



## Matt Bristow: Desert Valleys PCA engages in CAPCA's mission

CAPCA Staff

Matt Bristow graduated from California Poly Pomona with a Bachelor of Science degree in Crop Science. In addition to his PCA license, which he obtained in 2004, Matt is also a Certified Crop Adviser. The major crops he consults in are vegetables and citrus, but also works with dates, table grapes and a few acres of alfalfa.

He began his career as an intern for Western Farm Service while in college and continued with them straight out of school. Currently he works for Nutrien in Coachella, where he's been for the last 17 years. Other work experience included tractor driver, welder/fabricator, chef and bike mechanic – "I think I was able to bring some of the knowledge I gained from all of my other jobs to being a PCA." Asked how he knew being a PCA was a good career fit, Matt says, "Honestly, I didn't until I was hired as an intern to pull tissue samples one summer. I worked outside all day and no one was mad at me for getting dirty. I enjoyed the fact that the job was mentally challenging, not mundane." He says getting to work outside and not be cooped up in an office all day is one of the highlights of the job and he jokes, "Lunch is about the only part of the day I feel like I know what I'm doing. I do my best to take a comprehensive approach to my work. In my experience it is very rare that a problem has only one solution." But he also acknowledges customer service is really the foremost portion of the job, being knowledgeable and practical about the problems you encounter.

When talking about the value of his CAPCA membership, Matt recalls why he initially joined: "Becoming a CAPCA member was strongly suggested to me by my first boss. He was adamant that I needed to be a member and participate in my local chapter." Matt currently serves as the Secretary on the State Board of Directors after serving for two years as the Director representing Desert Valleys Chapter. "I was probably too eager to join the local board and then get on to the Government Relations Committee. But I am glad to be a part of the team, I think Government Relations is CAPCA's most important role and I want to support the people who are defending my license."

When he describes his job for someone outside the industry or unfamiliar with PCAs, he says casually, "I try to make sure the bugs don't eat your food before you do. I'm really not trying to poison anyone." When asked what CAPCA involvement has to offer PCAs he considers his experience volunteering over the last several years: "I really feel like the work that the Government Relations Committee does is not understood or appreciated to the extent it should be by all members. We PCAs are misunderstood and outnumbered in the capital. Our story was being told by our opposition. We are changing that." ■



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