

The following reflects information provided at the time of the honorees' induction to the Ag Hall of Fame and was obtained from the National Ag Science Foundation.

## 1998

### National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame

**Clare Berryhill** -As a state senator and assemblyman, Clare Berryhill went to Sacramento because he thought somebody should represent agriculture. While serving as Secretary of the State Department of Food and Agriculture, Mr. Berryhill continued to farm his merlot grapes. Berryhill was known as a strong family man who not only loved to farm but was an astute businessman. Just prior to his death in 1996, Berryhill continued working on a family ranch in Montana building up a cattle herd, always looking at the business side of the industry he loved.

**Richard Lyng** -Richard Lyng was a native Californian who began his agricultural career with Ed J. Lyng and company here in Modesto. In 1967, he was appointed as the Director of the California Department of Food and Agriculture before moving to Washington D.C. to represent the nation as the Assistant Secretary of the USDA. During his diverse career he also represented the Meat Institute, Livestock and Meat Board, Tri Valley Growers and the Refrigeration Research Foundation in addition to serving as a Senior Research Fellow with the Harvard School of Business Administration.

**Ann M. Veneman**-Ann M. Veneman was raised on a peach farm in Modesto. She has used her agricultural roots and background in international trade to expand opportunities for California agriculture. Ann represented the nation as the Deputy Secretary of the USDA and served as the Secretary of the California Department of Agriculture, she was the highest ranking woman in both agencies.

Veneman served as USDA Secretary from January 20, 2001 to January 20, 2005, leaving to become the fifth executive director of UNICEF. A lawyer by training, Veneman has practiced law in Washington, DC, and California, including being a deputy public defender. She has also served in other high level positions in U.S. federal and state government, including being appointed California's Secretary of Food and Agriculture, serving from 1995 to 1999.

**Henry Voss** -Henry Voss, a former president of the California Farm Bureau Federation and State Secretary of Agriculture had an agricultural career that spanned more than 40 years. Governor Wilson stated that Mr. Voss had a special passion for making sure that kids understood agriculture. His career began early as he managed a 60-acre peach orchard while attending the University of California at Davis. Agriculture lost Henry in 1996, and his contributions will long be remembered as part of the roots of Stanislaus County Agriculture.

**1999**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Gertie Zehrung** -Gertie was a “professional volunteer,” serving California Women for Agriculture, Ag in the Classroom, the Hughson Fruit & Nut Festival, Friends of Extension, Ag Pavilion Advisory, etc.

She had lived in Denair for 68 years and was a homemaker. She was a member of United Methodist Church of Hughson, California Women for Agriculture, Ag in the Classroom and the State Fair Board. She was also a past board member of Creative Alternatives.

**Rolland Starn**-Rolland Starn lived in Hughson since 1920. He owned and operated the family farm since 1946, producing peaches, nectarines, almonds and walnuts.

Rolland was elected to serve on the Stanislaus Board of Supervisors in 1981 and served 12 years. He had a strong commitment to county government and later went on to become Chairman of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and active with the National Association of Counties (NACO).

Rolland maintained a consistent record of involvement in agriculture and the community. He had been chairman of the Cling Peach Advisory Board, President of Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, First Chair of Citizens Advisory Committee of SAAG, Founding Director of Norman W. Ross Horticulture Foundation and founder of Friends of Agriculture. He is honored by having an Endowed Chair in Agriculture Studies at CSU Stanislaus.

He was a lifetime member of the Hughson United Methodist Church.

**Bill Ulm**- A native Californian, Bill was born in Santa Ana and attended schools in Tustin, where he graduated from high school. Active in 4-H and music, he attended Redlands University for a short time, travelling with the Redlands Glee Club to New York and competing in the Fred Waring competition at Carnegie Hall.

During the war he worked at a shipyard, building wooden tugboats for the landings in the Japanese conflict.

The family-his mother, father and two brothers, Don and Gerald, moved to Modesto in 1943 when his father bought a part of the old Cressey Maze Ranch on Maze Boulevard outside of Modesto. In 1947 Bill and his brother Don leased and later bought the ranch from their parents and continued in the dairy business, in a partnership that lasted forty years, known as the W.D. Ranch.

