

# KYLE ORTH



PRESIDENT/CEO | AGRIVEALTH, INC.

**EDUCATION:** CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO - BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION - MANAGEMENT OPTION AND CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO - MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION | **AGE:** 35 | **FAMILY:** I HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR 10 YEARS TO MY WONDERFUL WIFE LISA. WE HAVE A 4-YEAR-OLD SON ELI. WE JUST RECENTLY WELCOMED OUR 1-MONTH-OLD DAUGHTER EZRA, TO OUR FAMILY.

## What we do:

AgriWealth is an agriculture real estate firm that specializes in sales, asset management and consulting work throughout California. At AgriWealth, we assist our clients with a variety of real estate brokerage services with a proven track record of excellent customer service.

## Tell us a little about your career to your current position.

I started my career early in college as a credit analyst at United Security Bank where I assisted with the underwriting of commercial real estate loans. I then transitioned to Wells Fargo Bank Private Bank as a Real Estate Asset Manager. I worked for Wells Fargo Bank for 8 years and worked my way up to SVP - Real Estate Investment Consultant for all of the Western United States Agriculture assets. During my tenure at Wells Fargo, I fell in love with the art of real estate transactions and processing effective wealth transfer to the next generation of farmers. While I enjoyed the opportunity to work for Wells Fargo Bank, I ultimately made the decision it was best that I go off on my own and create AgriWealth.

## What first interested you in agriculture?

I am born and raised in Fresno, which has a very expansive agricultural footprint. I also grew up seeing my father work in the water industry — that field has always been very interesting to me. Ultimately it was my employment at Wells Fargo Bank that really opened my eyes to the importance of California's role to supply the world with agricultural commodities.

## How has the typical ag land investor changed over the years?

Agriculture real estate investors are very diverse. I've represented business professionals from different fields (medical professionals, CPAs, etc.) acquire agriculture real estate investments to benefit from advantageous tax strategies. I've also worked with large investment funds and foundations who are looking for agricultural assets as a diversity play within their investment platform. I have also worked with farmers of all sizes to acquire strategic property to grow their family holdings.

More recently I am seeing the typical agricultural investor purchase land with one critical goal in mind; the property must have good water rights. I am seeing a strong uptick with current farming generations wanting to take a step back from day-to-day farming and complete a 1031 tax deferred exchange. This exchanges their farming portfolio into more passive income from commercial real estate investments. AgriWealth does an excellent job with these clients, and I partner with local professionals who really know the commercial space to provide exceptional service.

## What are ag land buyers looking for? Why is that important?

Water, water and more water. Water is the key to land values and harvesting a profitable crop. With the looming enforcement of the Sustainable Ground Water Management Act, it is essential for agriculture investors to find the right areas to buy. Once ground water restrictions are in full force, superior surface supply allocations in certain districts become very sought after.

## What can the state and local governments do to provide for those needs in the future?

We need more water for our farmers. There are a lot of politics involved here, but I think we can have better policies to capture the most water possible for our farmers.

## While drought, labor shortages and shipping complications plague the ag industry, is there anything that encourages you?

The resourcefulness of California farmers is always encouraging. They are the most resourceful people in the world. There will always be new innovations to deal with each problem. When you couple that with California having some of the most fertile agriculture land in the world, it encourages me that California agriculture is not going anywhere. It is easy to get caught up in the negative influences, and I certainly agree it becomes harder to farm each day that passes, but there are a lot of positives to see in the industry too.

## Where do you see ag in five years?

I see California agriculture going through growing pains in the next five years with implementation of SGMA (California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act). Ground water pumping restrictions will be in place. Many areas of the Valley will be short on water, and that is going to be a challenging arena for farmers and GSAs (Groundwater Sustainability Agencies) to navigate.

## What is the best part of your job?

I really enjoy that each project is different. I can work outdoors with the freedom to work remotely and spend more time with my family. I also really enjoy hearing the history of family farms and how they grew to the current generation.

## I always have time for:

Family, clients, good food and good discussion.

## I have no patience for:

Poor customer service.

## What causes/organizations are close to your heart?

St. Jude and Children's Hospital

## What was your very first job and what did you learn from it?

My very first job was helping a family friend paint houses. I was the kid in charge of masking the trim throughout houses. That first job taught me work ethic, attention to detail and the value of a dollar earned.

## What do you like to do in your spare time?

I am the type of person that can't sit still and enjoys new challenges. I really enjoy spending time with my family and friends on the lake, golfing, motocross and elk hunting.