More than 200 educators from across the state joined us in Sacramento for the 36th Annual Ag in the Classroom Conference in September.

The conference, spanning three days, took attendees from the farm to the fork, quite literally, as we had collaborative events with the Sacramento Farm to Fork Festival, which was occurring simultaneously with our conference.

In the wake of the loss of two revered icons in agricultural education, Laura Tower and Jean Landeen, we reflect on their extraordinary contributions to agriculture literacy and advocacy.

During her 25-year tenure, Laura Wheeler Tower held leadership roles within the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. Her guidance influenced not just the organization but also the current Executive Director, Judy Culbertson, and numerous members of the Ag in the Classroom staff. Laura served on boards within the California Department of Education, authoring publications, and focusing on agricultural education. A farm owner in Farmington, Laura was involved in many community organizations that benefit youth and agriculture, including 4-H, FFA, and Farm Bureau.

Jean Landeen was a trailblazer. She was one of the earliest females to devote her entire career at the California Department of Education as a champion of agriculture education. Despite having taught only four years in the classroom, Jean made a huge impact in her profession by pioneering the development of urban agriculture programs, helping to write the AgEd State Standards and Frameworks documents, and serving as the lead consultant in the early development of the California Ag in the Classroom movement.

We will honor the life and legacy of Laura and Jean by continuing to reach classrooms across the state and by sharing the many important lessons that only agriculture can teach.

“The heartfelt donations we receive in their memory will enable us to educate future generations in California,” said Culbertson.

With these contributions, we sow the seeds of knowledge, ensuring that the vital lessons of agriculture are passed down to the next generations in California. 

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Have you ever wondered what kind of crops are growing along the side of the road as you drive down Interstate 5? You’re not alone.

Ag in the Classroom was recently awarded a Specialty Crops Block Grant, which will support the development of a new web-based application Knowin’ What’s Growin’. The app will help users identify what’s growing throughout the Golden State and learn more about the production practices and the crop’s commodity value. Is that a pear or pistachio tree I just passed? A tap of the app will tell you.

The overall goal of the project is to increase specialty crop awareness and consumption among California’s fourth-grade students and teachers. The specific age-related audience is ultimately what helped Ag in the Classroom secure this grant.

Research shows that 93 percent of children under-consume vegetables and 60 percent under-consume fruit, a serious issue.
Life on the Farm Early Childhood Curriculum

Imagine this... Story Writing Contest

Any 3-8 grade students in your life? Encourage young writers to submit a story for the imagine this... Story Writing Contest!

Going on its twenty-fifth year, the contest entails students writing stories (real or imagined) based on accurate information about California agriculture. One winning author is selected from each grade. These individuals will travel with their families and representatives to the State Capitol in March to be recognized and celebrated during National Ag Week.

Scan the QR code to learn more or submit a story. The deadline is November 1!