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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Agribusiness Students Win National Case Study Competition

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- A team of Cal Poly agribusiness students placed first in the recent Student Case Study Competition sponsored by the Food Distribution Research Society. This is the third-straight year that Cal Poly has won the first-place award.

The competition was held in conjunction with the society's annual conference in Biloxi, Miss. Universities from across the United States and Canada were represented, with Western Michigan University placing second and the University of Florida third.

The case study dealt with the challenges facing the Texas-based supermarket chain H.E. Butts Grocery Inc. in the Houston retail food market. With the recent entry of Wal-Mart Supercenters into the Houston market along with other national chain-store competitors, H.E. Butts has been struggling to increase its market share.

The students analyzed the case, developed strategic alternatives, and recommended a course of action that was presented to a judging panel coming from academia and industry. The 15-minute presentation was followed by a 10-minute question-and-answer session.

Three team members, Gavin Hertz of Elko, Nev., Sarah Piatt from Ceres, and Erin Smith, Yakima, Wash., are agribusiness undergraduates. The fourth member, John Diodati of San Luis Obispo is a second-year MBA student with a specialization in agribusiness management. Agribusiness Professor David Schaffner coached the team.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A photo of the winning team is available from Bob Anderson in Public Affairs at (805) 756-1511 or banderso@calpoly.edu.

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