

Building Tomorrow

Leadership Farm Bureau 2018



Leadership Farm Bureau 2018



“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

—John C. Maxwell

Table of contents

Foreword.....	5
Class of 2018	6
February	8
March	10
April.....	12
May.....	14
August.....	16
November	18
Class of 2019	20
Congratulations Class of 2018	22

LFB: Building tomorrow

By Stephanie Younger, LFB Program Director

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead



Stephanie Younger

The 2018 Leadership Farm Bureau Class carried the theme of “Building Together” when exploring Farm Bureau, agriculture and themselves. They learned firsthand that more can be accomplished when working together to find solutions to issues that impact ourselves and others. This is a lesson they will take going forward with every new experience.

The California Farm Bureau LFB Program is designed to provide an opportunity for Farm Bureau members to gain skills and confidence to be advocates for agriculture, themselves and Farm Bureau. LFB produces leaders who are well-rounded in many phases of leadership and are able to effectively communicate with those who may not understand the significance of agriculture in our daily lives. Throughout the program, class members are challenged to grow in both personal and professional capacities.

Emerging Farm Bureau leaders dedicate 10 months to the LFB program. They take time from their jobs, families and individual agendas to participate in six sessions that focus on developing skills in media training, team building, public speaking and business etiquette, while gaining a better understanding of the many facets of the organization—from membership to advocacy on a local, state and national level.

Each session introduces class members to leadership opportunities within Farm Bureau and encourages their personal growth in communication, outreach efforts and other areas of their interests to fill these leadership roles. They gain experience by lobbying for agriculture at the state and national levels and touring parts of California to learn about agricultural issues and practices.

LFB is a constantly evolving program that began in 2000 as a way to develop leaders from within our own Farm Bureau family. Since then, more than 200 Farm Bureau members have graduated and gone on to become outstanding presidents and executive board members of state and county Farm Bureaus, commodity and industry associations, and school and irrigation districts. If you are fortunate enough to have one of these graduates in your community, you’ve seen the many benefits of the LFB program.

Are you willing to take the challenge and fulfill your leadership potential by building together? Submit an application today (www.cfbf.com/lfb) or ask an LFB member about signing up.

congratulations
to the class of 2018!

Class of 2018



BRAD FOWLER, NEVADA COUNTY

Brad Fowler is a first-generation rancher. He and his wife, Alana, own and manage two small businesses, including a contract grazing enterprise and a grass-fed, pasture-raised meat operation servicing the local community. Brad is first vice president of Nevada County Farm Bureau.



JESSICA SWEETEN, STANISLAUS COUNTY

Jessica Sweeten is a sales representative for Horizon Ag Products, working with Helena Chemical from Arizona to Idaho. Jessica is active in Stanislaus Young Farmers and Ranchers, and serves as communication and outreach chair. She attended California State University, Fresno, where she earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture communications and served as student body president.



JOSEPH ALEXANDRE, HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Joseph Alexandre is a fifth-generation dairy farmer in Humboldt County and CEO of his family's recent launch of self-branded dairy products: Alexandre Family Farm. Joseph graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where he majored in agricultural business and completed his MBA. He is second vice president of Humboldt County Farm Bureau.



BRITTNEY BLANKENSHIP, TULARE COUNTY

Brittney Blankenship is a program coordinator for Tulare County Farm Bureau, focusing on education, membership and Young Farmers and Ranchers. She oversees the organization's Youth Leadership Program, special events and newspaper production. Brittney graduated from the University of Arkansas with a bachelor's degree in agriculture education, communication and technology.



JASON GIANNELLI, KERN COUNTY

Jason Giannelli is a fourth-generation farmer from Kern County. He is a general farm manager for Ten Star Farming, specializing in almonds and diversified row crops. He is a board member for Kern County Farm Bureau.



RACHAEL FLEMING, SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Rachael Fleming is a program director for San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation, focusing on agriculture education and community outreach. She is involved in her family's wholesale nursery business and active in San Joaquin Young Farmers and Ranchers. Rachael graduated from California State University, Sacramento, with a bachelor's degree in history.



ERIN JOHNSON, SHASTA COUNTY

Erin Johnson is executive director of Shasta County Farm Bureau. She helps with her family's farm, which produces beef cattle, grass hay, turkeys, chickens and other rotational livestock. She is attending California State University, Chico, to obtain her bachelor's degree in business management.



JOE FERRARI, SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Joe Ferrari is a fourth-generation walnut and cherry farmer from Linden, and a certified public accountant. He is a board member for San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation and assists the California Farm Bureau policy team in food safety and tax issues.



