

Ag Teacher of the year: Nominee Leslie Clark

a. Overview – brief description of the agricultural education program and the community in which the program exists.

I currently work at Carlsbad High school in a single teacher agriculture program. I have the pleasure of teaching 135 different kiddos a day. Out of those 135 students some will take my class multiple times a day, thus class enrollment this year is 155. The program consists of Introduction to Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing(Agriculture Economics), Agriculture Leadership, Greenhouse/Plant Science, Animal Science, and sometimes Agriculture Mechanics class. We do run a greenhouse that has cuttings that have been potted along with 3 different hydroponic machines. Many of my students do have SAEs, consisting of animals, job placement, and entrepreneurship. I would classify my agricultural program as very “Non-traditional” as most of the students are not directly involved in agriculture. Most students do live in town, are lucky if they have a dog, and have never been in a barn.

b. Teaching Philosophy – a brief reflective statement (not to exceed one page) of the personal teaching philosophy.

I believe that I am obligated to have the highest expectations of each of my students in my classroom. I believe that with perseverance, hard work, dedication, and overall making my students feel loved and valued that all my students can and will rise to my expectations.

c. Instruction – examples of your effective classroom and laboratory instruction including curricula that is used or has been developed.

I will be the first to say that as an agriculture teacher I will beg, borrow, and steal anything and everything I can. There is no doubt that I have created different ways to teach things, along with power points, activities, and labs. I use different curricula from iCEV, our very own CAERT, National FFA tool box, and going old school to IMS. I have been blessed to attend different conferences over the years and incorporate different things into my lessons from those workshops, such as AI, seed germination, hydroponics, teaching the creed, teaching FFA history, Jeopardy, just to name a few.

d. Experiential Learning – examples of the accomplishments in getting students involved in work-based learning such as supervised agricultural experience programs, cooperative education, and internships.

Over the years I have been blessed to have some great students that have had a ton of SAEs covering so many different areas. Some may work on the family farm or ranch. Others may work at the local grocery store or small gas engine shop down the street from the high school. And I definitely have a couple of handfuls of students each year that take on the challenge of showing animals at the local county fair and beyond. Lastly, I have some I have been able to place on different farms and ranches as workers.

One of the most challenging is getting students to show animals as their SAE as most do not have a place to keep the animals as they live in town, or the parents do not want to make the commitment to take their child to the ag farm each day to take care of their animals. Those students who do show become a family as we practice together, we clip goats, shear sheep, and haul together. While at fairs the students work together to get sheep and goats drenched every 3 hours, work on showmanship at the show ring together, and we walk their animals together when possible. The reason we do this all together is because there are some that have been showing for years, and then there are new ones that it is their first year to show. I try to not only be the ‘educator’ but express the value in each student’s knowledge and make them ‘teachers’ also.

Ag Teacher of the year: Nominee Leslie Clark

e. Leadership Development – examples of the accomplishments in developing leadership skills of the students. Students’ participation and successes in student organization activities, such as FFA, PAS, and NYFEA but not limited to these organizations may also be included.

“My cup runneth over” with students that are willing to take a step into some of the most uncomfortable situations in their lives...public speaking/leadership. When I began teaching I started the program in Loving. With the support of the community and amazing students we had students compete in the creed competition, public speaking, and even was able to scrape together a couple of parliamentary procedures teams. When I moved to Carlsbad 9 years later there was a change in students and a change in tradition and drive. Over the past 24 years I have had numerous students and teams compete in public speaking (Gh prepared, chapter prepared, and extemp), creed speaking, quiz teams, parliamentary procedure, and agriculture issues. I have been blessed with three state winning Parliamentary Procedure teams. Two of these teams were 5th in the nation and the third one...we will see as we have fingers crossed! One state winning creed speaker who finished 8th in the nation. Lastly, there have been three teams go to Nationals for quiz competition as they finished 2nd at our state competition with last year's team finishing 6th in the nation!

f. Professional Growth – examples of how they stay professionally prepared and up-to-date in teaching techniques and technical content including information regarding their participation in professional organizations such as NMAETA, NAAE and programs sponsored by NAAE

I am a very strong advocate for teachers to belong to professional organizations and go to conferences as we can learn so much and make some great connections. I am an active member of the NMAETA, NMACTE, NAAE, and ACTE. As I think through some of the professional development I have done over the years is going to be interesting. I can say that I have never missed a summer conference for NMAETA since signing my first contract before I actually stepped into the classroom. I have served 2 times on the officer team and the NMAETA board and have served on the NMACTE board. I am currently serving as one of the NAAE Region II representatives for the Marketing Committee. I love to attend the National Ag Teachers’ Conferences and have attended multiple of the years, gaining some amazing new ideas and tools of teaching things in my classrooms. I have also attended the Regional conference for ACTE held in Oklahoma City. I have been blessed to attend the 2 different National Team Ag Ed Inserve conferences in Indianapolis, IN and was blessed to attend the National Policy Seminar in Washington, DC in 2014. 014.

I have also been blessed to attend other workshops that tie into my teaching, just not directly tied into the NAAE or ACTE, which include High Schools That Work (academy workshops), reading strategies trainings, and have also gone to AP workshops as I am certified to teach science,