



united
not divided



united

not divided

LEADERSHIP FARM BUREAU 2017



CHANGE IS
inevitable
GROWTH IS
optional

—John C. Maxwell



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Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.

— Henry Ford

uniting forces

By Lindsey Liebig,
LFB Program Director

California agriculture is one of the most diverse industries in our nation. It depends on all commodities and livestock from all corners of the state to remain the No. 1 agricultural economy in the nation. Farm Bureau is no different, as we depend on our members, county Farm Bureaus and volunteer leaders to bring together their diverse interests to achieve our common goals.



Lindsey Liebig

The California Farm Bureau Leadership Farm Bureau program provides the ideal environment for selected participants to grow in both personal and professional capacities. LFB offers the opportunity for emerging leaders to experience all facets of the organization—from membership to advocacy—and encourages their personal growth in communication and outreach efforts, among others. LFB produces leaders who are well-rounded in all phases of leadership and able to effectively communicate to those who may not understand the significance of agriculture in our daily lives.

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 180 LFB graduates have taken time from their individual agendas, jobs and families to work as a group on media training, team building, public speaking and business etiquette. They have lobbied for agriculture at the state and national levels and toured parts of California, other states and Mexico, learning about agricultural issues and practices. The personal sacrifices they have made to be away from farm and family are far outweighed by the lifetime of friendships and personal growth they have gained. In short, they have been provided an opportunity to grow and they took it upon themselves to develop an abundance of new skills.

LFB alumni have 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 push yourself to reach new limits? Fill out an application today (www.cfbf.com/lfb) or ask an LFB member about signing up.

congratulations
to the class of 2017!

Leadership farm bureau

CLASS OF 2017



CHRISTINA BECKSTEAD,
MADERA COUNTY

Christina Beckstead is the executive director of Madera County Farm Bureau. She was raised on a dairy in the Central Valley and is actively involved with California Women for Agriculture. She has a juris doctorate and bachelor's degree in agriculture business and economics from California State University, Fresno.



JILL DAMSKEY,
SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Jill Damskey is an account manager for Ag Association Management Services. She previously worked as the program and government affairs coordinator for Sacramento County Farm Bureau, and as a grower relations representative for the Sacramento-Amador Water Quality Alliance. She is active within her community and volunteers for many FFA functions, including coaching Career Development Events, judging and contest coordination.



LINDY KEILSON,
MENDOCINO COUNTY

Lindy Keilson is the membership and marketing coordinator for Mendocino County Farm Bureau. Prior to working with Farm Bureau, she was a program technician for U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency. She attended Humboldt State University and graduated with a degree in wildlife conservation and management.



JENNIFER BERETTA,
SONOMA COUNTY

Jennifer Beretta works on her family's dairy in Sonoma and is heavily involved in dairy advocacy. She serves as 2nd vice president of Sonoma County Farm Bureau and is active with Sonoma-Marín Young Farmers and Ranchers. She attended California State University, Chico, where she graduated with a degree in animal science.



KELTON FLEMING,
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Kelton Fleming is a second-generation nursery grower in Lodi. He operates a wholesale nursery business servicing the Western U.S., specializing in large specimen trees. He is active within San Joaquin Young Farmers and Ranchers, and serves on the Rural Health & Safety Committee of San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation.



RYAN RICE,
HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Ryan Rice is a construction manager for Humboldt Redwood Co. Previously he managed his own construction business, which provided heavy equipment services to timber companies, nonprofit organizations and landowners in rural Humboldt County. He is president of Humboldt County Farm Bureau.



MARK CHESINI,
YUBA-SUTTER COUNTY

Mark Chesini is director of operations for Rice Grower Association of California, specializing in rice brokerage and grower contracting. He is also the 2nd vice president for Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau. He continues to work on his family rice farm. He attended California State University, Chico, and graduated with a degree in business administration.



