which she received for her commitment to community service, including volunteer work with the elderly and disabled and her fundraising efforts on behalf of childhood cancer research. Hurd was also presented with the College of Agriculture’s Outstanding Student Leader Award at the University Awards Reception. Each college selects a recipient based on the student’s demonstrated leadership. Hurd co-chaired the FFA Field Day leadership team, holds officer positions in multiple student organizations, and helps with coordinating and planning agriculture ambassador events.
College of Ag Makes Top 25 List for Innovation

The College of Agriculture has been named as one of the top 25 agricultural innovators in California from a list of 100 business and universities. A selection committee of experts from investment banks, venture capital funds, academia, and industry chose the top 25, which were recognized during the inaugural Agriculture Innovation conference sponsored by Grow California and held at UC Davis in July.

University Inducted into Calif. Agricultural Heritage Club

California State University, Chico was inducted into the California Agricultural Heritage Club at an awards brunch held at the California State Fair on July 29, 2011. The Heritage Club recognizes farms, ranches, organizations, and agricultural businesses that have operated in the state for at least a century.

Nineteen businesses and organizations, including CSU, Chico, were added to the 100-year Agricultural Heritage Club in 2011.

‘Aggie Ladies’ Shave Their Heads for St. Baldrick’s

College of Agriculture students Audra Harl, Elizabeth Hurd, and Suzanne Perrin, dubbed the "Aggie Ladies," shaved their heads on April 30, 2011 to raise awareness and money to support research for childhood cancer. The Aggie Ladies have generated over $3,600 for the St. Baldrick's Foundation, which donates the money to support research to find a cure for childhood cancer. To donate to the Aggie Ladies cause visit www.stbaldricks.org/teams/mypage/teamid/72108.

Dodson Receives Chico Noon Rotary Award

CSU, Chico, College of Agriculture Professor Brad Dodson received the University Educator of the Year award from the Chico Noon Rotary on April 19, 2011. Dodson has been instructing, coaching, and advising future agriculture teachers in the College of Agriculture for 11 years. “It’s a real honor to be recognized for something I love and value: teaching,” said Dodson. Jennifer Ryder Fox, dean of agriculture at CSU, Chico, nominated Dodson for the award. She said, “This award is well-deserved recognition of Dodson’s devotion to his students and to his profession.”

Superior Ag/Tri Counties Bank Golf Classic Raises Over $50,000

On June 13, 2011, the 16th annual Superior Ag and Tri Counties Bank Golf Classic raised over $50,000 to benefit scholarships and academic programs in the College of Agriculture. The tournament was held at the Butte Creek Country Club. Thirty-three teams of golfers signed up to play in the tournament. The North Valley Nut team of Randy Hart, Mike Hart, Bill Minkler, Curt Avrit, Richard Conte, and Bennie Walters won the overall tournament.

Sierra Oro Farm Trail and Hall of Honor

The University Farm was abuzz with more than 400 visitors taking tours and exploring the farm during the Sierra Oro Farm Trail Passport Weekend Oct. 8-9. For the third year the College of Agriculture participated in the Sierra Oro Farm Trail and held the annual Hall of Honor during the Passport Weekend.

During the Hall of Honor reception the evening of Oct. 8, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. was inducted into the College of Agriculture’s Hall of Honor for its service and support of the college.

Ag Students Represent CSU, Chico at National Quiz Bowl

July 22–24, 2011, four College of Agriculture students—Michelle Coon, Marcela Samaniengo, Elizabeth Tutt, and Casey Williams—traveled to Pittsburg, Pa. to compete in the Academic Quiz Bowl competition during the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association annual meeting. The quiz bowl is a double-elimination Jeopardy-style competition that tests the competitors on their knowledge of several different aspects of agriculture business and economics. The team made it to the third round of the competition before being eliminated.

Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. Stan Cooper (center) with Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox and President Paul Zingg.

Quiz Bowl team left to right: Casey Williams, Michelle Coon, Elizabeth Tutt, Marcela Samaniengo and Coach Jake Brindlow in back.

North Valley Nut team Randy Hart, Mike Hart, Bill Minkler, Curt Avrit, Richard Conte and Bennie Walters won the 2011 Superior Ag and Tri Counties Bank golf tournament.

Sierra Nevada Brevtoy Co’s Stan Cooper (center) with Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox and President Paul Zingg.

College of Agriculture

Star Students

Each year the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture recognizes one exemplary student within each discipline as one of our Star Students. To view the complete articles on all of our past star students, visit our website at www.csuchico.edu/ag/about/star-students.
A Look at What’s New at the University Farm

The cyclical nature of university life means that something new is always happening, and nowhere is that seasonal transformation more evident than at the “living laboratory” that is the Paul L. Byrne Agricultural Teaching and Research Center, also known as the University Farm. New students come aboard, seasoned students witness the fruits of their labors in their directed work experience projects, and faculty implement new teaching and research tools into the curriculum. The coming year will bring even more transformation as the ambitious goals from previous years are coming to fruition and giving students the diverse hands-on training to enter the agriculture industry or carry on their family business.

Wrapping Up a Successful Year of Crops

It was a profitable year for annual crops at the University Farm in 2011. Staff and students harvested 275 acres of wheat, safflower, alfalfa, sweet corn, and silage corn. Additionally, two seed contracts provided a wealth of learning opportunities for students. The University Farm contracted with Sunfield Seeds in Chico to grow sunflowers, and the squash and watermelon crops were contracted to Seminis Seed Company, one of the largest developers, growers, and marketers of vegetable seeds.

The orchards were another bright spot in 2011, with almonds, walnuts, pecans, olives, and peaches providing students with hands-on opportunities. The relatively young pecan orchard saw its largest crop to date.

However, cool spring weather and hail were not kind to the U-Pick Peach orchard, and a limited crop meant that community visitors were unable to pick peaches themselves but instead purchased pre-picked peaches at the University Farm office. To make better use of space and meet the growing demand for the popular U-Pick peaches, the farm plans to plant additional peach trees.