In 1950 Bill Married Marilyn Menzies, and they had three children.

While in the dairy business, Bill was active as a Farm Bureau Center Chairman, Farm Bureau Board of Directors, Charter Commissioner of Woodland Avenue Fire Protection District, President and member of the Stanislaus Farm Supply Board, Secretary of the State Board of the American Dairy Association and member of the board of the Associated Dairymen and member of the Sonoma Marin Dairymen's Association. While on the Board of A.D.A. he participated in the formation of the California Milk Advisory Board. He served on the M.J.C. Advisory Committee, was named as an Honorary Young Farmer of M.J.C., Chairman of the Ag Committee of the Modesto Chamber of Commerce and Farm Bureau.

In 1973 he was appointed to the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors by then Governor Ronald Reagan to fill out the term of John Thurman, who had been elected to the State Assembly. He served for 10 years, successfully being elected in two elections. While on the Board he served as a member of SAAG, Regional Air Quality Control Board, Transportation Committee, and LAFCO. He also served as trustee of Scenic General Hospital.

Bill retired from the Board of Supervisors in 1983, and returned to the ranch, serving as a member of the Memorial Hospital Board for five years. By then each brother had a son interested in farming, so the brothers dissolved the partnership in 1991, with Don and son David keeping the dairy and Bill and son Tom's part of the ranch to be planted in grapes, almonds and walnuts.

Bill served as chairman of the 4-H Sponsoring Committee and Chairman of Friends of Ag Extension and helped in the planning and development of the Stanislaus Ag Center.

**2000**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Max & Verda Foster-Foster Farms**-Max and Verda Foster were married on August 7, 1927. Max Foster was a farmer from a farm family and his early job as a city editor of the Modesto Bee (\$55 per month) paid for his start-up costs along with a small loan from W.W. Giddings at Modesto Bank & Trust. His wife Verda, was always at his side and helped raise their first batch of chickens and turkeys in 1939. Their hard work and vision paid off and Max became a true leader in this field.

Max's focus was always on the consumer. He spent his life working to produce better and safer farm products. "Excellence, Honesty, Quality and Service" were the principles upon which Foster Farms was founded and which serve to guide the company today. Max led the way in both the poultry and dairy industries. He was a forward thinker and always tried to add value to their products. In the dairy industry he was first to produce low fat milk from all fat. He replaced his Jerseys with Holsteins to effect this change. He led the poultry industry by doing away with the hanging whole body chicken (including head and feet) to chicken in a bag ready to cook or cut up chicken. He was consumed with providing the best in customer service.

Max embraced technology and was never afraid of automation. At one point, he tired of lifting milk crates onto the trucks, so he developed a chain conveyer belt to fill them with bottles of milk and convey them to the place where they are automatically stacked five high ready for the trucks. The system he designed remains in use today. He was also a pioneer in computerizing the chicken operation and installed the first large-scale automated system in Livingston. When it came to packaging milk, he was innovative as well and transitioned from glass bottles for milk to paper cartons after a rather startling discovery. In those days, glass milk bottles were returned for reuse. While going through the returned bottles one day, Max discovered one which smelled of

gasoline. He realized then that this was an unhealthy method and set about developing a disposable paper carton.

Foster Farms employs thousands in their poultry and dairy operations. They are one of the largest employers in Stanislaus County. Their fresh sales are growing. Home chefs, supermarket owners, restaurant owners know and expect only the best from Foster Farms. The passion for honesty, quality and integrity shared by Max and Verda Foster in 1939 is their legacy to every Foster Farms employee. This vision has led the company to become the largest poultry company in the western United States with annual sales in excess of \$1 billion dollars.

Foster Farms also reaches out internationally, shipping powdered milk products throughout the world. Frozen poultry products are shipped to several countries. As the company expands, Foster Farms will continue their ability to offer the best locally raised, great tasting products using continual research and award winning advertising such as the “home town chickens” not the “Foster Imposters”.

Verda passed away on August 19, 1993, and Max, a few years later on September 23, 1996. The Foster Family today is committed to being good stewards of the heritage and legacy passed on to them by Max and Verda.

