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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## BMCC agriculture instructor selected as president for national board

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Blue Mountain Community College agriculture instructor Nick Nelson was selected to serve as President of the National Association of Agriculture Educators (NAAE) during the NAAE annual convention in Nashville Dec. 5-9. He is the first teacher from Oregon to serve as President and the first person in the country to serve in the role from a post-secondary institution.

Nelson will serve 7,000 members and more than 12,000 agriculture educators from across the nation in his role. He's served on the NAAE Board of Directors for the past four years, three of those years as the Region 1 Vice President (serving 11 western states), and one as President-Elect for the national board.

Nelson, a second-generation agriculture educator, is an animal science instructor at BMCC, where he's been a faculty member for the past 11 years. Prior to coming to BMCC, Nelson taught agriculture at the high school level in Hermiston, Ore., and Clackamas, Ore. While his primary instruction area is animal science, Nelson has also taught courses in forages and crop science, soils and fertilizers, as well as auctioneering.

Over the next year, Nelson will travel to Washington, D.C., for Board meetings and the National Policy Seminar hosted by the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). He will also represent the organization at the six regional NAAE conferences and will conclude his term at the 70<sup>th</sup> annual NAAE Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

Nelson's primary focus is working towards solving the agriculture teacher shortage across the country. In 2016, there were 770 open teaching positions and 66 programs unable to fill the agriculture teaching position, with 98 schools closing their ag programs due to budget cuts, low enrollments or the inability to find a qualified instructor. The "Teach Ag" Campaign from NAAE is making progress in recruitment, retention, and mentoring of agriculture educators.

"Ag teachers are truly dynamic individuals that wear numerous hats," Nelson said. "They teach in the classroom, serve as the FFA advisor, and then make project visits to students' homes all year long. They

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are also very active in the community doing numerous tasks, all the while raising a family and farming on the side. It is no wonder why we are seeing an increase in the number of schools who want ag programs, but not enough ag teachers to fill the positions.”

Nelson and his wife, Chrissy, raise Red Angus cattle and market bulls with his father through the Lorenzen Red Angus program. Nelson serves as an advisor to the BMCC FFA program and Livestock Judging Team, as well as serves as a 4-H leader, where his children actively show cattle, sheep and hogs.

For more information about the NAAE, please visit [www.naae.org](http://www.naae.org).

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