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Cal Poly Professors to Address Agriculture and Natural Resource Issues

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Four professors in Cal Poly’s College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences are working with their colleagues at the University of California and other CSU campuses on projects that address issues in agriculture and natural resources.

Nine teams of researchers and educators from the University of California and California State University received funding intended to foster collaboration among California’s colleges and universities. Funding for the nine projects is provided by the University of California’s Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and totals \$79,000.

The campuses involved have primary responsibility for agricultural and natural resources research and education in the state; they include UC Davis, UC Berkeley, UC Riverside, and CSU campuses at Chico, Fresno, Humboldt and Pomona, in addition to Cal Poly. Deans and department chairs from those campuses developed the competitive grants program at a joint workshop in 2009.

Doug Piirto, department chair for Natural Resource Management at Cal Poly, is a primary investigator for the “Coast Redwood Forest Science Symposium” along with researchers from UC Berkeley and Humboldt State University. The project team will meet in winter 2011 to assess current knowledge of California’s coast redwood forest ecosystem and sustainable management practices.

Laura Hall and Scott Reaves of the Food Science and Nutrition department are working with a UC Davis professor to determine whether obesity is associated with compromised vitamin D status and the effectiveness of a vitamin D supplement.

Genome associations for sire proficiency on California commercial beef cattle ranches will be studied by Dairy Science Department Head Bruce Golden, who will work with a researcher at UC Davis to analyze genetic marker data to improve cattle breeding efficiency and producer return on investment.

Dan Peterson of the Animal Science Department at Cal Poly will study nutritional-endocrine interactions that regulate bovine epithelial cell function with the help of a UC Davis professor. The project seeks to better

understand bovine mammary gland function to improve milk production.

Reports on project outcomes are expected in December 2010. If successful, a second call for proposals will be issued.

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