TAYLOR ZUMSTEIN, SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Taylor Zumstein is the event and marketing coordinator for San Diego County Farm Bureau. She attended Cal Poly, Pomona, and earned a bachelor's degree in food marketing and agribusiness management. Taylor owns a breeding sheep business called TAZ Club Lambs and currently serves as Fallbrook 4-H's market lamb leader.

February

Many voices, one team



By Erin Johnson and Joe Ferrari

Our first Leadership Farm Bureau session for the 2018 year began Feb. 7 at the California Farm Bureau offices in Sacramento. After a quick introduction, it felt as though all classmates instantly clicked with one another, and class bonding and teamwork activities provided further confirmation that we were off to a great start.

Courtesy of Leo van Warmerdam, a Los Angeles-based team-building expert, we were able to gain a better grasp of each team member's personality and leadership style during the first of our three days together. Tapping into his experience working with renowned entertainers in Hollywood, Leo divided the classmates into personality profiles. This personality mapping provided

insight into how to approach and work with people whose personalities differ from our own, and gave class members an opportunity to get to know one another better. It also helped us understand what makes each person tick. Through additional group activities including consensus building, organizational communication and trust building, Leo helped the class develop new perspectives on leadership and management skills tailored to both Farm Bureau and our own farming operations (places in which communication is key).

The class switched gears to a new subject with the arrival of Tiffany Nielsen. Tiffany is a business etiquette instructor and worked with our class

on subjects such as business card presentations, professional dress and dining etiquette. She then challenged us to put our new skills into action during lunch as we awkwardly handled utensils in a new way—even using a “European” or “continental” style, something of which few of us had ever drawn a distinction.

We also appreciated Tiffany's advice on professional business attire. In fact, one of our classmates (who shall remain nameless) had never chosen his own wardrobe, so this was a testament to the necessity of our visit to Macy's at the Roseville Galleria. Using the store's My Stylist function, in which a personal stylist answers questions and helps choose wardrobes, was a real eye-opener and we're sure will facilitate

future visits to the store—especially since these stylists also fit many a Sacramento lobbyist!

On the final day of our inaugural session as the LFB Class of 2018, Marketing & Member Relations Manager Brian Watson lead a discussion on discovering, understanding and responding to membership trends. He then gave us each a homework assignment to recruit two new Farm Bureau members.

When the day came to an end, none of us wanted to depart. Yes, our first session was that informative, entertaining and fun—and it was evident during our late-night hotel discussions that the clock was our enemy. It was an excellent beginning, and we look forward to an excellent year.



Taking another step toward building our future



By Joseph Alexandre and Taylor Zumstein

On March 5, our Leadership Farm Bureau class began with the task of determining a class theme. We found it difficult to condense Farm Bureau's 100 years of history, advocacy and leadership into one tagline—something that would resonate with all farmers and portray our need to make a difference within agriculture for generations to come. Upon reflection of our personal backgrounds and goals, we selected "Building our Future."

The CFBF Leaders Conference was held at the same time as our three-day session in Sacramento, so we were able to participate in many discussions and hear from top leaders in agriculture. This experience began with the CFBF Political Affairs Department and a presentation on the power of grassroots advocacy and educating policymakers, empowering farmers and ranchers, and speaking to open-minded businesses. We then broke into groups with conference participants and joined Issue Advisory Committees

to discuss challenges to our ability to farm and ranch sustainably and profitably in California.

On the second day, the Leaders Conference continued with opening remarks from CFBF President Jamie Johansson, who spoke about the importance of Farm Bureau and current issues facing California farmers. Assemblymember James Gallagher then discussed policy reform and the significance of investing and engaging in politics. California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross motivated us to take part in civic engagement and leadership development, and to remain articulate and poised when sharing our story with the public and legislative representatives. Aubrey Bettencourt, executive director of the USDA California Farm Service Agency, spoke about FSA updates and compliance regulations. Lastly, we heard from the president of Govern For California, David Crane, on the importance of

power and being leaders within the industry. Our LFB class was also introduced to the crowd of attendees during the opening session.

Later that day, we participated in legislative visits. All participants were briefed by CFBF Governmental Affairs staff. Then we made our way to the state Capitol, where we spoke to legislators within our respective jurisdictions about key legislation and issues facing agriculture. These issues ranged from statewide impacts from the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition's General Waste Discharge Requirements to changing the current definition of food processing byproducts. After our visits, we attended a debriefing and reception at Cafeteria 15L.