LAURA GUTILE,
MADERA COUNTY

Laura Gutile is a fourth-generation farmer, specializing in pistachios. She serves as secretary of the Madera County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and is a director on the Madera County Workforce Development Board.



KATIE VEENSTRA,
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Katie Veenstra is the director of marketing for GloriAnn Farms in Tracy. She serves as a board member for San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation, is active on numerous committees and is a past county Young Farmers and Ranchers chair. She attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and graduated with a degree in agricultural science with minors in agricultural communications and ag business.

FEBRUARY *forming connections*



By Katie Veenstra and Jill Damskey

The 2017 Leadership Farm Bureau class assembled on Feb. 1, with eager participants ready and excited to meet one another and see what the program had in store. Starting the year off on the right foot, the members of the class, along with our leader, Program Director Lindsey Liebig, bonded instantly.

Kicking off the first session, we had the pleasure of hearing from California Farm Bureau Federation Administrator Rich Matteis and President Paul Wenger. Both shared with us the value of CFBF and the importance of investing in talent and leaders, such as ourselves, to help guide the organization and the industry. They told us about the challenges agriculture is currently facing in California, while highlighting some of the tough losses and major victories experienced this past year.

We then dove deeper into LFB and the structure of Farm Bureau, and learned what this year has in store for us. When all was said and done, there was no doubt in our minds that

this year's LFB program, more than any other, will be a year that focuses heavily on policy, both in California and in Washington, D.C. It will also be an opportunity for us to grow as individuals, professionals and leaders.

Another focus for this year was presented to us by Brian Watson and Kate Tscharner from CFBF's Marketing and Member Relations Division. Membership, and the challenges associated with it, will be a continuous thread throughout the year. We were challenged to help strengthen this powerful grassroots organization, both by retaining existing members and recruiting new ones.

To be effective leaders and professionals, it's necessary to understand and recognize the importance of business protocol and courtesy. That's exactly what Tiffany Nielsen of Premier Etiquette focused on in her discussion of "From Farm to Capitol Hill: How to Stand Out, Not Stick Out." After having a candid and

eye-opening discussion about our pet peeves in the workplace and how we can navigate those issues in an appropriate manner, we went on to review everything from making a good first impression to the proper way to give and receive business cards. The afternoon focused on professional business attire, working closely with personal stylists at Macy's to broaden our wardrobes and ensure we're dressed to impress for our visits to Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

By the time day two concluded, it was clear our group was forming very strong connections. What better way to continue that trajectory than to participate in team-building and leadership exercises that pushed us all out of our comfort zones? Led by Leo van Warmerdam, day three got us all up and moving as we participated in several icebreakers through which we saw each other's true personalities, if we hadn't already. We discovered interesting tidbits about our fellow classmates,



learned how to achieve consensus in a group of strong-willed individuals and successfully completed a task with a majority of the group being blindfolded.

To better understand our personalities and different leadership styles, we completed an evaluation that accurately placed us in one of four groups: expressive, supportive, analytical or driver. We learned about the traits specific to each group, how they typically give information and how it's best received. Our class was pretty evenly spread among the different categories—a good sign of a diverse and well-rounded group.

As day three came to a close, we said our goodbyes with the anticipation of our next session at the Leaders Conference. With plenty of inside jokes to last us the year and bonds of friendship already established, our class has become a team, ready and eager to take on all the new opportunities and challenges the year, and this program, have to offer.



MARCH

grassroots engagement



Leadership is not a title.
It's a behavior.

— Robin Sharma



By Christina Beckstead and Mark Chesini

After reuniting with our classmates, we were tasked with our first big consensus-based project of choosing a class theme. This project drew on the teamwork skills we learned in session one and allowed us to really push each other to be creative, yet stay on task to accomplish our assignment. Many viable options were debated and we ended up selecting “United Not Divided.” This exemplifies our diversity among commodities, regions and issues that each of us bring to the table. We may come from different corners, but we join together to work for the same theme and to accomplish the same goal.

