

Ag Leadership Farm Show Breakfast: A Partnership between Agriculture & Insurance

Buckman-Mitchell, Inc.

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By Lisette Agundis

World Ag Expo 2018 is here, and as such, so is the California Ag Leadership Breakfast, which will be held at the World Ag Expo grounds the morning of Thursday, February 15th. The breakfast is hosted annually by a committee comprised of local Alumnus of the program in partnership with Buckman-Mitchell Inc. (BMI).

The breakfast is a fundraiser for the California Ag Leadership Foundation (CALF), the organization that runs the California Ag Leadership Program. The program is the premier Agricultural leadership program in the country producing over 1,000 alumnus throughout the state and is in its 48th year of operation. The program was created with the goal of taking emerging leaders within the agricultural industry and teaching them all aspects of leadership by exposing them to unique and different opportunities outside of the agricultural industry to develop a well-rounded leader.

Knowing the impact that CALF was making, Buckman-Mitchell was more than willing to assist when an opportunity arose. In a recent interview with Buckman-Mitchell's Chairman/CEO, Cliff Dunbar, he graciously explained how the beginning of this partnership took place. He said, "Twenty-four years ago Fred Lagomarsino (BMI Client) asked Alan Jacobus, BMI Vice President at the time, 'is there anything you could put together for our breakfast with insurance companies as sponsors?' With that question, we thought it would be a good idea to help them raise money. Out of that, came an insurance and Ag partnership."

Since then BMI sought insurance companies that would support the agriculture industry. Cliff continued on to mention, "BMI put together various sponsorship levels to allow for participation at different levels from our partners." Now, the breakfast has developed into an annual tradition among the Ag insurance community. The event has grown to the point where it is now recognized as the largest fundraiser for the Ag Leadership Program! In 2017, the Ag Breakfast alone



raised over \$110,000. This year, we're expecting a 6% increase with the addition of another sponsorship from an insurance carrier. It is incredible to see how much this fundraiser has grown and also see where it is going.

We at Buckman-Mitchell are lucky enough to have two alumni members who have personally gone through the program. Alumni, Steve Chrisman, Senior Vice-President/Agribusiness, shared his experience as a participant of the 10th graduating class. When asked about his involvement, he said, "It was an eye-opening experience, especially when I went to China in 1980." He also pointed out his favorite part of the program was the sense of comradery and being around people from all over the state. Steve's motivation to join the program arose from watching his older brother, who was in the second graduating class come back home from his monthly meetings with loads of excitement. Steve goes to the Ag Breakfast every year and is proud to be a part of an organization that significantly impacts the Ag Leadership Foundation.

Another Buckman-Mitchell CALF program alumnus Richard Nunes Jr. (Class 37), Vice President, expressed "How important it is for the insurance carrier partners that provide coverage to agricultural operations to give back and support the agricultural industry, and in turn, our clients then want to support these insurance carriers by placing their insurance coverage with them whenever possible. It's a great reciprocal relationship and one that I am happy to be able to assist in."

The partnership between the Ag Leadership Foundation and Buckman-Mitchell has come a long way. It has become an event we look forward to every year and hope to continue many more years to come. The World Ag Expo continues to be the foremost sought out agricultural trade show event for attendees from all around the world. Buckman-Mitchell is incredibly humbled to be able to spotlight and assist the California Agriculture Leadership Program and its impressive alumni at the World Ag Expo.

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