Our last day began with a Farm Bureau membership discussion, where each member of the LFB group spoke about their own county membership outreach and retention. We were able to gather ideas and suggestions from



each other to implement within our own counties. Brian Watson, CFBF Marketing and Member Relations Division manager, and Kate Fuso, CFBF marketing manager, were included in this discussion. Jack Rice, CFBF senior counsel, then spoke to the group about legal briefing and the interworking of the CFBF Legal Division. His presentation was very thought-provoking, encouraging us to think outside the box and be creative when speaking to the public about Farm Bureau. We also had a discussion and a "Start with Why" book review with Elizabeth Giannini from The Plant Foundation. She urged us to look into why we do what we do, to find and pinpoint that passion and drive that keeps us going every day. LFB members shared personal experiences and "whys," creating great dialogue and insight. This also opened discussion about how we can strive to



make a difference within our own lives, agriculture and Farm Bureau.

All in all, the second session of LFB and the CFBF Leaders Conference provided us with empowering information on how to be even more

effective advocates for California agriculture. We were able to meet with and learn from influencers in politics and government agencies, taking us another step toward "Building our Future"—both personally and within agriculture.

Practice makes...progress



Brittney Blankenship, Jason Giannelli

Communication is at the very core of advocacy, and when the class first met in February and went over our goals, being better at talking to the media was at the very top of the list. Our third session pushed us to improve in this area with the help of a few experts in the practice.

Not long after the class arrived at the California Farm Bureau Federation office in Sacramento, we met Johnna Miller and Elise Stoddard from American Farm Bureau and gave our benchmark speeches on immigration, water and trade. Elise told us a trick she uses when speaking in public is finding her "grandma." She encouraged us to identify a friendly face in the crowd that helps ground you if you were to ever lose your place. It was difficult to choose just one in this setting because the class is filled with support for one another. Elise also shared a few other speech hacks like the power pose, what we should do

with our hands and how to effectively use eye contact.

That afternoon, Johnna guided us through a message house, a tool used to help prepare for media interviews and also make our speeches more impactful. She shared different ways we could get a point across through anecdotes, "things that make you go, hmmm" and shocking facts. She asked that we work on retooling our speeches while preparing for interviews on the second day.

The next morning, we felt a little better about what was to come after making it through the first round of our speeches. We split into two groups: one with Johnna for media interviews and one with Elise for speech work. During our time with Johnna, it was clear that navigating through an interview would be a challenging task. Through practice, she taught us how to keep each response on track with our goal message.

Later in the day, we shifted gears to focus more on talking to non-ag audiences. Johnna told us what words work and what falls flat when talking about agricultural issues with those who do not know a lot about the subject.

Another segment of this session was discussing our experiences in recruiting new Farm Bureau members. As classmates recounted their trials, a theme became clear: Identify a farmer or ag business who is not a member and talk to them about how they are already benefiting from Farm Bureau. We all realized it is not that easy in every case, but the point was sometimes all that is needed is a conversation.

On the third day of our session in Sacramento, we were joined by a few special CFBF employees: Senior Counsel Carl Borden discussed the roles and responsibilities of board members; Administrator Rich Matteis went over balancing perspectives in legislative advocacy in addition to



taking a number of questions from the class; and Federal Policy Division Manager Josh Rolph prepared the class on what to expect when we meet in May for our trip to Washington, D.C. In addition, representatives from the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom shared resources the nonprofit organization has to offer county Farm Bureaus working with schools in their areas.

As we said our goodbyes and began the journey back to our respective pockets of the state, the class was feeling both mentally drained while simultaneously motivated to carry on the work of Farm Bureau. It was a sure sign of the jam-packed learning experience we had all gone through together. We were all a little more prepared for media interviews and public speaking opportunities. Furthermore, we were motivated once again by all the work Farm Bureau is doing for California agriculture.



Washington trip shows value of in-person advocacy



By Brad Fowler and Jessica Sweeten

In May, our Leadership Farm Bureau class traveled to Washington, D.C., alongside California Farm Bureau Federation leadership, the CFBF Federal Policy team and county Farm Bureau representatives from Shasta County to Tulare County. This trip was an opportunity to put many of the skills acquired so far through the LFB program to work on behalf of California agriculture and California Farm Bureau.

Before the program, most of us had never met with any other than our county-level elected representatives. In March, we met with our state representatives in Sacramento and began to see the importance of personal interaction with policymakers. On this trip, the value of having a personal conversation was even more important, because the policymakers can be less

connected to their constituents, as many spend a lot of time in Washington. Our ability to explain how federal policies impact our livelihoods as constituents was critical in our meetings.

