

Rabobank's Roots Firmly Planted in Farming

by Amy Roberts

Founded by Dutch farmers in 1898, Rabobank's dedication to agricultural banking has nurtured the opening of branches across the United States for the last 25 years including a Hanford branch in 1997. Like its founders, the local bank is concerned about farmers and immediately started contributing to the betterment of the local agricultural community.

By 1999, the office moved to its current location in the old Post Office building at 218 N. Douty.

"I believe what makes Rabobank special can be found in our core focus – to create value for our customers, employees and the communities we serve," said Hanford's Community Banking Manager Larry Velasquez.

He said joining Kings County Farm Bureau is indicative of Rabobank's long-standing commitment to agriculture.

"We are a century-old cooperative bank with a strong commitment to community banking and take pride in our long heritage in agricultural finance."

As part of extending a helping hand to agriculture, Velasquez has made it a priority to partner in helping during Farm Bureau's annual meetings.

"Rabobank has been involved for many years," he said. "Additionally, Rabobank sponsored the 2006 Agri-Business Luncheon at the Kings Fair."

KCFB Executive Director Ryan Bertao said he appreciates the support Velasquez offers. In turn, Velasquez said that is part of what Rabobank is all about.

"Partnering with Farm Bureau allows Rabobank another opportunity to give back to our local community," he said. "Farm Bureau does such a great job representing our local ag community and Rabobank is pleased to be one of its community partners."

Velasquez likens the services Rabobank offers customers to "one stop shopping" for farmers and ranchers. He said the bank has a full array of retail banking and ag-lending products available to these customers.

And the agricultural community can be assured of the strength behind Rabobank's assets. According to its Web site the bank is rated as a triple A global financial services leader with over \$600 billion in assets, nine million customers and is in 38 countries. Rabobank also has trained employees ready to assist individuals,



Larry Velasquez manages Rabobank in downtown Hanford.

businesses, developers, investors and agricultural clients in making wise decisions.

Besides working with established farmers and ranchers, Rabobank is a strong supporter of future ag leaders by sponsoring the FFA 2006 New Century Farmer Program. This elite leadership program helps prepare members for successful career in production agriculture. Rabobank International was also a major sponsor of the PBS *Voices of Vision* film featuring the role of FFA and education in the country.

California community Rabobanks, including the Hanford branch, offer a 4H/FFA loan program for students who need assistance in securing an animal for educational purposes.

BUSINESS STATS

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