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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cal Poly Workshop to Highlight Methods to Assess Soil Organic Matter, Nutrient Levels

SAN LUIS OBISPO – The Cal Poly College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences' Center for Sustainability will host a workshop titled "Horizons in Soil Health" from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, May 15, at the San Luis Obispo Grange Hall.

"This training comes at a critical time for the California agricultural industry, which is being called upon to monitor and budget nutrients," said Hunter Francis, director of Cal Poly's Center for Sustainability. "The accurate quantification of agricultural inputs to soils will play a fundamental role in safeguarding soil, water and air quality into the future."

The workshop is also designed for soil health managers and advocates such as farmers, composters, certified crop advisors, extension specialists, land managers, consultants and anyone interested in how nutrient cycles work in soils and how key agricultural nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) can be measured rapidly, effectively and economically to support best management practices.

The workshop will examine cutting-edge technologies and topics such as:

- Metagenomics for assessing the status of microbial communities;
- Nutrient cycling in soil eco-systems and essential soil processes;
- Monitoring soil respiration as an accurate assessment of soil biological activity;
- The relationship between soil organic matter and nitrogen release with implications for soil management;
- Understanding the role and value of biological nitrogen and its relation to chemical nitrogen;
- Evaluating overall nitrate in soils and water with traditional and new techniques, such as enzymatic analysis; and
- Methods for increasing soil organic matter and the benefits of building beneficial soil biology.

Topics covered at the workshop will be of value to those who manage soil nutrients. Participants will learn how nutrients function in soil systems, which is important in understanding systematic soil processes and in nutrient-management planning. Discussion will include how soil analyses can be used to complement effective water quality management.

Four Certified Crop Advisor credits have been approved for the workshop. The San Luis Obispo Grange Hall is at 2880 Broad St.

The cost to attend is \$30. For more information and to register, go online to: http://cfs.calpoly.edu/soil_health.html, call 805-756-5086, or e-mail cfs@calpoly.edu.

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