

Fresno State rebranding ag business center

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The Fresno State Center for Agricultural Business has been renamed the Institute for Food and Agriculture as part of the group's efforts to encourage growth and innovation in California's food and agriculture industry.

The rebranding was a key recommendation from the Fresno State President's Commission on the Future of Agriculture and is meant to better connect the Jordan College of Agriculture Sciences and Technology with local and regional agribusiness.

"One of my highest priorities has been for Fresno State to be the leader in providing California agriculture with future employees, industry leaders and innovators in food procession and production agriculture," said Joseph I. Castro, university president. "With support building in the San Joaquin Valley and beyond for the university and our agricultural programs, the institute will play a key catalyzing role in taking the Jordan College to the next level of impact."

As the Institute for Food and Agriculture, the center will expand its services, outreach and resources and build upon industry partnerships for its nationally-recognized water, viticulture and enology centers. It will also continue research and training in food and fiber systems as well as market and policy analysis.

An industry advisory board of state agricultural leaders appointed by Castro will also be created to help define important issues and collaborative research opportunities.

"The advisory board will help align us with the industry's future," said Dr. Mechel Paggi, director of the Institute for Food and Agriculture and associate dean of research at the Jordan College. "Other important parts of the research process include exposing our staff and students to the Central Valley agriculture food value chain and helping various companies that are important to our local and state economies become more efficient and successful."

The advisory board will convene for its first official meeting later this summer and includes representatives from the California Fresh Fruit Association, Fresno County Farm Bureau, California Dairies, Bank of the West and Fowler Packing Company.

The Institute for Food and Agriculture will also host the 34th Annual Agribusiness Management Conference on Nov. 4. The event brings together top individuals from the state's agribusiness industry and academics to discuss global trade, water, federal farm policies and more.

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