### College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

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# CAL POLY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES . WINTER 2012



#### Wine and Vit Receives \$1 Million Pledge



Winegrower and visionary Jerry Lohr understands the value of Cal Poly's Learn by Doing philosophy. Since his winery's inception in 1974, Lohr has hired countless Cal Poly graduates as winemakers, viticulture scientists. interns and marketers, and today he is taking that support a step further by awarding the university's hands-on Wine and Viticulture program a \$1 million donation to kick-start the fund raising for its new \$8 million Wine and Viticulture Innovation Center.

"The graduates that come out of Cal Poly's Wine and Viticulture Program have been invaluable to our company," said Lohr. "With the dramatic growth of the industry and the high quality of Cal Poly students, I am pleased to lead the industry support of the university's

new center for education and research, which will serve as a resource for all of us in the wine industry, locally and throughout California." Cal Poly first planted grapes on campus three decades ago. The College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences launched a full-fledged major program in wine and viticulture in 2004 in response to the growing wine industry's need for qualified professionals with a thorough understanding of crop science, fruit science, food science, chemistry and agribusiness.

"Cal Poly enjoys close professional ties with wine industry partners from all over California," said Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences David Wehner. "And with our ideal location in the heart of the Central Coast wine region, our students can acquire real-world industry experience right in our backyard."

As part of one of the largest and most respected agriculture colleges in the United States, Cal Poly's Wine and Viticulture program has grown to become one of the leading programs of its kind in the nation. "Our unique three-pronged curriculum fosters an academic alliance of production agriculture, food science, and agricultural business, providing students with the hands-on experience to grow it, make it and sell it," noted Wehner. "The generous support of <u>J. Lohr</u> and other industry partners will bring the new Wine and Viticulture Innovation Center to life, strengthening our ability to teach all aspects of the business to the next generation of industry leaders."

#### FROM THE DEAN



Welcome to the inaugural issue of Agriview Online.

Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences is in for an exciting year in

2012.

Through the generous support of our industry partners, our students are rolling up their sleeves at our brand new state-of-the-art meat processing center, where they are learning the most modern and innovative processing and food safety practices in the industry.

Our award-winning Wine and Viticulture program has received the support of an esteemed leader in the wine industry, J. Lohr Vineyards and Wines, positioning the program for exciting growth and opportunities. Plus, our Center for Sustainability is adding a new faculty fellowship in organics to train the next generation of crop science professionals in the growing field of sustainable farming methods. We truly appreciate the support that we continue to receive from our valued industry partners.

Students from all corners of the college continue to shine as they compete nationally in their areas of study. Each quarter I am inspired by the excellence and hard work of our students as they















#### Cal Poly Combats Hunger

# Students and Faculty Collaborate on Community Research Project



Cal Poly students and volunteers canvassed San Luis Obispo County this fall, talking to more than 800 low-income residents to gather accurate data on how many people in their community go hungry.

"We think the public perception on hunger in San Luis Obispo County comes from the fact that those most in need have been under-counted in previous studies," said Cal Poly Kinesiology Professor Ann McDermott (above, far left), director of the university's <a href="STRIDE">STRIDE</a> (Science through Translational Research in Diet and Exercise) center. Together, McDermott and Food Science and Nutrition Professor Aydin Nazmi (above, second from right) oversaw a team of more than 100 Cal Poly students during the sixmonth-long study.

Cal Poly is partnering with <u>The Food Bank Coalition</u> of San Luis Obispo County on the study, which is being funded by a \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The study is one of only 14 Hunger Free Communities grants awarded across the nation in 2011 by the USDA.

As part of the research project, Nazmi and 17 students from his senior-level Community Nutrition class conducted a food availability survey at 45 grocery stores throughout the county. The nutrition students took an identical list of food staples to each store and documented the cost and quality of 97 food items and whether they were in stock. The results of the survey painted a clear picture of the differences in price and availability of nutritious food in San Luis Obispo County. Then, sometimes aided by translators, students took to the streets to survey more than 800 respondents about their households' access to food. "This experience, of speaking face-to-face with members of our community, and to hear their stories was a life-changing experience," said nutrition major Rylee Horner. "I grew up volunteering at a soup kitchen and serving the hungry, but to have an honest dialog with a mother about her inability to feed her family, that's a whole different situation. I am really looking forward to seeing how this new information might lead to solutions in our community."

The results of the study revealed that San Luis Obispo County families with low incomes are frequently being forced to chose between paying their rent or buying food, or paying their utility bill or buying food. The non-profit SLO Food Bank Coalition has seen a 25 percent increase in the amount of people showing up to request free food over the past year. And most of those who need food assistance are working - but at jobs that pay \$250 to \$1,500 a month. Other findings conclude that healthier foods cost more: lower-fat ground beef costs an average 33 percent more, higher-fiber bread was 31 percent more expensive. Unhealthy items (pre-packaged food, snacks high in fat or sodas and sugary drinks) were generally cheaper than healthy items (fresh fruits and vegetables).

SEE COMPLETE FINDINGS

#### Organics Fellowship Comes to Campus

Cal Poly is ready to launch a nationwide search for a new professor specializing in

proudly represent Cal Poly's tradition of Learn by Doing.

Please share this edition with others who will appreciate hearing from us. We love to hear from you – our alumni and friends – and we are interested to learn where your Cal Poly experience has taken you. Thank you for your continued interest in the innovations and growth of the College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences.

