

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2018



CENTER for
**LAND-BASED
LEARNING**

Contact: (Information omitted)

California Farm Academy to honor 21 graduates at State Capitol

Seven months of intensive training proves tomorrow's farmers ready for new challenges

Winters, CA — The seventh graduating class of the California Farm Academy, a program of the Center for Land-Based Learning, will walk the West steps of the State Capitol in Sacramento at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 23, where they'll begin their journey as the farmers of tomorrow.

This year, 21 students will join the 111 previous graduates of the program, which began in 2012 and teaches participants about agricultural production, business planning, and marketing of a wide range of specialty crops, poultry and livestock.

"Graduation is a celebration of seven months and hundreds of hours of hard work for these students," the farmer training program manager Maureen Thompson said. "They have been in the classroom, in the field and have toured dozens of local farms. All of this prepares them to enter into a career in farming."

The ceremony will feature keynote speaker Judith Redmond, one of six owners of Full Belly Farm (fullbellyfarm.com), a multigenerational certified organic farm in Northern California growing fruits, nuts, vegetables, and flowers. Full Belly Farm includes pastured sheep and chickens and prides itself on making every effort to foster sustainability with everything from soil fertility to crafting a stable, respected workplace for its employees.

Redmond also serves as an advisor to the California Climate and Agriculture Network, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, and as a Commissioner of the Capay Valley Volunteer Fire Department. Additionally, she is on the Governing Council of the Organic Farmers Association, a group providing a strong national voice for organic farmers.

"This eclectic group of aspiring farmers have come a long way since taking their tentative first steps in February 2018," Sri Sethuratnam, director of the California Farm Academy said. "CFA's Beginning Farmer Training program has provided them with the knowledge and skills that will help them chart their next course of action, whether it be starting their own production farm, school garden or farm centered non-profit. The foundational

knowledge imparted by this program will stand them in good stead in the journey that lays ahead of them and for many years to come.”

Upon completing the program, graduates who have a solid business and marketing plan in place can lease small plots of low-cost land from the Center for Land-Based Learning, which continues to provide ongoing training and peer-to-peer support. More than 70 percent of California Farm Academy graduates are either farming or working in agriculture-related businesses.

California agriculture, a \$54 billion industry, leads the nation in agricultural production, but the average farmer’s age ranges in the 60s. The USDA estimates that the U.S. will need 700,000 new farmers over the next two decades to replace those who age out. Fortunately, this new crop of Farm Academy graduates, which mostly hails from the greater Sacramento region to the outer reaches of Northern California, ranges in age from 20 to mid-50s.

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The Center for Land-Based Learning was founded in 2001. The mission is to inspire, educate, and cultivate future generations of farmers, agricultural leaders, and natural resource stewards. Combining innovative hands-on experience with classroom learning, participants in Land-Based Learning’s programs develop leadership skills, learn how sustainable agriculture practices contribute to a healthy ecosystem, and create connections to agricultural, environmental, and food system careers.

Then. Now. Beyond.

**A FACT SHEET FROM
THE CENTER FOR LAND-BASED LEARNING**

— We grow farmers —

The Center for Land-Based Learning, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is based in Winters, Calif. at 5265 Putah Creek Road.

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Who we are:

Our vision: The Center for Land-Based Learning envisions a world where there is meaningful appreciation and respect for our natural environment and for the land that produces our food and sustains our quality of life.

Our mission: To inspire and motivate people of all ages, especially youth, to promote a healthy interplay between agriculture, nature, and society through their actions and as leaders in their communities.

The Center for Land-Based Learning is dedicated to creating the next generation of farmers and teaching California's youth about the importance of agriculture and watershed conservation. All of our programs emphasize developing personal strengths, such as leadership, tolerance and cooperation.

What we've done (some highlights):

- The Center for Land-Based Learning was **founded in 1993** as the **Farming, Agriculture and Resource Management for Sustainability Leadership (FARMS Leadership)** program by walnut farmers Craig and Julie McNamara
- The FARMS Leadership program began with a group of students from the Bay Area and Yolo County as the first high school educational program on agriculture and the environment in the Winters region
- Currently our executive director, Mary Kimball joined the Center for Land-Based Learning in 1998 and is celebrating 20 years with the organization
- In 2001, the Center for Land-Based Learning formed its board of directors, incorporated as an official **non-profit organization** and opened its first office
- In 2014, the **West Sacramento Urban Farms** program launched
- Today, the FARMS Leadership program is just one of several operated by the Center and connects 400 students each year from 58 California high schools to agriculture careers
- This year, the Center for Land-Based Learning's **California Farm Academy** apprenticeship program became the first registered apprenticeship program for beginning farm and ranch farmers
- The Center for Land-Based Learning and its programs have won several prestigious **national, state and regional awards**