Because session two of LFB was held in conjunction with the annual CFBF Leaders Conference in Sacramento, we had the opportunity to attend one of the Issue Advisory Committee meetings and participate in the grassroots policy discussion. Following the IAC meetings, we attended a reception that gave us

an opportunity to mingle with other conference attendees.

On the morning of day two, CFBF First Vice President Jamie Johansson introduced our class to the assembled crowd at the opening session. Throughout that session, we heard from a number of speakers discussing topics ranging current state legislative bills to water and forestry issues. We received a briefing on the key topics we would be discussing during our afternoon legislative visits at the state Capitol, including labor, trucking regulations, nitrates in drinking water and one topic that was fresh on everyone’s minds— flood protection. Even if we lacked expertise on some of these topics, the morning’s agenda provided a wealth of information to help us convey the effect these issues have on agriculture.

After lunch, we headed to the Capitol to begin our legislative visits. We enjoyed navigating the halls of our statehouse

and appreciated the important work that takes place within this building. We hope our efforts with our legislators will lead to changes that will positively affect our work in agriculture. After a debriefing at the Hyatt, we attended a legislative reception at Cafeteria 15L. This gave us the opportunity to converse with our legislators and their staff in a more relaxed atmosphere. We were also able to visit with members from our own counties and counties across the state, as well as LFB alumni.

Day three provided the opportunity to revisit Farm Bureau membership and engage with other divisions within CFBF. We discussed membership and the ways each county Farm Bureau has worked to recruit new members. Several counties had different approaches, resulting in productive conversations on improving current strategies. The day also included a discussion with CFBF attorney Jack Rice, who described the workings of



the CFBF Legal Division and asked for our thoughts on a compliance guide for surface water measurement and reporting. Under SB88, all surface water diverters of more than 10 acre-feet per year are required to report to the State Water Resources Control Board, and CFBF has created a tool to explain in a simplified manner what is required.

The day ended with a presentation by Political Affairs Manager Chelsea Molina discussing the important role we as Farm Bureau members play in the political realm. She reviewed and explained Farm Team and Farm PAC, both valuable tools for our grassroots organization.

With the emphasis on policy in session two, we were able to learn how to effectively advocate with our state legislators, work with neighboring counties on common issues and take part in the grassroots policy development that makes Farm Bureau so unique.



APRIL

effective communication = effective advocacy



By Laura Gutile and Kelton Fleming

Each time LFB 2017 meets, it's as if we are greeting lifelong friends. Session three—which focused heavily on communication—was no different. We can easily pick up right where we left off, like no time has passed.

On day one, we met Kyle Perry and Johnna Miller from the American Farm Bureau Federation's Training and Development Department. Kyle guided us through our benchmark speeches and talked with the group about presentation skills. Johnna "the Piranha" talked about what to expect with her on-camera media training. Kyle then provided several ideas on how to craft speeches and keep them on point, but we think the best advice he gave was for us to identify with our subject and speak from the heart.

Several of us woke up on day two with trepidation. The time had come for us to split into two groups: one working on speeches and the other doing benchmark on-camera interviews. Johnna started the interview process by letting us know her goal was to be the hardest interview we would ever have. She was not kidding! Many of us felt a little traumatized, but the experience and her feedback were invaluable. She