During the three-day trip, we participated in policy issue briefings to become familiarized on the topics of trade, water, immigration and the farm bill, and met with various legislators and dignitaries.

Our first meeting was at the British Embassy with trade officials. We discussed Brexit, the impact it may have on agricultural trade and the opportunities it presents for more open commerce with the United States and California. What a great occasion to start a relationship between California Farm Bureau and Great Britain.

We also met with Ambassador Gregg

Doud, chief agricultural negotiator for the United States Trade Representative. With Ambassador Doud, we expressed concerns about a trade war with China and how it has already adversely affected California farmers.

One evening, CFBF President Jamie Johansson led a walking tour of the National Mall. It a memorable experience, especially for those of us who had never visited Washington.

We met with many of our California representatives in smaller groups to discuss key issues including the 2018 Farm Bill, as a vote was taking place that week. We heard lawmakers' concerns, and could advocate and answer questions pertaining to how the farm bill would directly impact California agriculture and our individual operations. Many of us also had the

chance to see the farm bill being debated on the House floor, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

LFB class members Jason Gianelli, Joe Ferrari and Joseph Alexandre attended a news conference with Farmers for Free Trade. As part of the event, Jason discussed the importance of export markets to California farmers and ranchers.

In all our meetings and discussions, it was made clear the value of having real people advocate on behalf of matters that affect our farms and ranches.

The third day started with a Capitol tour led by the office of Rep. Kevin McCarthy. We also met with Sen. Joni Ernst and Rep. Devin Nunes to discuss issues including trade, the farm bill and the Food Safety Modernization Act. We wrapped up our time in

Washington with a visit to Arlington National Cemetery, to pay our respects to those who served and made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. It was a sobering finish to a busy trip.

Erin Johnson, LFB class member and executive director of Shasta County Farm Bureau, said about the trip, "It gave me full confidence in the efforts of California Farm Bureau in sharing the story of every farmer and rancher in the diverse state of California that we represent day in and day out."

We are grateful for the opportunity to represent California agriculture in Washington, D.C., and thankful to staff for making everything go so smoothly. If anyone has not been on legislative visits, we would encourage them to try it out and see what a difference their stories can make.



August

Water proves to be a timely topic



By Rachael Fleming

As our May session in Washington, D.C., concluded, the question was posed for the theme of our Northern California tour in August. We chose water and it proved a timely decision, as we arrived in Sacramento six days before the rally at the state Capitol held in response to the State Water Resources Control Board hearings about unimpaired flows that would redirect significant amounts of water in three Central California rivers.

We chose water as our theme for various reasons, mostly because we all thought we had some foundation on the subject. After receiving an overview by CFBF Director of Water Resources Danny Merkley and California Farm Water Coalition Executive Director Mike Wade, we quickly surmised that water is a major issue impacting many. This was further reinforced by Assemblymember James Gallagher, who discussed the Oroville Dam spillway failure in 2017 and the importance of water infrastructure.

From Sacramento, we headed out

to meet Fritz Durst, president of Reclamation District 108, to learn about their projects. He told us farmers are growing fish food in their rice paddies and adding gravel to restore side channels. He also said something that became a focus of our session: "Sometimes it's about the fix and not the fight." While the reclamation district works to identify and develop solutions with multiple organizations, not all groups support their efforts; however, groups no longer speak out against agriculture and that is an effective silence. As we thought about this, CFBF attorney Jack Rice provided an overview of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Next stop was Gorrill Ranch in Butte County. CEO Danny Robinson told us about their operation and took us to see their fish screen and ladder. We ended the night with Butte County Farm Bureau and a special speaker, Sheriff Kory Honea, who gave a firsthand account of the spillway failure.

The sheriff kept the class riveted, describing his experience of leading under pressure and the events that led to his decision to call for an evacuation. As we closed out day 1, we reflected and discussed these presentations in preparation for our first tour of day 2: Oroville Dam.

The next morning, Tracy Pettit of the California Department of Water Resources gave a presentation on Oroville Dam and the State Water Project. She addressed management of the dam and how water transfers work. We were unable to get close to the dam because of construction, but we could see the spillway as we headed to Tehama County. Once there, County Farm Bureau Executive Director Kari Dodd told us about leadership opportunities after LFB. CFBF First Vice President Shannon Douglass joined the class.

That afternoon, we learned about water conservation and farming with groundwater at Lindauer River Ranch with Michael Vasey. From there, we



headed to Lassen Canyon Nursery in Shasta County and learned about strawberry breeding and innovation in strawberry production from owner Liz Ponce, who is also the Shasta County Farm Bureau president.