**Bill & Mary Lyons-Mapes Ranch-** Bill and Mary are owner/operators of the 10,000 acre historic Mapes Ranch, located 10 miles west of Modesto on Highway 132. They have over 50 years active involvement with the California agricultural community. The Mapes Ranch operation consists of raising beef cattle and has grown wheat, corn, almonds, watermelons, tomatoes and plums.

Bill Sr. has been recognized as a leader in the preservation of wildlife, wetlands, and habitats by the National Audubon Society and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Bill has been recognized with the following community awards:

Modesto Chamber of Commerce Presidents Award 1991; The “Fred Price Memorial” Good Egg Award presented by Stanislaus Farm Bureau, the Modesto Chamber of Commerce and the poultry industry; Cattleman of the Year Award, 1984, presented by the San Joaquin and Stanislaus Branch of the California Cattleman’s Association.

Bill and Mary have been active members of many community and agricultural organizations: Saint Stanislaus Church, Old Fishermen’s Club, Sportsmen of Stanislaus, Hart-Ransom School Board, Hart-Ransom School Parents’ Club, U.C. Merced Board of Trustees, Central Catholic High School Boosters Club, Elk’s Club, National Cattlemen’s Association, California Cattlemen’s Association, California Cattlewomen, California Farm Bureau, California Watermelon Association, Catholic Charities and Laura’s House.

Bill also was President for 40 years of the ST&J Soils Conservation District and President 30 years of the Reclamation District.

The entire Lyons family, including spouses and children, are long-time supporters of the following organizations: Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, 4-H, FFA, The Children’s Crisis Center, Modesto Gospel Mission, Salvation Army, American Cancer Society, Catholic Charities, Omega Nu Charities, Self Help Enterprises, Laura’s House for Abused Women and Children, Stanislaus County Fair, Modesto Chamber of Commerce Annual Harvest Day Luncheon, proceeds towards scholarships for MJC agricultural students, Woodland Avenue and Salida Fire Departments, California Cattlewomen, and many local public and private schools and youth sports programs.



**2001**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Ernest and Julio Gallo**-Ernest and Julio Gallo have greatly impacted agriculture through their decades of leadership in the wine industry. Starting with a small family vineyard and winery, they strove for perfection, inventing the tools they needed when none existed, setting the path for others to follow. They built their business into the largest winery in the world.

The Gallo's shared ambition to produce and market quality wines at affordable prices motivated them to continuously improve their operations, extending the family business to include grape growing, winemaking, production of the bottles, warehousing, distribution, transportation and marketing their wines throughout the county and the world.

Ernest and Julio Gallo were instrumental in transforming the economy of grape growing, offering long-term contracts to independent growers to upgrade the varieties of grapes planted to meet future consumer demand for quality. The Gallo's invested heavily in agricultural research and shared their knowledge with local farmers. Through this investment, the Gallos helped improve the quality of grapes available in the region through better farming practices such as plant nutrition, irrigation and harvesting regimes.

The Gallos helped education generations of vineyard managers and winemakers by their support of curricula throughout the University of California and California State University systems. The efforts of Ernest and Julio Gallo, and their family, have historical significance in many ways. They helped re-establish the California wine industry at the end of Prohibition. The winery that was begun on a shoestring by Ernest and Julio is now a major force in the global wine industry. Today this global enterprise employs thousands worldwide including several thousand in and around Stanislaus County.

**2002**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**J.S. West & Company (The West and Benson Families)**-J. S. West and Company began in 1909 with the purchase of the Merced Milling building with a lease of land from the Southern Pacific Railroad in Modesto. Working with farmers on yearly contracts, James West sold sacked grain to brokers and customers. As the business grew throughout the early 1900's the family sold coal, wood and fertilizers.

A fire in the 1950's destroyed the feed mill and office at Ninth and G Streets in Modesto and rewrote the future of the family business. A new modern feed mill was built to supply feed to the poultry and cattle industry. Today, retail stores carry a full line of feed and supplies and custom feed blends are manufactured in the Sierra Grain Mill partnership in Hughson.

The family business does not end with feed. J.S. West has made ice, sold fuel oil, operated an automobile service station and tire shop and a furniture store.

