Agri Culture
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Change Service Requested

(L-R) Deborah Bethke, Superior Court Judge John Gallagher and Michael Bethke at last year's dinner. Join us at the 15th Annual Progressive Dinner. Call early for your reservations!
Photo by Bill Ringe

15th Annual Progressive Dinner

Saturday, October 29, 2011

Ticket Price: $100 per person

2011 Committee: Stephany Aguilar, Nancy Korach, Rob Love & Mark Sambrailo

Where: Oh No! Can't reveal the locations yet. Curious?

For more information, call Agri-Culture (831) 722-6622

Make your reservations early!

Only 100 tickets will be sold.

FOCUS AGRICULTURE CLASS XXII CHOOSES 21 COMMUNITY LEADERS

Twenty-one community leaders have been selected for Class XXII of the Focus Agriculture program. This "first in the nation" program is designed for community leaders to learn about agriculture in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. Class XXII members include: **Susan Barich,** Partner, Barich Business Services; **Natalie Beebe,** Senior Finance Analyst, Driscoll's; **Tim Brattan,** Executive Director, California Grey Bears; **Fred Chamberlain,** Photography Teacher**; Jackie Chuang,** Food Resource and Distribution Manager, Second Harvest Food Bank; **Stephanie Cruz,** Employer Services Rep., State Compensation Insurance Fund; **David Dobson,** Economic Development Manager, County of Santa Cruz; **Martin Garcia,** Analyst, 4th District, County of Santa Cruz; **Reed Geisreiter,** Senior Vice President, Comerica Bank; **Rachel Goodman,** District Director, Assemblymember Bill Monning; **Jim Howes,** Asst. Director, Regional Occupational Program, Santa Cruz County Office of Education; **Karen Marcum,** Branch Manager, Santa Cruz County Bank; **Cynthia Milich-Alcala,** Quality Control Supervisor, Germains Seed Technology; **Lynn Overtree,** Stewardship Manager, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County; **Kathy Previsich,** Planning Director, County of Santa Cruz; **Cindy Slade,** Regional Service Rep, California Certified Organic Farmers; **Tom Stelling,** Director/Broker Associate, KW Commercial; **Julie Thiebaut,** Financial Services Executive, Retired; **Lorili Toth,** Director Development & Communication, Elkhorn Slough Foundation; **Rebecca Trautwein,** Teacher, North Monterey County High School; **Arnett Young,** R & D Trial Assistant, Chiquita/Fresh Express**.**

BRANCHING OUT

Spring/Summer 2011

A SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT OF AGRI-CULTURE

World Premiere

"Santa Cruz County Agriculture" A Total Success

On Thursday evening, April 21, 2011, the "Red Carpet" came out in Santa Cruz County. The occasion was the premiere of Agri-Culture's new video "Santa Cruz County Agriculture". The event was held at the Cabrillo College Horticulture Center.

Guests attending the event were greeted by walking and talking fruits and vegetables including Russell the Brussels Sprout (best known for his appearance at the old Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's Brussels Sprouts Festival), a handsome apple and a good looking bunch of grapes. There is even a rumor that a human full-sized bull was in attendance. But the "All Stars" of the video were local growers: **Stan Iversen** of Suncrest Nurseries; **Edward Ortega**, Ortega Berry Farms; **John E. Eiskamp**, J.E. Farms; **Nita Gizdich**, Gizdich Ranch; **James Nagamine**, O. Nagamine Nursery; **Silvia Prevedelli**, Prevedelli Farms and **Janet Webb**, Big Creek Lumber Company. All were there to walk the "red carpet" and to autograph the new DVD. The guests were also treated to hot dogs, popcorn, nachos and slushies as well as a full compliment of candies. **Barry Jackson** of **Equinox/Harmony Wine Company** was on hand to provide complimentary wine and champagne.

Major funding for this video came from the **Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee's Testicle Festival** with additional funding from **T.H.A.N.K.S.** Broad support for the premiere of the video was received in sponsorhips from the following: **California Strawberry Commission, Cowles Berry Farms, Jim Howes, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, McSherry & Hudson, Tom & Laura Rider, Royal Oaks Farm, Snow Seed Company and Suncrest Nurseries.**

The video was a major project and the result of many hours of hard work. **Ron Tyler** and **Dave Moeller** wrote the original script. Ron and Dave served as Assistant Directors, along with **Bill Ringe**; **Jess Brown** served as the Executive Producer; **Cristina King,** owner of **Media Ready Services**, served as the Director, Narrator and Script Editor. Cinematographer and post-production coordinator was **Damon Meyer** from **Web VideoProducts.com**.

Please consider ordering a copy of this video which was produced to inform the public about the farming community. The DVD is available by contacting Agri-Culture at (831) 722-6622 or by visiting www.agri-culture.us. The DVD sells for $10 each, 2 DVD's for $15 or 3 DVD's for $20. Online orders add shipping and handling costs.

More stars of the show, (L-R) Jeff LeGrande (apple),Alex Stout (Russell the Brussels Sprout) and Celeste Din (grapes). *Photo by Jess Brown*

Agri Culture
"Communicating Agriculture"

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A Message From the President...

These Are Busy Times...