Small Animals Are a Big Deal

at Sheep & Goat Unit

With Associate Professor Celina Johnson at the helm, it is no surprise that there is a lot happening at the University farm’s sheep and goat unit. In addition to the usual lamb enterprise project, feed trials, and the annual Sheep and Goat Day, this year the sheep and goat team managed a meat goat performance buck test, added new does to the flock, and continued work on a crossbreeding project.

The unit hosted 16 buck kids from eight producers for a performance test that lasted until the end of August. The bucks were evaluated for growth rate and feed efficiency. “By having these bucks on a test like this, producers will have more information to offer buyers of bucks and will help improve genetics in their herds,” Johnson explained.

During the past year, six does were donated from the Braught family and rockin’ B ranch in Laytonville, Calif. Johnson said, “the rockin’ B goats bring in some great genetics that will help continue to improve the meat goat program at Chico State.”

Also new this year, a crossbreeding project with Superior Farms in Dixon, Calif., will evaluate the efficacy of Dorper-cross and Blackface (Suffolk and Hampshire) crossbred lambs. The first group of lambs is being finished to evaluate for carcass merit. The sheep and goat unit team is hoping to continue this evaluation for several years.

Venturing Deeper into Olive Oil

For the past three years, the University Farm has harvested olives and pressed oil from a small row of olive trees grown at the farm. A simple question from CSU, Chico’s President Paul Zingg led to one of the farm’s most ambitious projects for the coming year.

“Dr. Zingg asked me why we aren’t contributing more to the olive oil industry when we are right here in olive country,” said Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox. “As we thought more about it, we saw this as a great opportunity to increase the tools to help students be more active in the industry.”

Rich Rosecrance, professor in plant science, stepped forward to lead the project and work with partners, including industry leader California Olive Ranch, to plant 10 acres of super high-density olives on the University Farm. During the fall semester, students and staff tilled the soil, installed an irrigation system donated by Durham Pump, and planted trees donated by Nursetech Inc. The project will allow Chico State students to work with the production of olive oil from cultivation to pressing, bottling, and marketing a finished product.

By Malynda Whitworth
It was an experience many college students might find familiar—seven men and women living cramped together in tiny rooms, sharing a bathroom, a kitchen, and a washer. But it was not in a Chico State dormitory Krista Cooprider found herself living during the 2005-2006 school year. It was a tiny apartment (piso) in Madrid, Spain, and Cooprider was not just getting to know six new roommates. She was getting to know them in a foreign language.

Beyond academic learning, college is a time to meet people, experience new attitudes and ideas, and broaden one’s understanding of the world. Nowhere are these lessons more evident than for those students who choose to study and travel abroad, experiencing different customs and cultures and facing things that take them out of their comfort zones.

Cooprider, a 2007 Chico State animal science graduate, studied at Universidad de Complutense in Madrid for two semesters to complete a minor in Spanish. “Being in Spain was an opportunity to speak Spanish regularly and increase my fluency in the language, as well as gain appreciation for the Spanish culture and travel Europe,” said Cooprider.

“While I was in Spain, the most exciting development in my Spanish was learning to roll my r’s,” said Cooprider. “I had trouble learning to role my r’s in Spanish classes I had taken before going abroad.”

In AGRI 180 (The University Experience), a course for all new students entering the College of Agriculture, Associate Dean Dave Daley brings in veteran study abroad students as guest speakers to encourage incoming students to think about travelling. Daley often tells the class, “Take the chance to travel now because once you graduate, enter careers, and have families, it gets tough.”

The College of Agriculture offers a summer study abroad opportunity in Thailand through which students receive course credit toward their upper division general education requirement. Lee Altier, professor of crops, horticulture, and land resource management, developed PSSC 390 (Food Forever) in conjunction with a colleague at Chiang Mai University in Thailand.

During their coursework at Chiang Mai, Chico State students work on group projects with Thai students, interviewing farmers and conducting research together. The Food Forever course lasts three weeks, but students often stay in Thailand several more weeks, taking two additional courses at Chiang Mai University to complete their upper division education theme in cross-cultural exploration.

“I hope students take away from this experience an understanding of how much they can share with people on the other side of the planet and discover cultures that are kind, hospitable, and share the same concerns and values as people in the United States,” said Altier.

Kirby Swickard, a 2011 Animal Science graduate, worked as a peer advisor in the Study Abroad Office. Swickard spent the fall 2009 semester in New Zealand, and on return she mentored other students who were planning to study in New Zealand, as well as students who weren’t sure where they wanted to go.

“It’s important for students to study abroad to gain exposure to the world and gain appreciation for life outside of what they know,” said Swickard.

Swickard’s study abroad experience took place at Massey University in North Palmerston, New Zealand. While in New Zealand, she took courses in communications and marketing. She was also able to travel around New Zealand and experience iconic aspects of New Zealand like the Maori culture.

Swickard also had the opportunity to spend her 2010 summer in Australia as an intern for Australian Meat News magazine. She traveled around the country visiting boning and processing rooms, a lamb feedlot, and a Wagyu ranch to write articles for the magazine.

Another common way to earn college credit while studying abroad is the “Build Your Own” study abroad theme. All students are required to take three classes toward an upper division theme to increase diversity in the educational program. It is similar to how the Thailand participants complete a theme, but doing a “Build Your Own” theme offers more flexibility.

Jaime Carter, a 2010 agriculture education graduate, participated in a summer study abroad program in Ireland where she attended the National University of Ireland, Galway. She applied the two classes she took in Ireland, The Myth of the Irish West and Troubling the Past: The Rise of the Modern Irish Nation, to build her own study abroad theme.

Studying in Ireland changed Carter’s life in a way she never imagined; she met her fiancé, James Lynn, in Ireland. They are currently applying for a K-1 fiancé visa so they can get married and live in the United States.