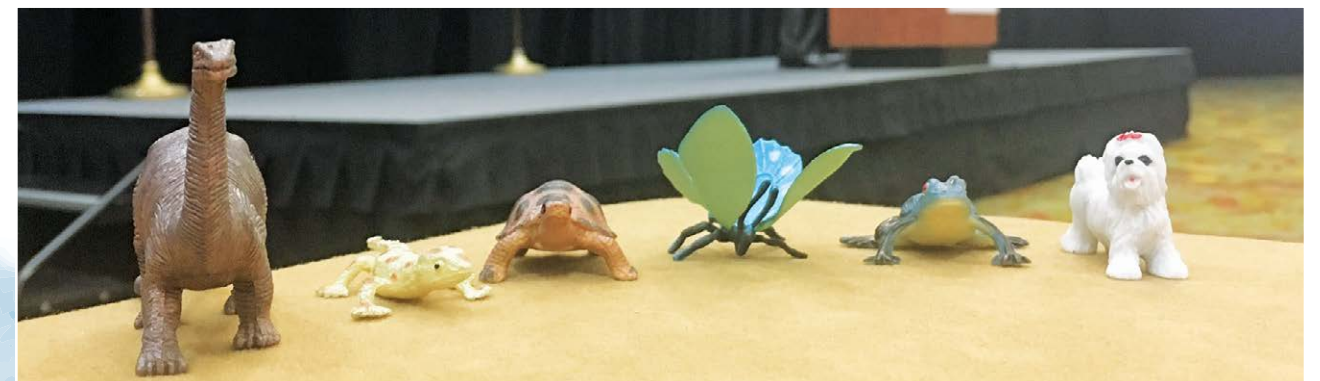
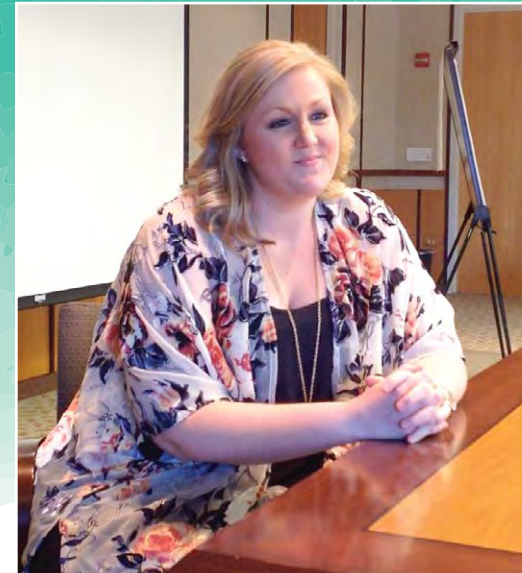
gave us tips on keeping still, looking relaxed and knowing your subject, and talked about potential pitfalls we may encounter. After everyone had a chance to be interviewed, we switched groups. Kyle had us refine our speeches, challenging us to convey our message without being wordy or using crutches such as notes. Then we adjourned for lunch and a much-needed break. In the afternoon, we were given the opportunity to do our interviews again. The second time around, although still difficult, went much better. At the conclusion of day two, we said farewell to Kyle and Johnna knowing that if we ever need help with a speech or interview, they had our backs.

On day three, we wrapped up the session with a discussion of Strength Based Leadership. Over the previous two days, we had each learned what our individual strengths were and now we had the tools to refine our techniques. We also met with Kate Tschanner Fuso, CFBF marketing manager, and Brian Watson, Marketing Division manager. There was lots of discussion about how to retain and recruit members. Ideas flew about the room as each county Farm Bureau had

different ways and ideas on keeping and retaining members. We also met with CFBF General Counsel Nancy McDonough, who talked about the roles and responsibility of the Farm Bureau Board of Directors. She focused on the leadership aspect, reminding us that we are the faces of Farm Bureau and, though we may not have all the answers, we have a team of professionals at CFBF just a call or email away.

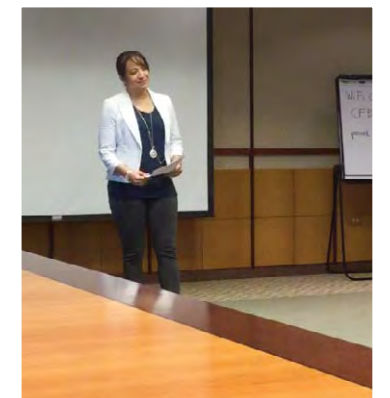
We wrapped up the day with Federal Policy Manager Josh Rolph and his team helping us complete preparations for our upcoming advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. We focused on the issues specific to California, but also some that pertain to agriculture nationwide. We were reminded that Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization and that we all—farmers and ranchers, conventional and organic growers—have skin in the game when it comes to policy making and advocating for our livelihoods.