Since our last publication six month ago, Agri-Culture has been busy on many fronts. A few of the important activities not covered elsewhere in the newsletter are:

■ By the time you read this column, escrow will have closed on the north coast farm property we owned for six years. I'm pleased to announce that the new owner is grower **Steve Dellamora**. Steve has farmed that property for approximately 30 years. The farmland, known as Sand Hill Bluff Property, came under our ownership when the Trust for Public Lands took action to save it from development in 2005. We received $4 million from two state agencies to purchase the land and then sell it, after a period of time, to a family farmer. We wish Steve and his son the best of luck and years of successful farming!

■ We presented the Jimmie Cox Memorial Scholarship to **Clinton "CJ" Miller** (pictured at left) during the National Agriculture Day Luncheon on March 17th. The annual event is sponsored by Agri-Culture and the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau. "CJ", the grandson of Clint & Karen Miller of Watsonville, plans to attend Chico State University with a major in Ag Business. He is preparing for a career in Farm Management and hopes to participate in the family agricultural activities.

■ At the National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon, we also announced the winners of the Poster Contest and the Poetry Contest. The Poster Contest was won by **Grace Bowman** (pictured below), a 6th grade student at Bradley Elementary School in Corralitos. The Poetry Contest was won by **Ashley Malone**, a 10th grade student at Monte Vista Christian High School in Watsonville. Their winning entries will appear on the National Agriculture Day place mat in March of 2012.

Agri-Culture President Bill Ringe welcomes Jane Borg to the Premiere

■ At the recent Agri-Culture Annual Meeting, **John Pisturino**, Chair of the Nominating Committee, brought forward the 2011 nominations for a vote. The results of the election are as follows:

- **Stephany Aguilar** and **Ron Tyler** (Community At Large); **Kirk Schmidt** and **Jane Nelsen** (Agriculture) were elected to a first year three year term. **Michael Watkins** (Education), Superintendent, Santa Cruz County Office of Education was also elected.
- Current officers re-elected for another one year term were the following: **Bill Ringe**, President; **Steve Bontadelli**, Vice-President; **Brian King**, Vice-President; **Elia Vasquez**, Sec/Chief Financial Officer; **Tom Am Rhein**, Past President.

■ We would like to welcome **Michael Watkins** (R) as a new member of the Board of Directors and congratulate all of the recently re-elected members of the board. Your dedication and loyalty to the organization is greatly appreciated.

■ Don't forget to visit the **California State Fair, July 14 - 31, 2011**. The Santa Cruz County exhibit is coordinated by **Melanie Schumacher** and **Jarred Sturla** of the Farm Bureau's **Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee.** Jarred is also heading up the fundraising efforts. If you miss the exhibit at the State Fair, you'll have a chance to see it at the **Santa Cruz County Fair September 13 - 18, 2011.** Hope to see you there!

Agri-Culture Earns National Award

Focus Agriculture Recognized

The organization Agri-Culture earned national recognition for an innovative program that informs people about local farming and ranching. It was among 15 programs from throughout the nation that were showcased during the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Ga. A local delegation of five were in Atlanta presenting information about the program. Over 6,000 people attended the conference.

Agri-Culture earned an "Activity of Excellence" award for its grassroots Focus Agriculture program. The program seeks to bridge the gap between rural and urban communities by annually educating 20 local elected officials and community leaders about agriculture in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. Participants learn about local agriculture during an intensive, nine-month program, composed of daylong, once-a-month sessions.

(L-R) Nita Gizdich, Rose Kevern, Jane Nelsen, California Farm Bureau Federation President Paul Wenger and Steve Bontadelli at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA. *Photo by Bill Ringe*

The five local representatives attending the AFBF Annual Meeting in Atlanta were: **Bill Ringe**, President; **Steve Bontadelli**, Vice President; **Nita Gizdich** and **Jane Nelsen**, Directors; and **Rose Kevern**, Program Assistant.

Now in its 22nd year, the Focus Agriculture program includes farm experiences aimed at showing participants the current issues affecting local farms and ranches.

There is a waiting list of more than 200 community leaders who hope to be chosen for the program. Agri-Culture President Bill Ringe stated, "Building relationships with local leaders early in their careers is critical to establishing a long-standing support system for local farmers and ranchers."

For more information, visit the Agri-Culture website at www.agri-culture.us or call (831) 722-6622.

Lake County's "AgVenture" Program Wins Local Award

This year the Lake County Chapter of California Women for Agriculture (CWA) adopted a Focus Agriculture program titled "AgVenture". AgVenture, is an innovative concept in agricultural education designed for non-farming community leaders who wish to understand more fully the workings of our local agricultural industry. The program is modeled on long-standing, successful programs in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties.

Jess Brown, Executive Director of Agri-Culture, made a visit to Lake County last year to explain our Focus Agriculture program and answer questions. Agri-Culture then spent time during the year helping them with structuring the program and suggesting topics, speakers and participants. At the Chamber of Commerce 14th Annual Stars of Lake County event, the CWA was the recipient of the "Best Idea" award for their AgVenture program. The AgVenture program coordinator is Annette Hopkins, who graduated from Agri-Culture's "Focus Agriculture" program and found it both fascinating and highly beneficial.