Best regards,

David J. Wehner

Dean

#### **EVENT SPOTLIGHT**

#### Rodeo Legend Rosser Honored



Cal Poly alumnus Cotton Rosser (ASCI '52) recently received the California Bountiful Foundation inaugural Public Outreach Award.

Cal Poly also honored Rosser this past fall at an event at the Madonna Inn for his lifetime of achievements and dedication to the treasured sport of rodeo. During the late 1940's and early 1950's, Rosser led the Cal Poly rodeo team as captain, and as the team's leader earned multiple national championships. Over the past 60 years, with the rodeo arena as his platform, Rosser has served the rodeo production industry as a beloved spokesperson for farming and ranching to an urban public.

## State-of-the-Art Center Unveiled



After years of planning and construction, Cal Poly's Animal Science department has proudly unveiled the new J

and G Lau Family Meat Processing Center, open for hands-on learning and production beginning this academic quarter. The 15,000 square-foot, \$6.5 million center is the first university teaching and research meat processing facility in the United States to be funded primarily by private donors and industry partners. True to Cal Poly's Learn by Doing philosophy, the center enables students to gain critical real-world experience in an environment that mirrors the industry they will enter upon graduation. "With our 'farm-to-fork'



organic and sustainable agriculture practices. And thanks to an \$80,000 pledge from Lundberg Family Farms, this means students will have year-round training and research opportunities in organic farming methods, food safety, and sustainable agricultural systems.

Adding the new faculty position has been a goal for the College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences' Center for Sustainability. "We are delighted to have the opportunity to support education in this rapidly

growing sector," said Hunter Francis, the center's director. "This will help satisfy the increasing student demand for education in organic and sustainable agriculture, and we're grateful for the generosity and vision of Lundberg Family Farms that will help our college respond to that demand."

The new faculty member will provide expertise in California production techniques in organic and sustainable agriculture systems, and will oversee Cal Poly's 11-acre organic farm where faculty, staff and students jointly manage production, care, harvesting and marketing of organic produce. The goal is to have the position filled by fall, 2012.

"In tight economic times, having the industry support to hire a year-round professor is crucial to enhancing our programs," said John Peterson, head of the Horticulture and Crop Science Department. "We normally hire faculty for the traditional nine-month academic year, but the needs of our organic farm span 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Now Lundberg Family Farms is helping us educate students who will lead this industry in the future."

The new position will be part of the Horticulture and Crops Department in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. The Lundberg Family Farms pledge and additional support from the Clarence C. Heller Charitable Foundation have enabled this to be a year-round position, which is critical to the successful oversight of the organic farm and its programs.

More on Cal Poly's Organic Farm

# Cal Poly Student Wins National Championship at FFA Contest



On far left, Cal Poly Agricultural Science freshman Maddison Easley, pictured with her Nevada Union High School coach and teammates after winning first place. Easley also earned top honors for best president.

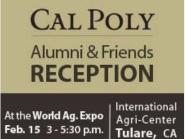
One of our own freshmen has already achieved top honors by bringing home a national championship title from Indianapolis. Maddison Easley, an Agricultural Science major from Grass Valley, Calif., proudly led her team from Nevada Union High School to claim the national prize at the 84th National FFA Convention, the annual meeting of the national group formerly known as the Future Farmers of America.

The purpose of Parliamentary Procedure Career Development competition is to test students' ability to effectively communicate ideas during a meeting. Components included a general knowledge examination of parliamentary law, a 10-minute demonstration of parliamentary procedure, oral questions and written minutes of the demonstration.

After competing in the finals in front of thousands of spectators, the team was unveiled as the winners at a banquet, and received a standing ovation. Cal Poly Agricultural Education professor Gerald Clark noted, "We are proud of Maddison for achieving this great honor. Her success underscores the significance of the FFA training and background that so many bright and dedicated students bring to our college."

vision, Cal Poly graduates will enter their professions as leaders, innovators and experienced problem-solvers producing safe, wholesome food," said Andrew Thulin, department head.

See more on the center.



For more info, CLICK HERE





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#### Cal Poly Trains Soldiers in Agriculture Practices



The USDA Foreign Ag Service has awarded a two-year, \$650,000 grant to Cal Poly and three other universities to fund the Agricultural Development for Afghanistan Predeployment Training (ADAPT) program. The cross-disciplinary project prepares military and USDA personnel for deployment, providing a broad overview of basic Afghan agriculture.

"Agriculture is the center of life in Afghanistan, with more than 80 percent of Afghans obtaining some part of their income from agriculture," said Cal Poly Food Science and

Nutrition professor Hany Khalil. "By educating U.S. military personnel on practical agriculture knowledge, we are helping them to understand the culture in Afghanistan, and we are doing our part to help stabilize Afghanistan's agriculture systems, their economy, and ultimately, their way of life."

The week-long workshops, which are a collaboration between Cal Poly, Cal State
University Fresno, Colorado State University and Southern Illinois University, focus on
Afghan culture and agriculture, crop management, livestock management, postharvest management, soils and irrigation systems. Recently, Wisconsin National
Guard members and USDA agriculture advisors spent a week at Cal Poly learning practical and sustainable methods from Cal Poly
faculty to take to Afghanistan upon their deployment in the coming weeks.

SEE NEWS STORY

For questions or submittals, email cafes@calpoly.edu

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