In the early 1950's the family developed an egg contracting business. Family members continue to be heavily involved in the poultry and egg industry at both the state and national levels. Research and application of fly control and the drying and application of poultry manure for fertilizer is an example of the family's environmental stewardship.

The West family packs eggs in over 60 labels and frozen liquid eggs in their Hilmar processing plant. They process liquid eggs in a plant they operate in Oakland and export shell eggs to the Middle and Far East.

From feed to eggs and ice to propane, the West family continues to make a difference in the agricultural industry worldwide.

**2003**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Larry Carter**-William (Larry) Carter had a long and dedicated career in agriculture. Carter worked for General Mills and the Pillsbury Company for several years before operating his own laying hen ranch in the 1960's through the early 1970's. Larry was also the Executive Manager of the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau from 1972-1987, and farmed 25 acres of almonds. Carter also worked many years for Stanislaus Farm Supply.

In addition to his career which was so evidently dedicated to agriculture, Carter was a part of, as a volunteer, a large number of organizations both involving agriculture and his community. Carter has been involved in the Denair Lions Club, Hughson 4-H, Modesto Chamber of Commerce, Stanislaus County Jail Site Committee, Stanislaus Ag Foundation, along with a number of industry organizations, boards and committees.

Carter, over the years, has exemplified loyalty and dedication, in particular, to agriculture. It is because of his commitment to agriculture that Stanislaus County can boast of their strong agricultural organizations, like Farm Bureau and the Ag Foundation.

**The Perez Brothers**-The Perez brothers, Tom, Earl, Daniel and Mike, have been leaders in the agricultural industry in this county and state since the 1940's. A family business begun by the brothers' father, Juan, has grown from beans, alfalfa, and cantaloupes to being one of the largest tomato shippers in the country. The family has farmed over 8,000 acres of tomatoes, tree crops, melons, beans and cotton.

The Perez brothers were instrumental in bringing profitable canning and fresh market tomato industries to Stanislaus County. They have farmed thousands of acres of processing tomatoes and several hundred acres of fresh market

tomatoes. They have also been involved in the packing and marketing sides of farming.

The Perez brothers work as stewards of the environment as they support research and improvement in farming. They also work to bring technology to the industry, bringing improved harvesting machinery to the field. The Perez brothers have shaped many aspects of the agricultural industry from marketing to crop improvement and water management.

The brothers have served on many industry boards and committees and given their time to a number of community organizations. The brothers have served on boards such as the Melon Research Board, the California Tomato Commission and Diamond Walnut. They belong to others such as Farm Bureau, Ag Foundation, Western Growers and civic service clubs such as Lions Club and Elks. The Perez brothers give resources of money, time and their wisdom to projects of every kind from political campaigns to service clubs and local schools; projects that they know will benefit both the ag community and their entire community.

**2004**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Floyd Zaiger-** For Floyd Zaiger and his wife Betty, life changed when he “caught the disease” of fruit breeding. An apprenticeship with an early fruit and nut breeder resulted in a lifelong passion to fill our tables with the best fruit science and imagination can create.

Floyd Zaiger, as the founder of Zaiger’s Inc. Genetics-a company that hybridizes most deciduous fruits, welcomes many students and foreign visitors interested in plant breeding to his operation and leads tours and tastings through his orchards.

Zaiger is a pioneer and industry leader in hybridizing between fruit species which yield interspecifics, complex combinations of two or more fruit types. The family plants over 60,000 seedlings each year, many of which have gone on to become household names like the Pluot, Plumcot and Aprium.

Zaiger holds over 100 plant patents and has received numerous awards including the 1995 Wilder Silver Medal from the American Pomological Society, the highest in the field of pomology in the United States. In 1982 he was awarded the Chevalier Award for eminence of personal achievement by the French government for his contribution to their fruit industry.

The work of Floyd, his wife Betty and children Gary, Leith and Grant has provided the industry with improvements beyond the introduction of new fruit varieties. Expanded seasons, increased firmness and storage life have added value to the industry as a whole, opening new markets for fruit exports. In addition, his interest and involvement in agricultural education at local high schools and Modesto Junior College has inspired hundreds of students.