“Being able to travel outside the United States to a place I have always wanted to visit was a huge accomplishment in my life and a wonderful experience that I will never forget,” said Carter.

Other students have travelled for the experience without taking classes and trying to articulate course credit. One such student, Kyle Daley, visited Australia to work on different ranches and experience their management practices.

One ranch Daley visited strived for zero-input costs for their cattle. “Their paramount belief was that the cow should be bred to withstand all of the environmental pressures, including heat, drought, parasites, sickness, etc.,” said Daley.

Another ranch focused on increasing body condition of their cows to increase conception rates. “To do this they weaned the calves off the cows early. That gives the cow more time to increase body condition before breeding, which increases conception rate,” said Daley.

“In the end, I realized that there are a lot of aspects of our management systems that are similar,” said Daley. “However, because we live on different sides of the world with different circumstances, there are also things that cannot be compared.”

Agriculture students who travel abroad experience different aspects of agriculture and learn the techniques and customs of other countries. It builds an impressive resume and gives them a well-rounded experience that less than 10 percent of college students take advantage of during their academic career.

By Kayla Dennis
The California State University, Chico Meats Laboratory is well known for its high-quality fresh meat, sausage, and jerky. The sales counter is busy on Thursdays and Fridays when visitors can purchase products and see students working hard to prepare those products.

Behind the sales counter, the Meats Lab has a lot more going on than just preparing products for retail. It serves as a hands-on laboratory where CSU, Chico students can learn everything from animal physiology to meat processing to food safety.

Patrick Doyle, associate professor of animal science, said, “The main focus of the lab is providing an educational opportunity for students. The retail products vary to provide students with experience in the diverse areas of meat production.”

In other words, customers may not always be able to count on a certain product being available, but they can count on the fact that their purchase contributes to the education of the students who helped produce it.

“The Meats Lab has a unique relationship with the local consumers,” said Doyle. “Without the students, there wouldn’t be a retail outlet at the lab for local consumers, and when local consumers purchase products from the lab they benefit the education of the students.”

The Meats Lab employs five to seven students with occasional help from student volunteers and students enrolled in a directed work experience class at the Meats Lab. The student staff are supervised by Doyle and a staff technician. For more than 30 years, the technician role was filled by Jim Holt; Randy Long took over for three years after Holt retired. Long recently departed to take a job with Yosemite Meat Company in Modesto, and the University Farm is currently working to hire a replacement.

Student staff and volunteers are involved in all aspects of managing and operating a United States Department of Agriculture-inspected production facility. They are involved from the harvesting process all the way to breaking down and fabricating retail products for packaging and sale to the campus community and public. Students also participate in preparing, making, and packaging of processed meat products such as sausage and jerky.

Prior to coming to CSU, Chico, Taylor Hagata, a 2011 graduate in animal science, had only experienced the cow/calf side of production in the beef industry. “I wanted to work in the Meats Lab to experience the final step of the beef and livestock industry,” he said. “By gaining that experience, I have a well-rounded education and deeper insight of the entire industry that will help me be a better producer.”

Not only did Hagata work at the Meats Lab, but he also attended class labs there. “When you have a lab in the Meats Lab you know you’re not going to be just standing around,” he explained. “It’s going to be a hands-on learning activity.”

Several classes hold labs at the Meats Lab to give students firsthand experience in yield- and quality-grading carcasses. “Having the opportunity to actually put paper to practice in grading carcasses brings to life the reason they are graded,” said animal science student Amy Abrams. “It also gives us a chance to see what select and choice products at the supermarkets and restaurants actually mean.”

The animal nutrition class (ANSC 330) holds a lab on physiology and anatomy at the Meats Lab to dissect the digestive tract of an animal. The students also get to use dissecting scopes to get a close-up view of different tissues in the digestive tract.

CSU, Chico offers a class titled Meat and the Consumer, ANSC 350, as an elective for those who want to get experience in the Meats Lab and the meat production industry. The class holds most of its labs at the Meats Lab, and students get experience in everything from proper sanitation of knives to breaking down a carcass. The students fabricate retail cuts from a carcass, which sheds light on where various meat cuts originate and how they break down into steaks and roasts found in a grocery store.

The class learns the entire meat production process from harvest to fabrication of swine, lambs, and beef. There is also an emphasis on how to produce safe, consistent, high-quality products. Doyle said, “I want students to gain an appreciation and understanding of the effort and work put into making a safe, quality product for consumers.”

Heather Ercolano was employed at the Meats Lab after taking Meat and the Consumer. Ercolano, also known as “The Meats Lady,” manages the sales counter in the lab on Thursdays and Fridays. She interacts with customers to answer their questions. “Not coming from an agriculture production background, the Meat and the Consumer class and the Meats Lab gave me insight into where I fit in the agriculture industry,” said Ercolano. “As a consumer I enjoy communicating to those outside the industry.” She plans to stay involved in food safety and quality assurance after graduation.

Gaining experience at the Meats Lab has influenced some students to pursue graduate school and obtain a master’s degree in meat science. One of those students is Trevor Nunes, who graduated from CSU, Chico with a bachelor of science in animal science in 2006. After graduation he went to Colorado State University, where he pursued a master’s degree in meat science.

While at CSU, Chico, Nunes worked in the Meats Lab through the directed work experience program and also took ANSC 350. “Having the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the lab and experience the entire production process from harvest to fabrication and processing developed and affirmed my interest in meat science,” said Nunes.

“The experience I got from the Meats Lab built a base for when I went on to pursue a master’s degree,” said Nunes. “I already had experience in harvest, fabrication, and processing when I came to Colorado to start graduate school.”
After receiving his master's, Nunes went on to culinary school. His goal is to work in meat product development. "Product development is a growing part of the meat industry," said Nunes.

