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California Polytechnic State University

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### **Cal Poly Ag Students Take First Place in National Competition**

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- A team of Cal Poly students took first place in a national competition sponsored by the American Society for Agricultural Engineering.

The annual competition asks teams of college students to build a working tractor a quarter of the size of a typical tractor (a quarter-scale tractor). College teams must also complete a written report on their entry and its designs, make a sales presentation to professionals on their tractor and its capabilities and uses, and compete with their tractors in categories including maneuverability, safety, and performance.

The Cal Poly team took first place in the Oral Presentation category -- making what essentially was a sales presentation to representatives of companies including Caterpillar and John Deere.

The Cal Poly entry was especially designed for work in steep slope vineyards, explained team advisor and Agricultural Engineering Professor Mike Lehmkuhl. "The students took a look at the market needs, and a lot of the vineyards are on steep terrain. There's a need by vineyard owners to get out between the rows in the hills to do maintenance and crop work," Lehmkuhl explained.

The students also designed a vineyard-specific towing rig and accessories for their Cal Poly entry, which was a quarter-scale, four-wheel-drive tractor with "Polybuilt" emblazoned across the front.

Their first place win in the Oral Presentation competition involved both engineering and marketing skills; students scored big by targeting the wine vineyard industry, Lehmkuhl said.

A team of 20 Cal Poly students designed the quarter-scale tractor, and 12 traveled to East Moline, Ill., in June for the ASAE conference where the competition took place.

Cal Poly was among 30 U.S. colleges and universities participating and 25 competing in the quarter-scale tractor project.

The overall winner was Oklahoma State University, with Kansas State University and the University of Kentucky third overall. In the Oral Presentation category, Cal Poly took first place, Penn State University took second, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison took third place.



**The Cal Poly ASAE quarter-scale vineyard tractor, and competition team members (standing) Adam Bechtold and Joe Chapman, with team captain Warren Voss at the wheel.**

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*Editors: A photo of winning students and the quarter-scale tractor is available. For a jpg, contact Teresa Hendrix at (805) 756-7266 or [thendrix@calpoly.edu](mailto:thendrix@calpoly.edu).*

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