**Ernie Gemperle-**Ernie Gemperle was born in Switzerland where he graduated from the International Poultry School in Bern. In 1949 he immigrated to the U.S. and served two years in the U.S. Army.

Gemperle married and had seven children; three daughters and four sons. He has owned and operated a poultry business and egg packing operation for 52 years and is proud to say that all four of his sons are working in the family poultry business.

In addition to operating his successful poultry business, Gemperle has taken an active role in his industry. He has served as chairman of Nulaid Foods and is a board member of Nu-West Feed Company, Nu-Cal Egg Company and National Foods Corporation. Gemperle also served as a board member of the American Egg Board for eight years and as a commissioner for the California Egg Commission.

Gemperle gives his time, talent and treasure to serve the community through many organizations. He is past chairman of the Stanislaus State University Foundation, Catholic Charities of Stockton Diocese, Boy Scouts of America, Yosemite Council and Turlock Rotary Club. He is also a past board member of Emanuel Medical Center and Doctors Medical Center.

Ernie Gemperle epitomizes both the American dream and the opportunities that are available in the agricultural industry.

**2005**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**A.L. Gilbert Company-** A.L. Gilbert Company serves dairymen and livestock producers throughout the Central Valley providing bulk feeds, liquid feeds and field seeds from its feed mills in Oakdale, Keyes, Fairfield and Chowchilla. The company has over several hundred employees and is in its fourth generation as a family owned and managed business.

In 1892, A.L. Gilbert Company was established in Oakdale by Amos Lawrence Gilbert as a lumber and grain milling distributor capitalizing on a family history in these business areas dating back to 1585 in Central Europe. In the early 1900's the company sold wheat seed and provided insurance for crops to local farmers. Mr. Gilbert had a hand in the Gold Rush purchasing wheat for flour and selling the flour to mining camps and towns in the Mother Lode.

July of 1900 saw the opening of the Farmers Warehouse in Oakdale, a presence which has remained for over 100 years. The company has followed the trends in agriculture selling dairy, beef, horse and poultry feeds to keep up with the changes in farming practices. Today the growing business includes sacked feed and a brewer's grain distribution unit both in Fairfield and in Colorado.

The continued success of the A.L. Gilbert Company depends on the procurement, manufacture and delivery of the high quality feeds that have served the Central Valley for more than a century.

**2006**

**National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Ratto Bros.-** Since 1905, Ratto Brothers has been owned and operated in the family tradition started by Antone L. Ratto who grew his own vegetables on Bay Farm Island near Oakland and personally delivered them to customers in a horse-drawn cart. Over a century since its founding, the family business continues to thrive and carry on the Ratto Brothers tradition through four sons, Ronald, Raymond, David and Frank, who run the operations.

Today, Ratto Brothers farms over one thousand acres of prime farmland near Modesto, while their headquarters remains in Oakland near some of the original farm acreage. The company's success throughout the generations has been a result of the enormous pride the family takes in cultivating relationships and providing the best, freshest produce to Ratto Brothers customers year after year.



**2007**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Burchell Nursery-** Over 65 years ago, Irvin Burchell moved his family to Modesto where he began a legacy, The Burchell Nursery. More than six decades of lessons learned in the fields and three generations of personal experience growing and harvesting trees has made them the recognized leader in the industry.

The Burchell Nursery continues to be family owned and operated-selling millions of trees of almonds, apples, apricots, cherries, nectarines, olives, peaches, pomegranates, plums, prunes, and walnuts a year. In order to provide the best quality trees, innovation is key, which is why they continue to set the pace in plant breeding, research and development. With a vision of “plant good trees on good land, take care of them, and they will take care of you,” it is no wonder The Burchell Nursery is a success in the nursery industry.

**2008**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Flory Industries-** Innovation has been a key for the Flory family from the beginning. Upon moving from Whittier to Salida in 1909, the family began breaking new ground in agriculture. The first family farm in Stanislaus County to have a milking machine, Flory also became the first farm to convert from steel tractor wheels to rubber tires.

Eventually the family expanded their 100-cow grade “B” dairy to include custom grain and bean harvesting. Howard Flory built two bean harvesters for use in their harvesting business. These two machines lasted 30 harvest seasons.