The Meats Lab also served as a career pathway for Andrea (Derobertis) Perkins. Perkins graduated from CSU, Chico in 2004 with a degree in agriculture business and minors in animal science and business administration. Right after graduation she started employment for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a plant inspector. Now she has moved up to the position of enforcement, investigation, and analysis officer.

While a student at CSU, Chico, Perkins was employed in the Meats Lab for two years. "Having the opportunity to work in the meats lab, I gained experience in the requirements and operations of a USDA-inspected plant, which gave me a base to get started in the USDA," said Perkins.

Perkins started at the USDA in a career internship program. "Having a working knowledge and background of how a USDA-inspected plant operates allowed me to move up quickly through the USDA to the position I hold now."

The Meats Lab also acts as an educational facility for students outside of the College of Agriculture. "We have done tours for the CSU, Chico nutrition and food sciences department to get them in a production facility and experience the process behind meat production," said Doyle. "We have also given tours to high school classes interested in the lab."

"The CSU, Chico Meats Lab provides a unique opportunity and experience for undergraduate students," said Doyle. "There are not many places where students can experience the entire meat production process from harvest to fabrication."

By Kayla Dennis

University Plans to Build Creamery and Farm Store

Work is progressing on a business plan to build a farmstead creamery at the CSU, Chico University Farm. The creamery will be coupled with a farm store to sell the various products produced on the farm, including nuts, olive oil, meat, vegetables, and the new organic dairy products. Its planned location near the farm entrance at the corner of Hegan Lane and Nicholas C. Schouten Lane will also offer visitors an education in agricultural literacy as they watch students making cheese and learn about agricultural products grown in the North State.

Cindy Daley, PhD, animal science professor and director of the Organic Dairy Unit, said that while a central location for producing and marketing products grown at the University Farm is a benefit, the main purpose is to provide a hands-on education. "The creamery and farm store will help CSU, Chico close the food loop and open more markets in Chico. It will provide a farmer-to-consumer direct marketing model."

"People who visit the farm and tour the dairy often ask where they could buy products from the organic dairy," said Kaitlin Mummy, a 2011 graduate in animal science. "So the creamery and farm store will make the perfect addition to increase publicity at the farm and build a stronger connection with the community."

Daley spent a year travelling around the United States observing university-based creameries and farmstead creameries for reference to build a business model and floor plan. She visited Seven Stars Farm in Pennsylvania, Hawthorne Valley Farm in New York, Washington State University, California State University, Fresno, Butter Works Dairy in Vermont, Wallaby Yogurt in Petaluma, Calif., and Cowgirl Creamery in Point Reyes, Calif.

Daley's vision is that the Chico State creamery will serve as a model for other small farm producers to build their own farmstead creamery.

“Our creamery model is very simple but contains all aspects necessary for those who want to build a creamery to see,” said Mummy. “The creamery will provide the opportunity for students to see the entire process behind dairy product production and will be a rewarding experience for those who work at the farm to see and sell the end products.”

Daley envisions that the creamery will produce farmstead artisan cheese that will be unique, signature cheeses to the college. Cheese ideas in the works are beer-flavored cheddar and a signature Brie cheese. Depending on marketability and funding, the creamery may also have ice cream, butter, and fluid milk.

The College of Agriculture is currently seeking funding to be able to start construction.

It may be a few years before the University Farm Store is open, so in the meanwhile, check out our Online Farm Store at www.chicostatefarmstore.com. You can purchase walnuts, pecans, almonds, olive oil, and the latest Chico State Agriculture fashions, and have them shipped to your front door.

By Kayla Dennis
Ask any given group of agriculture students, farmers, ag leaders, or policy makers to list the top challenges facing agriculture, and issues of water supply are sure to make the list. The American Farmland Trust's December 2010 report to the California Department of Agriculture, titled *California Agriculture Vision: Strategies for Sustainability*, identified “secure an adequate water supply for agriculture purposes” as one of 12 strategic priorities to ensure agriculture’s sustainability in California.

Faculty in the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture are taking the water challenge seriously and conducting research in cooperation with industry partners that will lead to improved irrigation efficiency as well as a better understanding of water’s economic impact. Through the Agriculture Research Institute (ARI), Professors Mike Spiess, Rich Rosecrance, and Eric Houk are engaging students as they seek to provide answers to the great water challenge.
Professor Mike Spiess Helps Water Users Be More Efficient

When the Irrigation Training Facility (ITF) was built on the University Farm in 2003, it opened up new worlds of opportunity for student education, faculty research, and industry training. Leading the utilization and application of its new technology is Mike Spiess, professor of agriculture education and ag engineering and technology.

The ITF was funded in part by the Bureau of Reclamation, which has awarded Spiess grants continuously since then to fund a staff position at the University Farm, held by Brad Laffins, and to sponsor workshops targeted to federal water districts and their water users. Workshop topics include water measurement, irrigation scheduling, auditing, and Global Positioning System (GPS). Workshops are led by Chico State staff and by the Irrigation Training and Research Center at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

"Before our facility was built, water users such as irrigation districts in the north state would have to travel to San Luis Obispo to get similar training or calibrate their water meters. Now they can learn about new technologies in water measurement and control right here. The goal is water conservation," Spiess said.

In addition to serving North State water users, the Irrigation Training Facility and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system are valuable teaching tools for students as well.

"We have a great facility for teaching because we can simulate different canal flows and facility set-ups all in one spot," Spiess said. "The whole farm is a good lab. We are able to demonstrate just about every type of irrigation method, except for pivots. Whether I am teaching an irrigation lab to students or a water efficiency workshop to irrigation districts, it allows us to go out into the field and look at the various conditions."

As the College of Agriculture’s technology guru, Spiess enjoys testing new technology to see how it will work in a production setting. He is currently conducting research on an Evapotranspiration (ET) Controller, which uses weather information to schedule irrigation automatically.

“The technology has been used in landscaping with a 40 to 60 percent water savings. The idea is that for a pretty nominal investment of about $2,500 plus an annual subscription, growers may significantly cut pumping costs, reduce groundwater leaching, and deliver the optimal amount of water for the plants’ needs."

