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## The Incredible, Edible Wall Cal Poly Students Create Affordable Fresh Produce for Congested Urban Areas

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Residents in Los Angeles' Skid Row will soon be growing and harvesting their own fresh produce, thanks to the efforts of the Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium and Horticulture and Crop Science Department at Cal Poly.

Students and faculty have cultivated 4,000 plants as part of a pilot project for Urban Farming Food Chain. The fruit and vegetable plants were grown on 180 vertical panels that will be mounted on walls of commercial buildings in Los Angeles' inner city. The vertical panels are designed to maximize growing space in congested urban locations.

The panels have turned into edible walls that are as much a work of art as they are a practical solution to providing access to fresh, affordable produce. In addition, the project aims to provide skills training and foster a sense of community beyond the garden walls, according to Hunter Francis, Program Associate, Cal Poly's Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium.

Plants grown this first season include bell peppers, hot peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, tomatillos, strawberries, spinach, parsley, leeks, edible lavender and a variety of herbs. The panels will be installed at four locations around downtown Los Angeles between July 29 and Aug 1.

The Urban Farming Food Chain hopes to create vertical farming systems that can be replicated in cities across the country and abroad. A collaborative community effort, the plants have been nurtured from seedlings donated by Greenheart Farms and Green Acres Lavender Farms with support from Farm Supply and transportation services donated by Meyer Trucking.

For more information on the Urban Farming Food Chain Project, visit <a href="http://urbanfarming.org/foodchain.htm">http://urbanfarming.org/foodchain.htm</a>.

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**NOTE:** Reporters and photographers are invited to witness the first phase of the program when the plants will be loaded onto trucks destined for L.A.'s Skid Row. The loading will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sunday, July 27. Please contact Hunter Francis for the exact location.

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