This session was intense, but everyone came away knowing more about themselves and ready to move forward and lead the charge to better educate consumers and advocate for agriculture.



You manage things.
You lead people.

— Rear Admiral Dr. Grace Murray Hopper



MAY

expanding our horizons



The price of greatness,
is responsibility.

— Winston Churchill

By Lindy Keilson and Ryan Rice

Our Leadership Farm Bureau class had the privilege of traveling to Washington, D.C., in May. Speaking on behalf of our members is a great responsibility, and the LFB training sessions leading up to this trip gave us the tools needed to advocate for our fellow Farm Bureau members in California.

Before being a part of this program, most of us had never experienced the chance to meet with elected officials in Sacramento or Washington. The LFB program has been a great opportunity for us to learn how to be more confident on many different levels in a legislative environment. The LFB program does a great job training leaders to take on this important task.

LFB gave us the chance to meet with legislative officials at the state Capitol in Sacramento earlier in the year. When bringing our advocacy to Washington, we have to take a look at

the federal perspective, which is often a broader scope.

During our trip to Washington, there were many discussion topics that we engaged in with different people on a federal level. These include: immigration, trade, management of national forests, infrastructure, water storage and other concerns that we have for our farming and ranching members. All of these issues greatly affect farmers and ranchers.

We feel it is crucial for our organization to advocate for agricultural members, especially in D.C. The people who make up the 2017 Leadership Farm Bureau class understand how difficult it can be to take the time to travel the great distance to D.C. to set up meetings and advocate for their concerns. Even people in the LFB program dealt with the challenge of leaving behind their businesses to travel across the country

and participate. We are proud to say that CFBF sends leaders back to D.C. throughout the year to advise our legislative officials on how these issues affect California agriculture.

When Farm Bureau comes to the table with issues that pertain to our members, it resonates. During our trip, we split into groups to discuss current issues with as many officials as possible, and were consistent with our messages. We are not just a few voices in the room, but many. We represent California's Farm Bureau membership as a whole. This approach through our united front is what gets the job done.

Building long-term relationships with every elected official and agency is also a big part of CFBF's effectiveness. This year, we met with senators, department heads and a large percentage of the California congressional members in Washington. Keeping the dialogue open



and ongoing with these officials is key. First of all, we wanted to remind them that many issues they are dealing with affect agriculture. They might not think to factor that in, and may not realize a specific issue has agriculture in the equation.

We want them to know Farm Bureau is a valuable resource and could answer their questions. We also communicated with our officials about how critical agriculture is to California's economy. This encompasses farm product processing, the agricultural supply community, farm labor, retail markets, shipping and export, and many other facets. It is also extremely important because California agriculture is our food and a life source as well.

On our Washington trip, our leadership class attained an extreme amount of knowledge and understanding on how the legislative processes work. We gained relationships with officials, staff members and elected leaders at our nation's capital that would never have been possible without California Farm Bureau. This in turn will give us greater confidence in the future on how to better speak on behalf of Farm Bureau members and advocate on the issues that are constantly challenging

us in agriculture.

A large part of the success CFBF has experienced is due to the approach that the organization has taken on issues for its members. The united front made up of a very diversified group of agricultural producers is also key to our success. This is made possible because of our history of being a grassroots organization.

The California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting is a prime example. This is where we update our policies through our county delegate session. We update policies based on principles and values we think will benefit our members as a whole. This in turn should bring a confident feeling to our members that the leaders of the CFBF organization are moving forward with what our members believe should be done.

California Farm Bureau's strength is in its members, leaders and staff. We are very appreciative of the hard work and dedication of our members, staff and leaders of the California Farm Bureau Federation. Because of our members, our organization continues to give us this valuable experience of the LFB program. The Leadership Farm Bureau program continues to create future leaders, keeping California agriculture alive and well.