Spiess is testing the ET controller in a block of peaches at the University Farm and at a second site with walnuts and pecans.

Associate Professor Eric Houk Studies Water’s Impact on Northern California

Eric Houk’s interest in water began long before he was hired to teach agriculture business at Chico State in 2009. Houk began developing economic models to better understand how water availability affected agriculture when he first started graduate school at the University of Idaho. While earning his PhD at Colorado State University, he focused his research on estimating the economic effects of transferring water away from agriculture to instream flows for endangered species in the Platte River Basin. Houk also looked at the effects of irrigation-induced water-logging and soil salinization in the Arkansas River Basin. Houk moved to California in 2003 and continued to examine both agricultural and residential water issues, including estimating the factors that influence residential water usage and conservation.

Now in his role as associate professor and ag business program lead at CSU, Chico, Houk is working on a project evaluating the impact of reduced agricultural water supplies in Butte County. The project, funded jointly by ARI and the Bureau of Reclamation, could make an important contribution to future statewide water decisions.

In light of growing pressures upon Northern California water supply, including transferring water south to meet agricultural, urban, and environmental demands, Houk’s research looks
The impacts of reduced water supplies on Northern California’s agricultural production and regional economy.

“As both manmade decisions (policy) and natural fluctuations (drought) diminish Northern California water supplies, it is vital to have a better understanding of just how valuable water is to agricultural production and to the Northern California economy in general,” said Houk.

In the first phase of the study, Houk is trying to estimate the direct value of agricultural production that might be lost if water supplies are reduced from either humanmade decisions or natural changes. In the second phase, he is looking at the impact that these reductions in agricultural production might have on the overall economy.

“If, for example, reduced agricultural water supplies result in an increase in the number of fallowed acres, then we would expect to see a reduction in the amount of economic activity within the farm service sector, such as sales of fertilizers, seeds, etc.,” Houk explained. “Having a better understanding of how important water is to Northern California will hopefully give us a bigger voice in statewide discussions and help preserve water for an industry that recently produced over $600 million worth of agricultural products in Butte County alone.”

Looking to the future, Houk has started making arrangements for his future research which will begin to incorporate the hydrologic effects of these water management changes on the local aquifer.

Professor Rich Rosecrance Looks for Water Savings in Olives

Olive oil production is one of the fastest-growing segments of California agriculture. According to the University of California publication California Agriculture, olive oil production in the state is expected to double in the next three years, from 800,000 to 1.6 million gallons. Most of that growth comes in the form of a relatively new type of orchard system called super-high-density olive production, in which orchards are planted up to 900 trees per acre, compared to the traditional system of 120 trees per acre.

Chico State Professor Rich Rosecrance is working with the burgeoning olive oil industry to help find ways to reduce water inputs. For the past three years, Rosecrance has collaborated with olive grower Matt Lohse with Carriere Family Farms to investigate “regulated deficit irrigation,” the practice of stressing the plant at certain times in the production cycle to reduce irrigation, maintain yields, and improve oil quality.

“Of all the tree species, olives are one of the most drought resistant,” said Rosecrance. “They are able to survive without a lot of water, and in fact water stress has been shown to improve the quality of the oil because it increases the levels of tannins and polyphenols in the fruit. Our objective is to see how much we can limit water, and at what points in the production cycle, without jeopardizing yields.”

Another goal of Rosecrance’s research is to find out if stressing the olive trees will hasten fruit ripening and allow for an earlier harvest, thereby decreasing the risk of frost damage late in the season. “If that’s the case and we can get the olives to mature more quickly, it should be easier to harvest, causing less damage to the tree and increasing the longevity of the orchard.”

Orchard longevity under super-high-density production is unknown at this point because the system has been around less than two decades. “There are olive trees in Israel that are 1600 years old, and the traditional orchard in California might reach 100 years,” Rosecrance said. “But we just don’t know how long these trees will last when we try to limit their growth and use mechanical harvesters.”

Rosecrance and his collaborators hope that reducing water inputs will add years to the longevity of super-high-density orchards while conserving water and improving oil quality at the same time.
Like many credentialed agriculture teachers, Austin Large knew that earning a master’s degree could open opportunities for career advancement and pay-scale increases. But the 2007 Chico State ag education graduate teaches full-time at Minarets High School in Madera County, and his summers are filled with fairs and student projects. The existing option of a three-summer master’s program at another university wasn’t going to work for him.

Large will become one of the first agriculture teachers to take advantage of a new online Master of Science in Agricultural Education that will be offered through the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture once final approval is gained. The self-support online program proposes to meet a growing need for post baccalaureate training in agricultural education using a consortium of universities called aG*IDEA.

aG*IDEA is a distance education forum providing students with online courses in specific areas of study from premier programs throughout the country. In the case of the program at CSU, Chico, students will have access to graduate level courses from consortium-member institutions across the nation. CSU, Chico would be the only college in the western United States to offer an online MS in agricultural education, as well as the only college of agriculture in the West to offer this degree with a thesis option.

The College of Agriculture plans to introduce the new master’s program in the summer of 2012, pending regional accreditation approval. The college has been awarded a $50,000 grant from the Commission on the Extended University to support the development of the program. Mollie Aschenbrener, assistant professor of agricultural education, has led the charge to develop the new degree program, a process that took more than a year to get to the point in which it is ready to move forward for regional accreditation approval.

“The main challenge of the implementation of the program is this entire model is brand new to the western accrediting agency and entirely unique to anything that has been done before,” Aschenbrener said. “Working with campuses across the country allows us to ‘hand pick’ professors and courses, thus allowing us to customize a program to meet the needs of our secondary Agriculture Education teachers.”

Sample curriculum includes courses such as teaching philosophy, curriculum, instruction, assessment, research, and cultural and global awareness. A total of 30 semester hours are required for the MS in ag education. Students may choose to complete a thesis, develop an approved project, or take a comprehensive examination to culminate the program.