What we're doing (current project and programs):

- **The Center for Land-Based Learning now serves 27 counties**, including Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, Yuba
- The Center is made up of 23 **staff and associated staff members** – a group of dedicated people who bring diverse backgrounds, areas of expertise and ideas to the organization.
- Our **Board of Directors** consists of 14 men and women across organizations and professions such as the City of Sacramento, UC Davis, SMUD, Downey Brand Attorneys and Clark Pacific among others.
 - Our board is led by chair David Shabazian, Sacramento Area Council of Governments; treasurer Mike Boldt, Moss-Adams, LLP; secretary Jeana Hultquist, American AgCredit and immediate past chair Andrea Clark, Downey Brand Attorneys, LLP.
- The Center for Land-Based Learning operates four programs:
 - **FARMS Leadership** provides hands-on experiences and workforce development opportunities to youth at working farms, ag-businesses and universities.
 - **Student and Landowner Education for Watershed Stewardship (SLEWS)** engages high school students in environmental stewardship projects that enhance classroom learning, develop leadership skills and result in genuine habitat restoration.
 - **Caring for our Watersheds** is an environmental proposal writing contest.
 - **The California Farm Academy (CFA)** is a beginning farmer training, farm incubator, and apprenticeship program for adults.
 - The West Sacramento Urban Farms, Farm on Putah Creek, Cannery Urban Farm and veggie box CSA (community supported agriculture) are components of the CFA.
- \$137,000 has been awarded to **Caring for Our Watersheds California** students and schools across contest award and project implementation money.
- Additionally, our **Growing Green Internship** program provides high school youth with work experience in agriculture and environmental science, employment skills training, college and career exploration, and mentorship. Additionally, the Growing Green Internship program provides:
 - Monitoring Milkweed and Monarch Interactions for Learning and Conservation (MMMILC) science field research project with UC Davis Department of Entomology
 - Farm projects at Fiery Ginger Farm (West Sacramento) and garden projects at River City High School garden, Grant High GEO Garden and Burbank Urban Garden
 - Woodland Community College Environmental Science Summer Academy
 - Career exploration field trips, community service project

Where we're going (future plans):

- As part of our **25th anniversary**, the Center for Land-Based Learning is working to move to a **new location** in Woodland, Calif., which will provide:
 - New facilities that will better house our statewide headquarters, farming operations and training space in location that is more centralized and visible to our partners and community
 - More acreage for training farmers, educating students and the capacity to expand existing programs as well as create new ones
- The Center for Land-Based Learning has launched its **Growing Our Future** campaign, with the goal to raise \$3.1 million for this expansion.
 - Clark Pacific, Inc., has partnered with us and provided nearly \$1 million of in-kind support with *Growing Our Future* designed to raise the remaining funds by mid-2019
 - Visit issuu.com/landbasedlearning/docs/capital-campaign-case-statement for more.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Why we do what we do — An FAQ from the Center for Land-Based Learning

What does the Center for Land-Based Learning do, and how do you accomplish that work?

The Center for Land-Based Learning has a mission to inspire, educate and cultivate future generations of farmers, agricultural and natural resource stewards. This is accomplished with hands-on education programs that connect participants to agriculture and natural resource conservation. The Center's programs, which reach 27 counties throughout California from its headquarters based in Winters, are aimed at both adults and youth and offer diverse opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills, gain knowledge and confidence and build relationships with peers and mentors.

The Center's programs reach on average 2,000 individuals per year through four major programs: FARMS (Farming, Agriculture and Resource Management for Sustainability), SLEWS (Student and Landowner Education for Watershed Stewardship), Caring for our Watersheds—an environmental proposal writing contest—and California Farm Academy—a beginning farmer training, farm incubator, and apprenticeship program for adults ages 18 and up.

As a non-profit organization, the Center relies heavily on funds raised from outside sources. For the 2018-2019 season, some of our major funders include Driscoll's with a \$274,500 contribution for June 30, 2016 through June 16, 2019; Yocha Dehe Community Fund with a contribution of \$120,000 from Nov. 11, 2015 through Nov. 11 2018; Agrium with a contribution of \$67,000 starting in 2011 and continuing through the present and others like Sacramento Training Agency, Youth Outside, Soil Born Farms, CDFA Specialty Crops Block Grant and more. (*CLBL.org overview 2017*)

Why does the Center for Land-Based Learning believe “growing farmers” is so important?

