



Kristina Short: A Passion for Agriculture and PCA Advocacy

By CAPCA Staff

Kristina Short graduated from California State University, Chico with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture and Plant Science. In addition to her PCA license, which she obtained in 2009, Kristina also holds a QAL. The major crops she consults in are tree nuts, wine grapes, stone fruit, pome fruit, grains and berries.

She began her career as an intern working at the rice experiment station on weed control projects, and from there went on to work for Helena Research and Development where she learned more about pathology, entomology, weed control, and plant nutrition by conducting trials. In her current position with Westbridge Ag Products, she continues to learn about organic farming and new ways to solve crop management problems in the field using organic products. Her territory covers Chowchilla to Oregon, and Kristina meets with PCAs and growers, providing technical advice and assisting with solving problems in the field. “I have a lot of respect for PCAs who are walking fields every day, and I love getting to spend time with them creating crop programs and solutions.” She also works one-on-one in the field on plant nutrition, pest control, and IPM.

But her interest in agriculture and being a PCA began early in life. “I guess you could say I’ve always wanted to be a PCA from a young age, but I just didn’t know what it was yet. I have always had a fondness for agronomy and learning more about plants. I learned a lot from my grandfather about farming and hard work in the field, and my passion grew from there. I decided to focus on agriculture since I knew it was my passion.” She credits all of her experiences in the industry—from 4H, college and each job along the way—with providing lessons that have put her on her current career path. “I have always been a problem solver and love that I get to mix my love of the outdoors and farming with my love of solving problems.”

Building relationships within the industry is also a personal highlight for Kristina. When asked about advice for those considering the career or those new to it, she replied, “If I had to give any advice to young PCAs getting started, it would be to work while you’re going to school and start building relationships; they will be so crucial in building a career. I would also suggest finding a mentor to help guide you in your field knowledge and also in your relationship-building skills... Some of the most satisfying highlights I’ve had so far as a PCA have been the relationships I’ve made with other PCAs, researchers, and growers all over the state. I learn something new and exciting every day, and I love that that knowledge gets to come straight from the hard-working people in the field.”



KRISTINA SHORT

CAPCA Chapter: NorCal

Education: California State University, Chico

Year of PCA License: 2009

Employer: Westbridge Agricultural Products



When talking about the value of her CAPCA membership, Kristina is candid about why she initially joined: “As soon as I got my PCA license I signed up to be a CAPCA member. Originally, I just saw CAPCA as a means for tracking my hours. As I’ve grown into my career, I’ve realized that attending the local chapter meetings is a great resource for connecting to other PCAs in my area and for getting updates from the Ag Commissioners in our area. We are very fortunate to have the local county advisors at our monthly meetings and I enjoy their updates and information.”

Kristina is a member of the NorCal Chapter and serves as their Vice President: “I was nominated to volunteer by another chapter board member, and I couldn’t be happier I was asked to get involved.” Her involvement with CAPCA also includes the Government Relations Committee and advocacy initiatives. “I am so excited to see CAPCA wanting to get more involved with our local government affairs. I think that, as an organization, we are very fortunate to have PCAs all over the state of California, and that if we can all meet with our local assemblymen, senators, and state representatives, we can create a united message and presence.”

Asked about the NorCal Chapter’s recent advocacy event, Kristina shared about meeting with Colin Sueyres, the legislative director from Senator Jim Nielsen’s office, in early March at the State Capitol in Sacramento, along with fellow Chapter members Manny Salazar, JR Gallagher and Doug Elrich: “Prior to our meeting, we had lunch with Ruthann Anderson and George Soares. We had a great meeting with George and are so happy to have him representing CAPCA. Our meeting with Colin was very positive and he was very supportive of our industry and eager to learn more about what a PCA is and what CAPCA represents. We really wanted to build a relationship with Senator Nielsen’s office so we could have a future back-and-forth communication between our CAPCA chapter and his office. We touched on topics such as: What a PCA is, product registration, bee safety, recommendations, spraying around schools, water storage, nutrition, IPM, and crop diversity in our area. We plan to follow up with Colin after our chapter meetings and keep him in the loop with what’s going on in our area. He also seemed interested in reaching out to us when topics come up [where] he feels a PCA’s expertise is needed. I highly recommend other chapters try and setup a meeting with their local legislator. It was a valuable meeting and relationship for our Chapter.”

Considering CAPCA’s future, Kristina is excited to see continued growth and involvement for local PCAs with state legislators to keep them informed and be an industry resource. “I would also like to see CAPCA become a talking voice for PCAs to better inform people who aren’t in our industry about what we do. I often think the general public is misinformed, or doesn’t understand all the effort PCAs take to make good IPM decisions. If our association could educate the general public on all the decisions we try to make as PCAs for what is best for our environment, I think it would be a great benefit.” ■