AUGUST *through the trees*



The most powerful leadership tool you have is your own personal example.

— John Wooden

By Jennifer Beretta

Embarking on a three-day exploration of the mountains and foothills of the Sierra Nevada proved to be quite an adventure for the LFB group. Upon our arrival at Camp Sylvester, we were greeted with Farm Bureau family hospitality and a wonderful dinner prepared by Tuolumne County Farm Bureau. To start our discussion on water and forestry issues, we headed to Pinecrest Lake with Sasha Farkas and Shaun Crook, who explained about the county's unique water challenges. Shaun's discovery of trees damaged by bark beetle gave us a firsthand opportunity to see the widespread destruction this pest can cause. He showed how the beetle works its way into a tree and how to identify the tree's resistance efforts, where the tree pushes sap to ward off the beetle. The amount of sap produced

is based on how much water a tree has, and it was apparent the drought has played a role in trees dying and disease spreading throughout the forest, due to their inability to fight off the invasive beetles. To close the day, we visited Aspen Meadows Pack Station and saw the amazing horses, tack and facilities. We learned about their forest allotments and permitting process, and how they navigate their business within federal lands. It was humbling to see their passion and love for their animals.

Our second day began with Bob and Sherri Brennan discussing federal grazing allotments for cattle, specifically regarding Stanislaus National Forest. Most of these leases are multigenerational, and the number of regulations these families face daily to maintain the agreements is staggering. They are true stewards

of the land and manage their forest allotments to their utmost ability for the health and vitality of not only their cattle, but the forest itself.

We then explored deeper into the forest and visited an active logging site, where we learned about the lengthy process it takes to harvest timber, particularly on federal forestland. We saw the entire logging process from the selection and cutting of trees, to delimiting and preparing for loading. After our logging visit, we toured Lyons Dam and the unique wooden flume delivery system that supplies water to much of Tuolumne County. It was breathtaking to see such a great structure that provides the water for both residential and agricultural uses. In completing our full-circle view of forestry logging, we visited Sierra Pacific Industries and saw how lumber



is processed from logs to usable boards and other products. It was especially enlightening to see how the damaged logs are treated and the lasting effects forest health has on the lumber industry. We ended our day at Indigeny Reserve apple orchard and distillery, where we met owner Jay Watson and enjoyed a fantastic dinner in his barrel room.

Our final day began at Nathan Rosasco's cow/calf operation in Jamestown, discussing his use of reclaimed wastewater and the history of the family business, with his daughter Lindsay. This beneficial partnership with Tuolumne Utilities District allows the Rosascos to obtain water for farming, while providing a secondary use of the water from the wastewater treatment facility.

We ended our trip at the La Grange Dam with a tour lead by Modesto Irrigation District Director Jake Wenger and several other district officials. We learned about the challenges they are facing regarding the federal re-licensing of the dam and the mandated environmental studies and mitigation efforts the district has had to complete to keep the dam fully operational.

We thoroughly enjoyed this entire tour and are very appreciative of all our tour hosts and Farm Bureau members who took time to show us their operations.



NOVEMBER

pushing boundaries



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

— John C. Maxwell

By Katie Veenstra and Jill Damskey

Our final session focused on agricultural labor and Southern California water issues.

We began our tour in the Imperial Valley, where Tom Brundy hosted us at his Calexico hay and cattle ranch. Our discussion focused on border control issues. After a quick visit to his hay store, we traveled down the road for our first glimpse of the U.S.-Mexico border and the All-American Canal.

We then made our way to El Toro Export. One of 10 exporters in the Imperial Valley, El Toro exports most of its pressed hay and other products to Asia, specifically China. The company has recently opened a new corn processing plant, which co-owner Jeff Plourd, an Imperial County Farm Bureau director, said would enhance their ability to produce feed for their feedlot. This facility is much more advanced than its predecessor, and improves efficiency and capacity at the mill.