CSU, Chico’s online program will be available to individuals currently holding a bachelor’s degree in agricultural-related areas. The program is designed for and targeted at credentialed high school agriculture teachers, such as Large, who are working full-time.

“As an agriculture instructor with summer duties at my school site, I can testify to the fact that it is difficult to continue your education once you are employed,” Large said. “This program will not only allow me to complete coursework while fulfilling my duties, but it provides options for students to complete a master’s which best fits their needs.”

Aschenbrener said that the decision to offer the new program was driven by a desire to help agriculture teachers find an innovative way to pursue their master’s degree.

“The entire college has been supportive and can see the direct benefit for both undergrads and graduate students, and they are excited to step forward and help fulfill the needs of our students,” Aschenbrener said.

Aschenbrener grew up in Oregon and taught secondary education for almost a dozen years before going to the University of Missouri to earn her Doctorate in Agricultural Education. She has been with the CSU, Chico College of Agriculture for three years as a full-time temporary faculty member and was recently hired into a tenure-track position.

Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox said, “Mollie’s passion for her profession is evident by her diligence, hard work, and follow-up in this new degree application process. She paved new ground for the College of Agriculture, and we are excited to have her join our faculty as an assistant professor.”

For information about the master’s in agriculture education, Aschenbrener can be reached at 530-898-4568 or by e-mail at maschenbrener@csuchico.edu.
In the mid-1970s, when Dennis Choate was thinking about what he wanted to study in college, his parents encouraged him to major in anything besides agriculture. But summers spent on his uncle’s farm in Gridley, Calif., convinced Choate that agriculture was exactly the career he wanted to pursue.

“I liked being outdoors, working with plants and machinery. I got to make things, fix things, and solve problems,” Choate recalled.

He pictured himself one day managing a farm or ranch in Northern California. That dream led him to attend California State University, Chico and set him on the path to being named the 2011 Distinguished Alumnus for the College of Agriculture.

Choate graduated in 1980 with a bachelor of science in agronomy. A summer internship with Asgrow Seed Company led into a full-time job and a career. After 20 years with Asgrow Seed Company, he embarked on his current career path at Harris Moran Seed Company.

Choate is now the vice president of production, operations, and quality control for Harris Moran, which is a part of the largest independently held seed company in the world. He provides strategic leadership for the company’s production and operation activities, translating business needs from the market and the customers into a crop plan. A large part of Choate’s job includes managing people. “You have to understand people’s needs and work to help them grow in their profession,” said Choate.

Choate attributes much of his success to his experiences at CSU, Chico. “The faculty at Chico State were great teachers who could reach students on different levels and present material in a way that anyone could understand,” said Choate. “Chico State taught me to balance my life between class, work, and a social life, which was instrumental in my ability to balance my career and family life.”

He also thanks Chico for allowing him to meet his wife, Shawn. They met in August 1979 while they were both attending CSU, Chico.

Because of his love for agriculture, Choate has a passion for reaching out to those with little or no agriculture experience and teaching them about agriculture and its importance to the world. With encouragement from his wife, Choate developed a pumpkin patch at Harris Moran for children to come and pick pumpkins and gain a firsthand experience of agriculture. The program is free of charge and designed for kindergarten through second grade students. Each year the pumpkin patch has about 1,500 student visitors. “I like being able to work with kids and teach them basic agriculture literacy,” said Choate. “At the pumpkin patch we teach them about plant growth and seeds so the kids are able to go home with an agriculture experience.”

Though Choate spends all week working for an agriculture company, one of his favorite things to do during his time off is farm. Choate and his family own a small cherry orchard where they sell cherries roadside and commercially. When selling the cherries roadside, Choate often takes the opportunity to introduce customers to agriculture. “I enjoy meeting people and customers,” said Choate. “Sometimes I load people up in my old truck and take them on a little tour of our orchard to introduce them to agriculture and the process behind agriculture production.”

Choate continues to remain involved in his alma mater as a member of the CSU, Chico Agriculture Advisory Board, which provides industry guidance to faculty and staff on the direction of the agriculture program. “It’s part of my responsibility, as I’ve grown in my career, to give something back,” said Choate.

Given the chance to advise students, Choate said, “Don’t worry about learning too much in college. Learn the basics, how to analyze and how to problem solve. In an agriculture career you will learn as you go.”

Choate distinctly remembers a plant pathology class where the instructor told his students, “I have good news and bad news. The bad news is that only 50 percent of what I’m teaching you is right. The good news is that you will learn the rest through experience.”

“That’s been true in my career,” said Choate. “Agriculture changes so rapidly that what we do now is very different from what we were taught.”

Taking a cue from his own unexpected career path to vice president of a global seed company, Choate encourages students to spend some time learning about other parts of the world. “Agriculture and feeding people is a global business. Whether they stay in Northern California or go elsewhere, students need to understand the global nature and global impact of what they do.”

The bottom line, Choate said, is, “whatever you choose to do, pick something you like because you will be doing it a long time.”

Choate was honored as the 2011 College of Agriculture’s Distinguished Alumnus at a university-wide ceremony in the Bell Memorial Union on April 15, 2011.

2011 Distinguished Alumnus Dennis Choate (center) with President Paul Zingg and Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox
The history of livestock judging at Chico State spans six decades and includes three coaches and approximately 200 competitors. But it’s been about 30 years since a reunion was held to bring all those teams together. Shannon Douglass and Regina Stafford thought that was way too long. The two alumnae, who both competed on the 2003 livestock judging team, decided to plan an event that would draw former team members together and help raise money to support the current team.

The Chico State Livestock Judging Program Reunion and Benefit Dinner was held on Friday, July 15, 2011 at Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. More than 80 people attended and raised $2,000 for the Chico State Livestock Judging Team.