In 1961, the first Flory pick-up harvester was built. This small three-point mounted, tractor powered harvester was used primarily with almonds. As the industry grew, so did Flory. 1969 saw the introduction of the self-propelled harvester, which was the first in the ag industry to use a hydrostatic ground drive. Flory continued to meet the needs of the industry with the development of a self-propelled, heavy-duty sweeper in 1972. Flory sweepers have continued to improve over the years to meet industry needs and today’s diesel engine designs.

Flory Industries is considered the leader in the field of nut-harvesting equipment, with sales worldwide. Their equipment is used in the harvest of almonds, cashews, figs, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, tung nuts and walnuts. The technology of the equipment has improved to meet both the needs of the industry for efficient harvesting and the reduction of dust to improve air quality.

Flory’s commitment to cleaner air is evidenced with the manufacture of the brush shredder which is eliminating the wither burning of orchard prunings. The Flory team continues to work with educational institutions on environmental concerns including Cal Poly, UC Davis, Fresno State and New Mexico State.

Located on the original homestead in Salida, Flory Industries has been repairing and building farm equipment since 1936. Four generations work in the family business.

**2009**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Dave Wilson Nursery-** Established in 1938, Dave Wilson Nursery has grown to become one of the largest growers of deciduous fruit, nut and shade trees in California for both commercial orchards and home gardens. Prior to this, Dave Wilson worked at Kirkman Nursery, a prominent tree nursery in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, for about 14 years providing an opportunity for him to grow June-budded orchard trees on leased ground with John Moffet through a four year partnership. Subsequently, in the late 1930's and early 1940's, Dave and his wife Isabel operated Empire Nursery, a garden center located east of Modesto, with Isabel's sister and her husband, Pearle and Walter Mann. The nursery became Dave Wilson Nursery when John Wynne, Dave's son-in-law, joined the company in the early 1940's.

Dave and John grew commercial orchard trees in a partnership until the company was incorporated in 1957. John became President of the nursery in 1962 and purchased the present site of the nursery's headquarters, along the Tuolumne River, east of Hickman, in 1967. The nursery introduced the first tree fruit varieties developed by Floyd Zaiger in 1966 and are the primary propagator and exclusive licensor of Zaiger varieties with annual sales of over a million trees of patented varieties and rootstocks.

The nursery established a sales and distribution facility in Hughson (1966) which was relocated to the nursery's growing grounds in Hickman (1986). Additionally, an office, test orchard and sales yard was established in Selma, California (1979) then relocated to Reedley in 1995.

In 1972, Dave Wilson Nursery branched out to start growing trees for the home garden wholesale market. Robert Woolley, in 1980, joined the nursery initially to help in the development of a unique, regionalized retail mail order catalog for home gardeners. After the mail order catalog was discontinued, Robert became a Field Representative to commercial orchardists. In the early 1980's, the Hughson

office and sales yard was consolidated to Hickman, the growing grounds site. Robert and his wife Jane purchased the nursery in 1989 after John Wynne passed away (1988).

In order to accommodate growth in tree sales as well as to increase time in crop rotation cycles, the nursery purchased the 640-acre Red Rock Ranch in Hickman (1997) and added 240 acres adjacent to the nursery headquarters in 2004. The nursery employs several hundred people both full time and seasonally. Dave Wilson Nursery grows millions of trees for both the commercial orchard and home garden, farms over 1,000 acres, and maintains an office, sales yard and test orchard in Reedly.

**2010**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Duarte Nursery-** Duarte Nursery, which is family owned and operated, is located in Hughson in California's Central Valley. Family members include company president, John Duarte; the director of operations, Jeff Duarte; as well as company founders, Jim and Anita Duarte. Also, Jim's sister, Maryanna Pennington, supervises accounts receivable.

