

## Lake County CWA AgVenture 2016 Class celebrates graduation

Written by Editor

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LAKEPORT, Calif. – Ten community leaders attended the final session of the AgVenture 2016 program on Nov. 4.

This session marked the close of the seventh year of the AgVenture program.

Created by the Lake County Chapter of the California Women for Agriculture, AgVenture is an agricultural educational program devised for non-farming community leaders who aspire to understand the vital role that agriculture plays in Lake County.

Session four showcased Lake County olives production and farm labor issues.

Class members learned about olive oil production from Emilio dela Cruz and toured the Chacewater Olive Mill and olive orchards.

Cecilia Chi-Ham, PhD of HM Clause gave a presentation of the role of science and technology in agricultural production.

Class members heard about labor issues framed in policy and practical perspectives from Bryan Little from the Farm Employers Labor Service and David Weiss of Bella Vista Farming Co.

The session culminated in a farm labor panel consisting of local farm workers facilitated by local pear farmer Diane Henderson. The panelists were Octavio Jimenez and Jesus Flores of Scully Packing Co. and Jesus Martinez from Bella Vista Farming Co.

“This program has shown that Lake County has an impact on the country and the world and we have to start thinking like that,” Bob Massarelli, Lake County Community Development director and 2016 class member remarked upon graduating from the AgVenture program.

“This program demonstrates that today’s farmers not only have to be competent businesspeople to navigate producing and marketing products in an ever-changing global market and regulatory climate, but they must also appreciate and utilize science, technology and a bit of good luck in order to be successful,” said Brenna Sullivan, executive director of the Lake County Farm Bureau and 2016’s AgVenture coordinator.

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Graduates of the 2016 class included: Robert Massarelli, Lake County Community Development director; Katherine "Kat" McDowell, real estate broker, Real Estate Alliance and Lease; Andy Lucas, business representative, Community Development; Will Evans, deputy Water Resources director, county of Lake; Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, property management, community mitigation and consulting; Roberta Lyons, conservation chair, Redbud Audubon Society; Morgen Wells, public relations and philanthropy, Sutter Lakeside Hospital; Brian Martin, sheriff, county of Lake; Mark Melendez, agricultural biologist, county of Lake; Courtney Van Leuven, adjunct agricultural instructor, Lake County Campus of Woodland College; and Victoria Brandon of the Lake County Sierra Club.

Class members are selected yearly through an application process. Selection into the program is based on the applicant's interest in the program, their professional position in the community and their ability to help maintain a viable agricultural industry in Lake County. Program acceptance is competitive.

Generous sponsors for the 2016 series of seminars included: Lake County Winegrape Commission, Sutter Lakeside Hospital, Umpqua Bank, Beckstoffer Vineyards, Scully Packing, American AgCredit, Lake County Farm Bureau, Bella Vista Farming, Weed Tech, Rainbow Ag, Wilda Shock, Monica Rosenthal, Kenny Parlet, Lisa Wilson, Mary O'Meara and Lois Suchan, Gregory Graham Winery, Lake County Winery Association, Tallman Hotel and Blue Wing Saloon Restaurant, Chacewater Wine & Olive Oil Co. and Boatique Winery.

The AgVenture program Steering Committee, all CWA members, are Annette Hopkins, Paula Bryant, Toni Scully, Diane Henderson, Terry Dereniuk, Debra Sommerfield, Sharron Zoller and Brenna Sullivan.