We ended our day at the Imperial Irrigation District offices, discussing water allocations from the Colorado River and water rates for the Imperial Valley. While Imperial Valley's water supply issues seem to not be as challenging as those in the Central Valley, their water quality issues take center stage. The increasing salinity of the Colorado River provides unique mitigation issues for IID to manage and address, specifically in the Salton Sea.

Our second day took us into the Mexicali Valley of Mexico. We were amazed at the level of agricultural production in the area, including fields of cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and green onions managed by Mike Fox of Rancho El Golfo. As we followed the green onions from the field to the packing house, we saw Rancho El Golfo's food safety protocols in practice. We were pleased to discover standards identical to those in the

U.S. and discussed the challenges of maintaining such high standards. We also saw firsthand how labor shortages affect food production in Mexico, just as they affect us in California.

After successfully crossing the border back into the U.S., we wrapped up our tour of the Imperial Valley visiting with Jack Vessey at one of his spinach fields in Holtville. We discussed the harsh regulatory climate and how his operation has had to adapt to stay competitive. After taking in a beautiful Imperial Valley sunset, we ended the day watching aerial spraying of neighboring fields.

The second half of the Southern California trip took place in San Diego County. We started by visiting Hilliker's Ranch Fresh Eggs, where we learned about the changes the company underwent to become Proposition 2 compliant. We saw the difference between a closed facility and a cage-

free facility, and how the eggs were collected from each house, washed and packed for local distribution.

We then met with San Diego County Farm Bureau Executive Director Eric Larson and discussed water issues from his perspective. This was particularly interesting after hearing different views expressed by members of the Imperial Irrigation District.

To brighten our afternoon, Sunlet Nursery owner Janet Kister treated us to a tour of her expansive greenhouse operation in Fallbrook. From propagation to shade house finishing, Sunlet's beautiful production facilities provided a great example of this leading industry in San Diego County.

Finishing our day at Mountain Meadow Mushrooms in Escondido, we learned from General Manager David Barnes of the successes and struggles related to farming in such a highly populated area. We were fascinated by how many mushrooms can be produced in one week and how new regulations are making the company's future uncertain.

We began our last day in Southern California at strawberry fields near the beaches of Carlsbad with San Diego County Farm Bureau President Neil Nagata. Eating fresh berries straight from the field was definitely a highlight.

Our final stop was at Go Green Agriculture, a hydroponic lettuce operation. Owner Pierre Sleiman is a creative first-generation farmer who continually finds new ways to meet consumer demand. His passion for agriculture and respect for Farm Bureau were a perfect way to conclude our trip.

Our November trip was incredibly informational, and we walked away with knowledge and experiences of an area that is uniquely diverse. We thank all the Farm Bureau members we met for their generosity.