Co-founder Jim Duarte's experience in agriculture began in 1971 working in viticulture in Fallbrook, California. He commercially propagated the first UC heat-treated selections of grapevines. Jim revolutionized the viticulture nursery industry by growing the virus-free stock in a more sanitary method using plastic containers. In 1976 Jim expanded his focus to include the house plant industry as he and Anita operated a tropical house plant nursery for the next thirteen years. The rise of the threat of Phylloxera, coupled with the increased consumption of red wine in the late 1980's brought Jim to Hughson to begin construction on Duarte Nursery. In 1989, Jim, Anita, their sons John and Jeff and a small staff once again brought change to the viticulture industry with the reintroduction of containerized, grafted grapevines enabling farmers the option of planting grapes year-round.

Over the past couple of decades, the popularity of year-round planting has taken Duarte Nursery into a variety of agricultural nursery products. The company has continued its growth through innovation by making tissue culture tree rootstocks commercially available. Dry Creek Labs, a subsidiary of Duarte Nursery, is continually expanding its facility to meet demand for clonal prunus, citrus, pistachio, and walnut rootstocks.

Duarte Nursery is committed to product improvement through their many research trials, customer relationships and development of their facility. Duarte Nursery is known for its dedicated staff. As Jim Duarte puts it, "our goal at Duarte

Nursery is to provide the farming industry with the cleanest, highest quality nursery products available.”

**2011**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Stanislaus Food Products & The Cortopassi Family**-Located at the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and D Streets in Modesto, the Stanislaus Food Products cannery has specialized in fresh-packing premium tomato products for quality-oriented Italian restaurants and pizzerias since 1942.

Under the leadership of co-owners Dino Cortopassi (now retired) and Tom Cortopassi, the company has steadily grown since Dino first purchased Stanislaus from the Piciullo family in 1978. Today, Stanislaus Food Products has become the largest “fresh-pack” cannery in the world.

Most supermarket consumers have never heard of Stanislaus Food Products. That’s because the company does not make consumer-sized products for the retail market. Instead, Stanislaus specialized in packing their premium quality tomato products exclusively in the large “#10 cans” favored by restaurants.

Over the years, other tomato processors have tried to cut costs by re-manufacturing tomato sauces from industrial bulk tomato paste and water, 12 months a year. But for quality reasons, Stanislaus still insists on packing 100% of their products from fresh tomatoes, not from concentrate, during the summer season.

Only packing their products three months a year when processing tomatoes are in season means that Stanislaus’ production costs are higher relative to competitors who re-manufacture tomato sauces year-round. However, by focusing sales and marketing efforts on attracting quality oriented restaurateurs who recognize and are willing to pay a premium more superior product quality, the company has remained both profitable and growing over time.

The company owes its marketing success to Dino’s vision of transforming Stanislaus from a small quality oriented, private label cannery into a “must have” ingredient brand within the food service industry.



As a result, Stanislaus has grown to become the recognized quality leader within the California tomato processing industry as well as the market share leader within the pizzeria and Italian restaurant segment.

**2012**

**National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Veterinary Service, Inc.** –VSI is an overnight success story some fifty-plus years in the making. Headquartered in Modesto, VSI provides a diverse supply of animal health products. The company was founded in the late 1950's by Frank Sweetman, Dr. Willis Woodward, Dr. Donald Rosenberg, and John Pugliese. The decision by these four leaders to band together would forever change the animal healthcare industry. In 1979, John Scheuber was hired to be the General Manager, and in 2004 became President and CEO.

The focus on innovation by VSI's founders established a solid foundation for the company as well as a culture for success that remains today. The company not only supports the growing agriculture industry, but it established a standard of employee relations which has greatly contributed to the company's success by developing an innovative Profit Sharing Plan and Stock Ownership Program. The vision of the four original stockholders established a company that thrives today.

Today, VSI and its employee-owners continue to provide quality products and customer driven service for all segments of the animal health industry while being a strong supporter of the community and a leader in the agricultural industry.

**2013**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Ed Rocha & Rocha's Valley Enterprises** –Trucking is a Rocha family legacy. In 1924, John Rocha founded John N. Rocha Transportation, hauling milk, hay, dairy supplies, and cattle. Ed entered the business in 1952 as a senior in high school when his dad purchased two 1951 Peterbilt Cabovers and they became partners.

Ed started Ed Rocha Livestock Transportation in 1963, which grew to include tankers, vans, curtain vans, flats and of course, cattle trucks.

