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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Cal Poly Students Celebrate Western Bonanza Junior Livestock Show's 25th anniversary Feb. 13-15

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly students will present the Western Bonanza Junior Livestock Show on Feb. 13-15 in Paso Robles, and this year, they will mark the event's 25th anniversary with special celebrations and a capstone night of memories for past show managers and sponsors.

More than 350 entrants between the ages of 9 and 21 will show five species of animals at this year's event and compete for more than \$43,000 in payouts and \$40,000 in prizes. Entrants from 20 California counties, and some from out of state, will take part.

The show is free to the public and will be held at the Paso Robles Event Center.

Western Bonanza is one of the largest junior livestock shows in the western United States. Put on by the students in Cal Poly's Livestock Show Management class every President's Day weekend, it provides a clear illustration of Cal Poly's "learn by doing" philosophy.

The event began in 1985 with 100 entrants showing only cattle. Though it has expanded through the years, Western Bonanza maintains a network of supporters and former organizers who have used their experience in the show as they've gone on to careers in agriculture. Many of them stay involved in the event and lend their support to young agriculturalists showing animals or helping put on the show now.

John Toledo recalls the first Western Bonanza show well, when he prepared to enter the show ring at the California Mid-State Fairgrounds in Paso Robles (the former name of the event center) with his purebred Angus heifer.

Twenty-five nerve racking minutes later, the judge pointed to him and smiled, then named Toledo's heifer the first Western Bonanza Grand Champion Female.

Twenty-five years later, Toledo continues to be one of Western Bonanza's strongest sponsors through Tri-T Farms, the Toledo family's ranch in Visalia. Generous donations from Tri-T Farms and other sponsors allow Western Bonanza to give prizes to entrants, such as belt buckles, jackets, coolers, mugs and duffel bags.

Tri-T Farms has been a continuous supporter of Western Bonanza since 1989. Toledo and his wife, Kelli, run the ranch with about 50 cows and calves. Toledo said his operation focuses on range bull production and is a performance-oriented business, much like his showing experience at Western Bonanza.

In addition to sponsoring the event, Toledo routinely sells steers to youth who compete at Western Bonanza, giving him and his family an added connection to the show he enjoyed so much.

Toledo said the friends he made at Western Bonanza have been invaluable to him throughout his life.

"A lot of people we know have been friends since Bonanza," he said. "We are still friends after all these years."

More than 130 friends of the show will gather on Feb. 14 this year to reminisce about their Western Bonanza experiences. The group will watch video montages, show off past belt buckles, and look at past photos from 25 years of Western Bonanza success.

To learn more about the Western Bonanza Junior Livestock Auction, including a schedule for this year's event, visit [www.westernbonanza.calpoly.edu](http://www.westernbonanza.calpoly.edu) or call 805-756-5398.

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