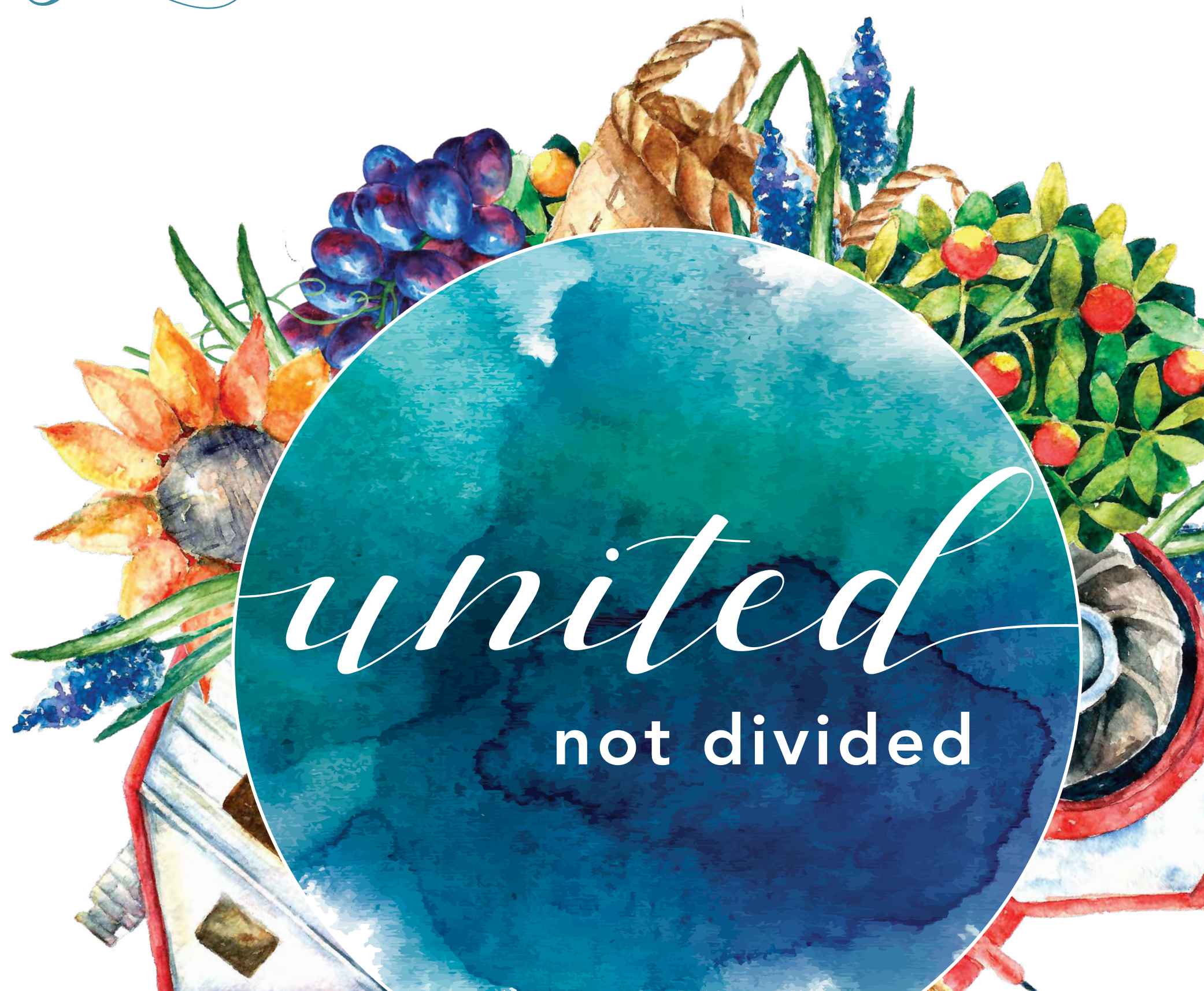
are you ready to join — *the class of* **2018**

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 advocacy 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 15, 2017.

www.cfbf.com/lfb



LFB CLASS OF 2017

by the numbers

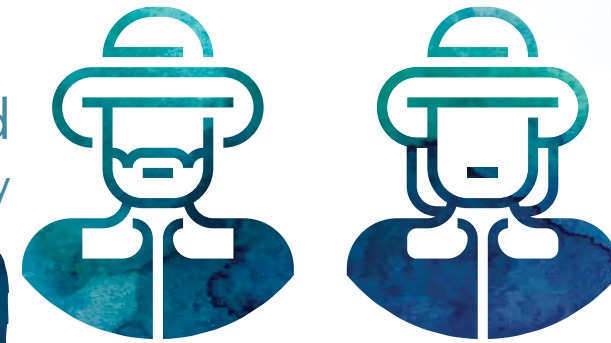
met with nearly

130



visited nearly

50



FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

more than



250

HOURS OF LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PER PERSON

each class member traveled more than

3,000 MILES BY AIR



2,200 MILES BY LAND



for advocacy and education

nine class members from

7 COUNTIES

representing more than

14,500 MI²



united
not divided



#goexperiencelive

Follow the LFB conversation on Facebook
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