It is estimated by Ag Careers that by 2050, the world's population will reach around 9 billion people. That will mean the need for resources to feed and clothe everyone will increase significantly. In turn, the need for educated people who can enter the workforce and contribute to providing those resources will also significantly increase (*agcareers.org*). Unfortunately, Ag Careers reports that employers are finding it hard to fill the majority of available positions with qualified workers. Many employers are looking to fill jobs with college graduates. According to Ag Careers, “Within the last 20 years...[jobs have grown significantly] in production, economics, marketing, agribusiness, technology, sales, finance, microbiology, communications,

and much more. In 2013, there were 52,862 jobs posted on AgCareers.com containing differentiated career opportunities in every aspect of the agricultural industry.”

A recent Ag Careers survey found that of the more than 60,000 jobs offered, only 35,000 graduates were trained to fill them and just 1 percent of college graduates major in agricultural fields (agcareers.org). More concerning is that many agriculture professionals will age out and retire or become unable to work in the next several years. For example, among principal farm operators, only six percent were under the age of 35 in a 2012 census survey by the USDA. Sixty-one percent were between the ages of 35 and 64 and 33 percent were 65 and older. The USDA reported that the average age of farmers was 58.3 years. Additionally, more than 700,000 farmers will be needed to replace those who are retiring. Currently, for every farmer under the age of 25, there are five over the age of 75 (*USDA and agcareers.org*).

With less and less trained workers qualified to work in the industry, agriculture jobs are going to become increasingly more difficult to fill and that’s where the **Center for Land-Based Learning** steps in. Farmers and ranchers in the region produce 3.4 million tons of food annually (with about 2 percent of the food consumed in our region coming directly from local farmers and ranchers) (*Rural Urban Connections Strategy*). “We grow farmers” because it is our mission to help cut down on the negative impact of so many farmers aging out and to help produce the next generation of agriculture professionals.

Why are you moving to a new facility and how will you fund this expansion?

The Center for Land-Based Learning’s *Growing Our Future* Campaign document details the entire plan, including why the organization is moving, how it will be funded and all of the other key details of the campaign. In short, Land-Based Learning is moving in order to expand its reach, abilities and resources in an effort to be even better prepared for future growth of the agriculture industry in California. Clark Pacific, Inc., has partnered with the Center and provided nearly \$1 million of in-kind support with *Growing Our Future* designed to raise the remaining funds by mid-2019. Learn more at: [/issuu.com/landbasedlearning/docs/capital-campaign-case-statement](http://issuu.com/landbasedlearning/docs/capital-campaign-case-statement).

What are some of the biggest and most important accomplishments of the Center for Land-Based Learning?

The Center for Land-Based Learning has been fortunate to win several awards on the national, state and regional levels during its 25-year history. Some of the most recent awards and recognitions include the American Planners Association, Sac Valley Region, Local Vision Award in 2015; Secretary of the Interior Partners in Conservation Award, U.S. Department of the Interior in 2013; Wildlife Habitat Council Partner of the Year, Community Partner of the Year, Wildlife Habitat Council in 2011; CA Council of Land Trusts Award Growing our Future Award in 2015; Mary Brill Youth Excellence, Sacramento Area Council of Governments in 2016; Wells Fargo, 3rd Annual CARE Award, Mary Kimball in 2016; and the Frank R. Beeler Watershed Stewardship Award, San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District in 2013. For more on the Center for Land-Based Learning’s awards and recognitions, please visit: landbasedlearning.org/awards.

What does it mean to have the California Farm Academy registered and how will it affect those who go through the program?

In early 2018, we received state certification for the California Farm Academy—our beginning farm and ranch manager apprenticeship program—which requires 250 hours of coursework and 3,000 hours of paid on-the-job training on a farm under the mentorship of seasoned farmers. More than 130 students have graduated from the program since it began in 2012. In the words of Center for Land-Based Learning Executive Director Mary Kimball, “This is incredibly helpful to beginning farmers in the state, who finally have a legal, formal apprenticeship program approved by the state that trains to one standard.”

This apprenticeship was developed in response to a need for skilled farming professionals to fill critical management positions on farms, to take the reins from farmers looking at retirement, or to launch their own farming operations. The approval process marks the culmination of two years of work and collaboration between the Center for Land-Based Learning, Soil Born Farms and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. This effort was made possible through grant funding from the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grants Program. It is the hope of the Center for Land-Based Learning that having the program certified will not only produce even more well-trained agriculture professionals, but that it will also help attract greater numbers of future farmers to take advantage of the Center’s training programs.