In 1990, Rocha's Valley Enterprises was founded, leasing tomato trailers to the Morningstar Company for handling the shuttle and inter-plant business for E&J Gallo. It is important to note that the Rocha family has hauled for the Gallo family for over 70 years.

A true family business, Ed's youngest son Douglas runs Rocha's Valley Enterprises, whose fleet consists of 27 power units and 150 sets of trailers.

Dedicated to giving back to the industry, Ed has been active in leadership roles with several trucking organizations. In addition, Ed and Carole helped start Children's Guardian Home in Oakdale, have supported the Children's Crisis Center in Modesto, and have served on the National Ag Science Center Board of Directors.

**2014**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Save Mart Supermarkets** –Led by brothers-in-law, Mike Piccinini and Nick Tocco, Save Mart Supermarkets opened its first store in Modesto on January 17, 1952. Today, Save Mart remains privately owned, operating 221 stores throughout Northern California and Northern Nevada under the Save Mart, S-Mart Foods, Lucky, Maxx Value Foods and FoodMaxx banners.

In 1985, Bob Piccinini purchased the supermarket chain and became the chief executive officer. Under his direction, the chain grew quickly through targeted acquisitions, innovative store formats and vertical integration. The company expanded throughout the 1980's including the acquisition of 27 Fry's Supermarkets located in the East Bay Area. In 1997, Save Mart acquired 10 Lucky's stores in the Central Valley this would be followed with the introduction of Food Maxx Warehouse Stores. In 2007, Save Mart grew again with the purchase of 128 Albertson's stores throughout the Central Valley, the Bay Area, and Northern Nevada. Headquartered in Modesto since its beginning, Save Mart Supermarkets employs several thousand people.

Throughout its history, Save Mart has been deeply involved in the communities it serves. Save Mart Supermarkets gives back more than millions annually to programs and organizations supporting health, wellness, nutrition, education, sports and hunger relief.

**2015**

## **National Ag Science Center Ag Hall of Fame**

**Stanislaus Farm Supply** –A shrinking supply of bailing wire, brought on by steel work strikes across the country, drove area farmers to pool their resources under a committee to secure a railcar of wire. One of those farmers, Joe Sousa made an offer to the Farm Supply Committee, headed by Maurice McDonald, to manage the company for six months at no salary. In addition, he offered the use of his pickup and 1-1/2 ton truck at no charge. If, at the end of six months the directors were satisfied with the operation, he would continue an additional six months. If not, he would resign with no financial obligations to the company. Fred Thiemann supplemented this proposal by offering office space and clerical services at no charge, and in 1949, Stanislaus Farm Supply was born.

Originally located on 8th and Washington, Stanislaus Farm Supply's early success is often attributed to the business savvy of its founding members along with its integral relationship with the county's Farm Bureau which supplied much of the early financing for the growing company. Within five years of business the small cooperative grew to over \$500,000 in annual sales. By 1960 Farm Supply acquired a new warehouse on E. Service that allowed for the future development of onsite bulk fertilizer storage and added a field staff to better emphasize its service-oriented business model.

While Stanislaus Farm Supply saw a strengthening in its relationship with Farm Bureau and area growers there was an increase gap between those farmers and consumers. When Sam Bettencourt took the role of General Manager in 1978 he began to build a legacy around the company as one that represented a voice for our member owners. Sam aggressively furthered the company's commitment to supporting local youth through junior livestock events and student scholarships for those pursuing agricultural related degrees. In addition, Sam oversaw the hiring and development of many of Farm Supply's most valuable employees, many of which remain with the company to this day. In 2015, Nick Biscay was

welcomed in as the new General Manager of Farm Supply following Sam Bettencourt's 37 years at the helm.

While other grower-owned companies and ag suppliers have gone out of business in the past 66 years, Farm Supply has been able to survive and thrive by adapting to change. From advances in ag technology to climate and environmental changes, agriculture is a dynamic industry full of challenges and opportunities. Stanislaus Farm Supply is proud to work alongside Farm Bureau as an affiliated co-op to be a voice for agriculture and will strive to improve the financial well-being and quality of life for farmers and ranchers.