



University of California Cooperative Extension  
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**Internship Program Provides Expanded Opportunities for Agriculture**

Department of Agriculture biologist, Pest Control Advisor, farm manager, Peace Corp volunteer, computer programmer, army Captain, mother, graduate student. These are some of the current and previous occupations and pursuits of former Di Giorgio interns.

J.S. Di Giorgio was a farming pioneer in Kern County. To honor the accomplishments of this former president of the Di Giorgio Corporation, the Di Giorgio Foundation established a Memorial Fund with the Regents of the University of California in 1981. “It is the desire of the Di Giorgio family and the Di Giorgio Foundation to encourage and assist students in pursuing careers in agriculture and in promoting the profession which is synonymous with the name Di Giorgio.” The initial donation of cash and stocks valued at \$45,000 has grown over the years. Interest from the endowment principal is used to finance the internship program, which is administered by the University of California Cooperative Extension.

One or more students each year are given work experience and a broad exposure to “production agriculture.” Students working with Farm Advisors from the Kern County Cooperative Extension office are involved in applied research, extension information delivery, problem diagnosis, problem solving, equipment operation and other related agriculture production practices. Dr. Ralph Phillips has utilized interns over the years on an oak regeneration project. Interns have been heavily involved in evaluating test areas for oak plant survival. They have collected massive amounts of data and updated the information from previous surveys. “He helped me learn how to identify the different oak trees

and quizzed me on remembering how to recognize the different ones” wrote an intern. Interns have the opportunity to work with the Farm Advisors

on many different projects: soil sampling, insect collection and identification, measuring tree trunk diameter, mapping boll location on cotton plants, potato harvest. “It was a valuable ground level experience.” While traveling with Craig Kallsen, an intern participated in “farm calls” with pistachio growers; watching, learning, and doing bud graphs. Not all of the work is a pleasant experience. Tedious, repetitive, intricate, detailed, complex, and sometimes backbreaking describe aspects of research data collection. “I walked in the mud a lot,” wrote another intern.

Working with interns gives us the opportunity to do what we like to do the most; that’s teach. Long rides to the furthest parts of the county, after-work hour discussions, or setting up experiments are opportunities for teachers to teach and willing, open-minded, and enthusiastic interns to learn, usually with a hundred more questions to follow.

Interns must have completed high school and be enrolled in a college or university agricultural curriculum. Preference is given to Kern and Tulare County residents. Selection is based on scholarship, commitment to a career in agriculture, financial need and US citizenship. Access to this and other University of California programs is without regard to sex, creed, race, religion, or national origin. The interns are also expected to submit a written report of their activities during the summer.

“This internship has really opened my eyes to the vast amount of research and study that goes into production [agriculture], so much so, that I am seriously considering changing my major to one more involved with science and research” wrote former intern Juli Jackson. Now entering its twenty sixth year, the Di Giorgio Internship has been an overwhelming success in providing educational opportunities for agriculture students.

Interested students can obtain additional information from at the Cooperative Extension Office or on the web at [www.co.kern.ca.us/farm](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/farm).