“We had people there who competed in the 1960s all the way through members of the 2011 team,” Douglass reported. “It was a time for people to reconnect and reminisce about some of their most memorable college experiences.”

Since the early 1960s, Chico State has fielded a livestock judging team every year or every other year. The team travels to events around the country to compete in contests that test their livestock evaluation and communication skills. The season culminates with a Senior College Final Contest at the North American International Livestock Judging Exposition in Louisville, Ky. in November.

“Livestock judging is like a sport in its intensity and the level of dedication necessary to be successful,” said coach Clay Carlson. “We work these students every weekend, honing their ability to look at a pen of livestock and determine how to place those animals one through four based on their suitability for the livestock industry. They also have to be able to explain verbally why they placed the animals the way they did.”

Like many livestock judging alumni, Douglass looks back on her time on the team as one of the most valuable experiences of her college career. “Not only did I learn presentation and critical thinking skills that I use every day, but I was able to visit parts of the country that I never would have seen otherwise and develop some great friendships that will last my whole life.”

Carlson plans to use the money raised at the reunion to help students with some of the additional costs they incur while judging, such as competition-appropriate dress clothing. “Sometimes when you hold a benefit dinner, people think it’s because the program you’re doing it for might be in trouble. That’s not the case here,” Carlson said. “The team is going strong and has great support from the University. Our goal is to help support the team’s travel and relieve the financial burden for students who judge.”

Douglass and Stafford are determined not to let another 30 years go by before the next reunion. “A lot of people who attended want to get together every year or two. We would like to make this a regular event which coincides with the team’s every-other-year competition schedule,” Douglass said.

For more information on how to contribute to the Livestock Judging Team, or if you would like to attend or help plan a future reunion, please contact Sarah DeForest in the College of Agriculture at 530-898-3737 or sdeforest@csuchico.edu.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our wish list in last year’s magazine, including Steve Brocchini of Brocchini Farms, who donated this used Kubota tractor to the University Farm. Besides the satisfaction of supporting our educational program, donors may be eligible to receive a tax deduction. If your new or used equipment is in good working condition and meets our instructional needs, the University Farm will gladly accept it. Here are some items we currently need:

- Backhoe
- Brillion seeder
- Cultivator
- Dump trailer or set of doubles
- Fork lift
- Front-end loader
- Gated aluminum pipe
- Gator/mule type vehicles
- Harrowed
- Hay squeeze
- Pipe and cable for fencing
- Shaker
- Small farm implements for smaller pastures
- Small refrigerated truck/van
- Swather/mower – pull-behind rather than self propelled

For more information about making a donation to the College of Agriculture, contact Sarah DeForest at 530-898-3737 or sdeforest@csuchico.edu.
1960s
Donald H. (Don) Heinze (Agriculture, ’62)
Range Conservationist (Retired) – U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management.
Don and his wife live in Los Lunas, N.Mex., where they enjoy camping, hiking, birding, and botany. Don represents the Native Plant Society of New Mexico on the State of New Mexico’s Noxious Weed Advisory Board and frequently writes articles and gives presentations on noxious weeds.
DHHBotany@gmail.com

1970s
Jay Eubanks (Agriculture, ’73)
Owner – The Dentist’s Choice, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Fred Schill (Agribusiness, ’78)
Attorney at Law, Chico, Calif.
attyfschill@hotmail.com
Mark Ashcraft (Animal Science, ’79)
Owner – North Valley Farms Chevré, Inc., Cottonwood, Calif.
www.northvalleyfarms.com

1980s
Joyce Buckley (Animal Science, ’80)
Lab Manager – IDEXX Lab Inc., Portland, Ore.
Buckley9625@comcast.net
Ray Griffin (Agribusiness, ’86)
General Manager – FoodSource, Monterey, Calif.
rgriffin@buyfoodsource.com

1990s
Tyler Bucke (Animal Science, ’98)
Manager – Bucke’s Feed and Grain, Orland, Calif.
tylerbucke@yahoo.com
Ted Myers (Ag Science & Education, ’98)
Owner – Lava Farms, Arbuckle, Calif.
TCMYERS2001@yahoo.com
Neil Tung (Ag Science, ’99)
Operations Manager – Robb Ross Foods, Fresno, Calif.
nell@robbrossfoods.com
Scott Bowdridge (Agriculture, ’99)
Assistant Professor in Food Animal Production – West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va.
sabowdridge@gmail.com

2000s
Josh Cartwright (Plant Science, ’01)
Pest Control Advisor – Bear River Supply, Rio Oso, Calif.
josh@beariversupply.com
Emiliano Castanon (Agribusiness, ’01)
Vineyard Manager—Michael-David Winery, Lodi, Calif.
ecastanon@michaeldavidwinery.com
Trisha (Bucke) Nissen (Agribusiness, ’01)
Manager – Bucke’s Feed and Grain, Orland, Calif.
Tnissen77335@qsbglobal.net

James Moller (Agribusiness, ’03)
Assistant Beef Operations Manager – UC Davis, Davis, Calif.
jrmoller@ucdavis.edu
Andrea (Derobertis) Perkins (Agribusiness, ’04)
Enforcement, Investigations, and Analysis Officer, USDA Food Safety Inspection Service
andreaderobertis@yahoo.com
Jolyn (Wells) Campbell (Agribusiness, ’05)
Warehouse Examiner, USDA Farm Service Agency
jolyn.campbell@kkc.usda.gov
Hunter Moyles (Animal Science, ’05)
Farm Bill Biologist—Pheasants Forever, Preston, Calif.
moyles74@hotmail.com
Stacey (Stirtz) Moyles (Animal Science, ’06)
Farm Loan Officer – USDA Farm Service Agency, Preston, Idaho
stacey_moyles@yahoo.com
Jackie Anderson (Plant Science, ’08)
Viticulturist and Pest Control Advisor – Wente Family Estates, Livermore, Calif.
Jackie.Anderson@wentevineyards.com
Darren Rigg (Agribusiness, ’08)
Sales – Meridian Nut Growers, Clovis, Calif.
drigg@meridiananut.com
Amy Sparks (Agribusiness, ’08) and Casey Rose (Agribusiness, ’08) were married on July 23, 2011. The couple lives in Salinas, Calif., where they both work for produce companies.
amy.sparks@darrigo.com
crose@colorfulharvest.com

