

Board Member Profile: Jeremy Lane

Jeremy Lane is FCFB's Vegetable commodity chairperson.

Meet FCFB Director Jeremy Lane. Jeremy is the Sales and Marketing Manager for Baloian Farms. Lane oversees the growing, packing, shipping and selling of produce in the U.S. and Canada. Lane's passion is working for a family legacy that has been around for more than one hundred years and driving that legacy far into the future. "It's a tough business, but I love the company and the culture. It's a great place to be."

Lane accelerated his involvement with production agriculture through projects at his local high school.

Although Lane's parents weren't directly involved with agriculture, he was introduced to agriculture through his grandparents. His first hands-on experience came during Christmas vacations on his grandparents' farm in Reedley, where he pruned grapevines for extra spending money.

Growing up in Selma, Lane saw an opportunity to get involved with the Selma High School farm. Students at Selma High School could apply to grow a commodity, operations they ran under the supervision of agricultural professors.

Through this program, Lane grew sweet red onion transplants. Lane recently discovered those red onion transplants were donated by Baloian Farms. That project is what inspired him to be a farmer.

"I really enjoyed the vegetable projects," Lane said. "It was an incredible amount of work, but it was very engaging, and I enjoyed watching the crop develop into a finished product." He said the project covered everything from soil preparation to the final invoice, and students had an opportunity to take in some of the profit. Lane recently discovered those red onion transplants were donated by Baloian Farms. That project is what inspired him to be a farmer.

After graduating from Selma High School in 1993, Lane set out to pursue an agriculture degree. He first attended Kings River College (now Reedley Community College). He transferred and graduated from California State University, Fresno in 1997 with a bachelor's degree in plant science, with an emphasis in production management.

Thrown into the thick of things

Lane's first job was with Schrack Drilling Co. in Selma. He credits that job for learning the value of hard work and a no-quit spirit. Before Lane graduated from Fresno State, he had a position in quality control (QC) at Baloian Farms in Fresno. Baloian Farms is a family-owned business that has been in production since the 1920s. Lane then transferred from QC to the shipping department. Upon graduation, he became a harvest foreman and began farming leased land on the side.

He grew leaf lettuce (mostly Romaine) and some squash. Through his position at Baloian Farms and personal farming activities, Lane became well-versed with the production side of agriculture.

After a brief stint at Baloian Farms in a sales position, Lane decided to accept an offer to work for USDA in Chicago for the next three years as an investigator. His primary job was to investigate licensing in the produce industry, mediate disputes between the growers and the receivers, form reports for assistant U.S. attorneys in Washington, D.C., and investigate false accountings. The false accountings can be anything from money laundering to false claims of damages or defects claimed by the receivers.

Back to Fresno

Lane credits three main reasons why he moved back to the Fresno area: 1.) He moved back to the Fresno area to settle with his wife, Flannery: 2) He wanted to work for Baloian Farms, a family operation: and 3) He wanted to keep his grandfather's land in agriculture production after his grandfather passed away.

Lane has had several exciting things going on in his personal life so far this year. He and his wife just celebrated a milestone 20th wedding anniversary and their daughter turned twelve this year. Their family also recently moved into a new residence in the Fresno area with the highlight being a new pool!

Lane and his family enjoy travelling. They recently celebrated Lane's birthday in the Bahama's in the remote "out islands" where they enjoyed snorkeling and scuba diving. They hope to travel to Japan soon.

Bringing expertise to FCFB

Lane has been the vegetable commodity chairperson for seventeen years, recruited by former FCFB President Debbie Jacobsen.

Lane has a great admiration and respect for fellow farm bureau Board members. He mentioned examples of how his peers have overcome challenges in the sheep and grape industry and saved their farms with perseverance. "Being part of the Board has been such an inspiration. Passion for agriculture and family farms renews hope and faith."

Lane is also a private pilot. He flies about once a week to Coachella, Hollister or other areas.