How can people and/or organizations get involved with Center for Land-Based Learning?

The “Support” section on the official Center for Land-Based Learning website offers links to donate, volunteer and to follow the Center via email updates. Through those links, interested parties can fill out forms to sign up to volunteer, send monetary donations in several different amounts and to sign up for regular updates through an emailed newsletter. Please visit landbasedlearning.org/support for more.

(Sources: Center for Land-Based Learning, unless otherwise stated in-text.)

Contact:

(Information omitted)

First employee of The Center for Land-Based Learning celebrates 20 years as organization turns 25

By Daniel Wilson

What started 25 years ago as a small program by a couple of walnut farmers is now a statewide non-profit organization featuring several full-fledged programs across much of California.

This year, the Center for Land-Based Learning, a Winters-based farmer education group, celebrates a milestone anniversary, but it couldn't have done it without its first employee and current executive director Mary Kimball, who's been with the Center for 20 years.

"[The FARMS Leadership program] was started by our founder Craig McNamara [and his wife in '93-'94] and [they] worked with other local partners to kind of get it going," said Kimball, who worked with the Yolo County Resource Conservation District when she began lending a hand to the project. "It was very grassroots, right? So, it was like here was a farmer working with Yolo County RCD, California Foundation for Ag in the Classroom and the UC Davis College of Ag and Environmental Sciences."

Kimball explained that after about three years of this partnership, McNamara was approached by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation with an education grant. The Yolo RCD took leadership of the grant, which allowed Kimball to move into a management role for several of the projects under the FARMS program. By 1998, through other grants and funding, Kimball was hired as the first employee of what would become the Center for Land-Based Learning.

Kimball said she thought the opportunity was perfect for her because it fit well with her background.

"I grew up here on a farm," Kimball said. "I went to UC Davis [for] plant science and then I got my Masters degree in agricultural education at Ohio State University."

Kimball said she never liked the idea of standing up in front of a group of people in the role of a teacher, so working in a job that allows her to oversee farmer education is the next best thing.

"[Teaching] was not my style, but I really liked the outdoor experiential hands-on learning opportunities that farms provided," she said.

Kimball started with a \$60,000 grant with the goal of expanding the programs throughout California.

Today, the center operates in 27 counties. It includes the FARMS Leadership program, which provides hands-on experiences and workforce development opportunities to youth at working farms, ag-businesses and universities.

Another program of the center, the Student and Landowner Education for Watershed Stewardship (SLEWS), engages high school students in environmental stewardship projects that enhance classroom learning, develop leadership skills and result in genuine habitat restoration. And the "Caring for our Watersheds" program is an environmental proposal writing contest for youth.

The center's bread and butter, though, is the California Farm Academy (CFA), which is a beginning farmer training, farm incubator, and apprenticeship program for adults.

The CFA was certified this year – one of the only certified farm academies in the country — and that means the training is streamlined and standardized.

In addition, future farmers in the program are held accountable for putting in enough hours in each area of farm leadership as to be able to take on their own farm or various areas of farming upon completion of their training.

The CFA recently graduated its seventh class with 21 students joining the 111 previous graduates. At the time, Maureen Thompson, beginning farmer training program manager praised the future farmers for seven months and “hundreds of hours of hard work” in the classroom.

“They have been in the classroom, in the field and have toured dozens of local farms. All of this prepares them to enter into a career in farming,” Thompson said in a press release for the graduation, which took place Sept. 23, 2018, on the west steps of the State Capitol in Sacramento.

The graduates will go on to lead their own farms, work in farm-related jobs or even help out with the center’s Urban Farms program in West Sacramento, which establishes farms in urban communities such as the Fiery Ginger Farm that sits next to the freeway and behind a post office on the campus of an elementary school.

“CFA’s Beginning Farmer Training program has provided [the graduating class] with the knowledge and skills that will help them chart their next course of action, whether it be starting their own production farm, school garden or farm centered non-profit,” Sri Sethuratnam, director of the California Farm Academy, said in the press release.

“The foundational knowledge imparted by this program will stand them in good stead in the journey that lays ahead of them and for many years to come.”

Kimball said one of her biggest accomplishments in the last two decades was the growth of the organization from 30 high school students in the FARMS Leadership program to a non-profit that serves hundreds of adults and about 2,000 high schoolers throughout the state.

She’s also proud of the creation of the California Farm Academy eight years ago as well as its subsequent certification this year.