Day 3 started at Shasta Dam. Due to the Carr Fire, access to the dam was closed, so we learned about the project by watching a video and exploring the visitors center. Then we took a tour of the Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery, where we saw the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's salmon operation and delta smelt project.

Heading south, we stopped at the Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, where General Manager Jeff Sutton talked about TCCA and the irrigation districts and farms it supports. We then took a tour to see how the canal diverts water from the Sacramento River to pumps with fish screens. Our last stop was at the Sites Project Authority, where General Manager Jim Watson provided an overview and timeline. As we discussed the benefits and the partnerships formed by Sites, we correlated that this project is a great example of our theme, "Building Together."

To say our Northern California trip was a whirlwind would be an understatement, but through it we are all able to better understand the complexities that drive California water.



Tour highlights creative ways to manage dwindling resources



By Brittney Blankenship

On Nov. 6, the class began our final session in Ontario and then traveled south, with a dip into Mexico, to learn about labor, immigration, water systems and innovation.

Our first stop was at Hadley Date Gardens in Thermal. We were surprised to learn each date tree must be climbed six times a year to aid in its annual production of approximately 250 to 300 pounds of fruit. Our hosts noted the average tenure of their employees is 20 years or more, and their biggest concern is a lack of new employees to replace the current employees as they retire.

California's tight labor supply was also a concern at our next stop: Prime Time's pepper-packing facility in Coachella. Partner Ellen Way noted that the company had previously grown mini bell peppers, but stopped because it was too labor intensive.

The next day we made sure to have our passports handy as we headed to Mexicali, Mexico, to spend time with Mike Fox, general manager of Brawley-based Lawrence Cox Ranches. The key advantage Mike noted of farming in Mexico is the availability and cost of labor. However, farming south of the border offers plenty of challenges as well. For example, trucks entering



the U.S. undergo lengthy inspections and at times have been completely offloaded, causing the produce to wilt.

Back stateside, Jeff Plourd showed us around El Toro Export, a feedlot and hay press in El Centro. He told us how they fit nearly a truckload of hay into a single shipping container. El Toro also creates custom-mixed, compressed large bales; they have even added rolled corn to some of the mixes.

The next morning, in Chula Vista, we gained insight from a panel discussion with representatives from U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. We learned the roles of the three organizations and how they work together, and were able to share some of the struggles agriculture faces when it comes to immigration. After a thoughtful conversation, the U.S. Border Patrol Agents who participated

in the discussion took us for a closer look at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Next, we were awed over the vertical integration and diversification of Stehly Farms Organics in Valley Center. The family's two retail locations feature their own fruits and vegetables, prioritize local sourcing, incorporate imperfect produce into the cafe and bakery menus, and compost their food waste. The Stehlys have created brand recognition in their community by hosting dinners and seasonal farm days, which in turn have helped them grow their business.

Our final stop was Go Green Agriculture, which grows butter lettuce hydroponically within the city limits of Encinitas. The company's innovative practices include using the dew that collects overnight and leaving the roots intact to give each head of lettuce a three-week shelf life.

Nearly all the hosts during our



four-day tour of Southern California and Mexico noted water and labor as major concerns, pointing to both as scarce resources that are likely to become even more scarce in the future. On the other hand, the hosts demonstrated how creative solutions have helped them stay in business—whether that meant moving a portion of their operation to another country or partnering with the local community on direct-to-consumer sales.

As we began the journey home, it was clear to us how close we'd grown since our first session in February. We looked forward to seeing each other again in December and graduating at the California Farm Bureau's 100th Annual Meeting.



are you ready to join the class of **2019**

DISCOVER the potential within

Leadership Farm Bureau is a one-of-a-kind experience and the only program in Farm Bureau that invests in key individuals instead of a demographic. Through LFB, participants receive more than 250 hours of hands-on experience in the halls of our state's and nation's capitols, exposure to dozens of different farming and ranching operations across California, and instruction on key elements of leadership and the inner workings of Farm Bureau at all levels. Leadership Farm Bureau is the one-year experience in California agriculture you've been looking for. Visit us online and apply today.

The deadline to apply is December 21, 2018.

www.cfbf.com/lfb





Congratulations LFB Class of 2018



Good leadership isn't about advancing yourself. It's about advancing your team.

— John C. Maxwell



Building *tomorrow*



#goexperancelive

Follow the LFB conversation on Facebook
[facebook.com/CALeadershipFarmBureau](https://www.facebook.com/CALeadershipFarmBureau)