Ashlee Willett (Agribusiness, ’08)
Ashlee.willett@dhs.gov
Sarah Hubbart (Ag Communications, ’09)
Communications Director – Animal Agriculture Alliance, Washington, D.C.
Sarah is earning her master’s degree in Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University. She is the first graduate student at GW to focus on agricultural communications and the impact that policy has on farmers.
shubbart@animalagalliance.org

Richard Anstead (Animal Science, ’10)
Crop Advisor/PCA – Wilbur Ellis, Colusa, Calif.
ranstead@wilburellis.com
Haley Hunt (Agribusiness, ’10)
Relationship Manager – Northwest Farm Credit Services, The Dalles, Ore.
haley.hunt@farm-credit.com
Hans Specht (Agribusiness, ’10)
Assistant Area Sales Manager – Sakata Seed America, Inc., Morgan Hill, Calif.
hspecht@sakata.com

Amy Sparks and Casey Rose

Send to:
Sarah DeForest
Director of Advancement
College of Agriculture
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0440
sdeforest@csuchico.edu

Where Are You Now?
IN THE NEWS

Mark (Agriculture, '82) and Susan (Agriculture, '85) Alves departed in September for Paraguay to fulfill their longtime dream of serving in the Peace Corps. The couple met at Chico State in the 1970s and now live in Zamora, where he works as a crop insurance adjuster supervisor and she is the principal at Maxwell Elementary School. (Woodland Daily Democrat, Aug. 1, 2011)

Jim Barbee (Animal Science, '93) was named acting director of the Nevada Department of Agriculture by Governor Brian Sandoval. Barbee, an agricultural consultant in the Nevada Department of Education, was nominated unanimously by the state Board of Agriculture. (Las Vegas Sun, Jan. 27, 2011)

Gene Bishop, a Plant Science major, won the California State Duck Calling Championship Aug. 6, 2011 in Colusa. Bishop outperformed 12 other competitors to win a variety of hunting equipment and the chance to compete at the world duck calling championship in Arkansas.

Dave Daley, associate dean in the College of Agriculture, was featured on episode 16 of the Farm Journal's Legacy Project, which airs on AgDay and U.S. Farm Report. Daley spoke with host Kevin Spafford about leadership development beginning at the farm dinner table. The episode can be viewed at www.agweb.com/legacyproject.

David Daly (Land Stewardship, '07) was featured in the New York Region Section of the New York Times on April 21, 2011 for his work coordinating the half-acre children's garden at Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Jessica Harris (Agribusiness, '06) was named one of the Top 40 Under 40 by Produce Business Magazine. Harris is the associate trade marketing manager for Earthbound Farm in San Juan Bautista. Her profile can be found in the June 2011 issue of the Produce Business Magazine at http://www.producebusiness.com/e-books/pb11jun.pdf.

Breanna Owens (Wildland/Range Science, '02) is entering her second year of the California Agricultural Leadership Program, which will take her on a 15-day international travel seminar to Russia, Poland, and Ukraine in February. Owens is a regulatory biologist and Certified Rangeland Manager for VESTRA Resources, Inc. in Redding. She and 18 other agriculture professionals throughout California make up Class 41 of the Ag Leadership program. Ag Leadership is an intensive two-year fellowship that prepares and motivates men and women in California agriculture for more effective leadership. For more information visit www.agleaders.org.

Anonymous Donor Paves Way for Newly Credentialed Teacher Award

After four or more years spent earning their bachelor’s degrees, and another year in the credential program, 13 newly credentialed agriculture teachers from CSU, Chico were inaugurated into the agriculture teaching profession at the California Agriculture Teachers Association (ATA) Summer Conference in late June. For the first time, the College of Agriculture was able to help those new teachers make the trip to the conference in San Luis Obispo thanks to an anonymous donation, which created the Newly Credentialed Agriculture Teacher Award.

“CATA is an important rite of passage for new ag teachers,” said Agriculture Education Professor Brad Dodson. “They each walk across the stage in front of hundreds of their peers to be welcomed into the profession.”

The Newly Credentialed Agriculture Teacher Award provided a travel stipend for each of the 13 recipients to attend the conference, where they received a certificate from the association, participated in organizational and professional development meetings, and networked with ag teachers from across the state.

“In speaking with the donor, he realized what a financial burden it can be for these students, many of whom have racked up thousands of dollars in student loans and who haven’t started working yet,” said College of Agriculture Dean Jennifer Ryder Fox. “He generously agreed to fund the award in its first year to help these brand new ag teachers launch their careers.”

Several of the students were able to make connections at CATA that led to employment. As of mid-August, all 13 had accepted job offers teaching agriculture.

If you would like to make a contribution to the Newly Credentialed Ag Teacher Award, you can do so online at www.csuchico.edu/AgGiving or by completing this form and returning it with a check to:

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE MAGAZINE

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Editor:
Sarah DeForest

Contributing Writers:
Sarah DeForest, Kayla Dennis, Jennifer Ross, Malynda Whitworth

Designed By:
Cristen Farley

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Casey Huff

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Erik Aguilar

College of Agriculture Development Office
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0440
Phone: 530-898-3737
Fax: 530-898-5845
E-mail: sdeforest@csuchico.edu
www.csuchico.edu/ag

UPCOMING EVENTS

January
27   Red Bluff Alumni Reunion
28   Swine Day

February
8    Colusa Alumni Reunion
11   Sheep & Goat Day
15   Career & Internship Fair

March
2    Ag Day at the Farm

May
19   Commencement

June
11   Superior Ag Golf Tournament

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