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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Lau Family Gives \$1 Million to Cal Poly Animal Science Department

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- A Modesto couple has given Cal Poly \$1 million toward the building of the Animal Science Department's new meat processing center.

John and Gay Lau, owners of the family-operated Yosemite Meat Company in Modesto, made the donation this month. The 13,000 square-foot meat processing center is expected to cost a little over \$4 million and is scheduled to begin construction this year on the west end of the university's agricultural lands, off Stenner Creek Road. It will feature state-of-the-art design and equipment.

Along with the \$1 million gift from the Laus, Cal Poly received \$1 million in state funding for the new meats center. The College of Agriculture is still seeking to raise the remaining \$2 million needed to complete the facility.

The new center will replace the existing Cal Poly abattoir and meat processing operations near Brizzolara Creek. The existing meat processing facility there, along with the College of Agriculture's 60-year-old feed mill, are being relocated and expanded to make way for construction of the 2,700-bed Poly Canyon Village student housing complex. That \$229 million construction project broke ground in March.

The Lau family has been strong supporters of Cal Poly and the College of Agriculture. Since 1999, they have provided scholarship funding for students studying meat processing, as well as annual support for the Western Bonanza Show and the Ag Ambassadors student leadership group. In addition to their support for Cal Poly, the family and Yosemite Meat Co. are also longtime supporters of 4-H and FFA programs throughout the state. They also provide scholarships at Modesto High School and Modesto Junior College.

"John Lau and his family truly believe in developing young people to become industry leaders," said Animal Science Department Head Andrew Thulin. "With their support and the support of others, Cal Poly's meat processing and food safety program will be among the best in the country."

John Lau said the family's gift is intended to support Cal Poly's learn-by-doing educational approach and the quality of its meat processing program. "We want future generations to have more opportunities to learn firsthand about the meat processing business, and to understand it before they come into the working world," Lau said.

Lau, the third generation in his family to own and operate a meats business in California, stressed his family's ties to Cal Poly. Lau's sister, brother, brother-in-law, and two of the Lau's three children attended Cal Poly. Son Michael Lau graduated from Cal Poly in 1999 with a degree in agricultural business and went on to earn his Ph.D. in agricultural business from Texas A&M University. He is now a professor of agribusiness at Sam Houston University in Texas. Son Steven Lau graduated from Cal Poly in 2005 with a degree in agricultural business and is now working in the family's Yosemite Meat Co.

The business also employs several Cal Poly graduates. In addition to this latest gift, the Laus have provided \$2,000 a year for student scholarships at Cal Poly since 1999. "We truly believe in Cal Poly's learn-by-doing themes, and we have found that Cal Poly produces very good-quality young adults," Lau stressed. "Our bottom line is we want to support the next generations."



#### **About Yosemite Meat Co.**

John Lau founded the Yosemite Meat Co. in Modesto in 1981. His grandfather was the founder of Modesto's California Meat Market in the early 20th century. Under Lau's leadership, the Yosemite Meat Co. has grown to become one of the most progressive meat processing facilities in the state. For details on the company, visit:

<http://www.yosemitemeat.com/>.

#### **About Cal Poly Animal Science and the College of Agriculture**

The Animal Science Department, with 600 students, is part of the Cal Poly College of Agriculture. The college is the fourth-largest undergraduate agriculture program in the nation, with more than 3,600 students. It offers 18 undergraduate majors and three graduate degree programs, and awards an average of 650 baccalaureate degrees each year, nearly half of all baccalaureate agriculture degrees granted in California. The college has more than 23,000 alumni, and operates programs on 6,000 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County, and another 2,300 acres at the Swanton Pacific Ranch and Valencia property in Santa Cruz County. For more information, visit the Animal Science Department web site at

<http://www.animalscience.calpoly.edu/> and the college's Web site at: <http://cagr.calpoly.edu/>.

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