She said she’s also quite proud to have a 65 percent rate of CFA graduates who go on to work in the field.

“That’s a very high percentage,” Kimball said. “When you graduate from college, in whatever major, how many people are actually working in the major in which they studied? Probably a pretty low percentage. To have [such a high number] of our alumni from the training program farming, that’s pretty awesome.”

The next big project Kimball and the 20 or so staff members in the organization will be taking on is to move the organization’s headquarters from Winters to Woodland. The \$3.1 million move, which is scheduled for mid-2019, will be paid for with the organization’s “Growing our Future” fundraising campaign. Nearly \$1 million of in-kind support from Center for Land-Based Learning partner Clark Pacific, Inc. has already been raised.

“We’ve outgrown our space and that, to me, is a big accomplishment,” Kimball said. “The fact that we’ve outgrown the space means we’ve done a good job and that we are ready to move on to the next 25 years and beyond.”

The new location will not only be more central to the partners and other offices of the Center in Sacramento and Yolo County as well as more visible to the community, it will provide new facilities that will better house the Center’s statewide headquarters, farming operations and training space. Additionally, it’ll mean more acreage for training farmers, educating students and the capacity to expand existing programs as well as create new ones.

“The ability to do that is an accomplishment in and of itself,” Kimball said. “There’s a lot of agricultural businesses that are headquartered in Woodland. So, from our standpoint of what we do and who we connect with and who’s our clients, there’s a lot more of them in Woodland than there are [in Winters]. There’s just more of a culture and infrastructure that will help the work that we do.”

Why supporting farmers and farmer training is now more crucial than ever before

By Daniel Wilson

Non-profits like the Center for Land-Based Learning, which is based in Winters, Calif. and has provided farmer training and education throughout 27 counties across four programs for the better part of 25 years, are now more crucial to the future of the state and the nation's agriculture than at any time in history.

By 2020, the U.S. Department of Agriculture predicts 57,900 annual job openings on average for graduates of higher education institutions with expertise in food, agriculture, renewable natural resources or the environment.

When combining that information with the fact that the a 2012 consensus study by the United States Department of Agriculture found that "among principal [farm] operators, 6 percent are under 35 years old, 61 percent are 35 to 64 years, and 33 percent are 65 and older," it's obvious that getting young people excited about farming and agriculture is important to our survival not only in California but in the United States. With the average age of the American farmer at about 58 years old, in the next 10 years or so, many of our farmers will retire from the field and we'll need lots of young, skilled professionals to fill those roles.

In fact, by 2050, AgCareers predicts that the world's population will hit 9 billion people. To feed, clothe and support that number of people, agriculture will become heavily important to the U.S. and large states like California, where a high number of the agricultural products consumed by Americans is produced.

In other words, filling jobs with well-trained people who can fulfill all sorts of roles on America's and California's farms is becoming dire. There were 52,862 jobs posted on AgCareers.com in 2013 but a lack of trained professionals to fulfill these roles has left the industry looking to organizations like the Center for Land-Based Learning to help train tomorrow's food growers. For example, that same year, AgCareers reported just 29,000 graduates were trained to fill the more than 50,000 jobs available.

The FARMS Leadership program provides hands-on experiences and workforce development opportunities to youth at working farms, ag-businesses and universities.

The Student and Landowner Education for Watershed Stewardship (SLEWS), engages high school students in environmental stewardship projects that enhance classroom learning, develop leadership skills and result in genuine habitat restoration. And the "Caring for our Watersheds" program is an environmental proposal writing contest for youth.

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In addition, future farmers in the program are held accountable for putting in enough hours in each area of farm leadership as to be able to take on their own farm or various areas of farming upon completion of their training.

Many people may not see farming jobs as appealing, but AgCareers says "whether you are looking for a company that you fit in with, a competitive salary, or you want to make a difference, the agricultural sector has such a wide variety of jobs to choose from that it is easy to find what suits you best. It's a growing field that needs new and talented employees to be ready to fill positions and be the next generation of agriculture."

With the CFA recently graduating another 21 future farmers, the Center for Land-Based Learning and its programs continue to contribute to the growth of the industry. Supporting farmers and the agriculture industry is literally vital to the survival of future generations and our programs are helping young people and adults alike realize that farming can be fun, beneficial and rewarding. Not only is farm leadership a great career choice with lots of need for diverse skillsets and abilities, it's a field where workers can feel like they are giving back to the community each and every day. For more information on the Center for Land-Based Learning and its programs, please visit us at www.landbasedlearning.org.