



LAKE COUNTY, Calif. – Twelve community leaders from a wide range of positions have been selected to participate in the fourth year of the popular AgVenture program.

Members of the 2013 class include: Lianne Campodonico, nonprofit administrator; Elly Fairclough, deputy district director for the office of Congressman John Garamendi; Bill Groody, owner, Groody River Films; and Kevin Ingram, principal planner, Lake County Community Development Department.

The class also includes: Jack Long, economic development manager, Lake County; Joey Luiz, Clearlake City Council member and marketing/hospitality consultant; Siri Nelson, chief administrative officer, Sutter Lakeside Hospital; Gabriele O'Neill, program representative, U.C.

Davis; Berenice Quirino, assistant editor, Lake County Record-Bee; Stephanie Tuft, field representative, Assemblymember Marc Levine; Jeff Tyrrell, district representative, Sen. Noreen Evans; and Marilyn Waits, president, Redbud Audubon Society.

AgVenture is an innovative concept in agricultural education designed for non-farming community leaders and others who wish to understand more fully the workings of the local agricultural industry.

The sessions will cover such topics as economics, labor, history, marketing, water and land use, agritourism and sustainability.

Class members will gain a broad knowledge about agriculture and farming in general, and more specifically about the heritage, culture, economy, and business of local agriculture.

Community leaders were invited to participate and the members of the class were selected based on their interest in the program, professional position in the community, and ability to help maintain a viable agricultural industry in Lake County.

The first session on Aug. 16 will focus on the pear industry in Lake County with orchard and packing house tours. Speakers will include Alan Flora, deputy administrative officer for Lake County and a graduate of AgVenture 2011; Broc Zoller, The Pear Doctor; Myron Holdenried, owner of Holdenried Ranches; Pat Scully, general manager, Scully Packing Co.; and Jack King, retired manager of the National Affairs Division of the California Farm Bureau Federation.

Diane Henderson of Henderson Orchards, Kelseyville, will provide a tour and discuss cultural practices, integrated pest management and sustainability, regulatory compliance, and the challenges faced by pear growers.

Toni Scully of Scully Packing Co., Finley, will talk about issues faced within the pear industry and provide an escorted tour of a packing house in full operation.

The second session on Sept. 20 will focus on the wine grape industry and include presentations by Scott DeLeon, director of Lake County Department of Public Works and Claudia Street, executive director of Lake County Farm Bureau; Glenn McGourty, UC Cooperative Extension farm advisor for Lake and Mendocino counties; Eric Seely, deputy county administrative officer for special projects; Randy Krag, viticulturist with Beckstoffer Vineyards; and Debra Sommerfield, president of the Lake County Winegrape Commission.

The day will include a luncheon at Vigilance Vineyards and a tour of the Gregory Graham Winery to demonstrate a small winery operation and compliance with regulations.

The third session on Oct. 18 will focus on the walnut industry in Lake County. Speakers will include Katherine Blyleven, agricultural biologist and weights and measures inspector, Lake County Department of Agriculture; Paula Bryant, vice president, commercial relationship manager, Umpqua Bank; Marc Hooper, pest control advisor, AgUnlimited; Rick Coel, Lake County Community Development director; and Sky Hoyt, retail vegetable grower and instructor, Mendocino College.

A tour of the Suchan Farm and Nursery, Upper Lake, and an overview of the walnut industry, including nursery, orchards, and dehydrator operations by Alex Suchan will conclude the day's session.

The final AgVenture session for 2013 will be held on Nov. 8. Brian Leahy, director of California Department of Pesticide Regulation will speak to the class on the state perspective on pesticide regulation and invasive pests.



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