

[Skip to Content](#) ?[my CalPoly login](#)

News

University News & Information

[Admissions & Aid](#)[Majors & Colleges](#)[Research](#)[Alumni Community](#)[Campus Life](#)[Athletics](#)[About](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 18, 2014

Contacts:

Haley Marconett

Cal Poly

805-756-2933; hmarcone@calpoly.edu

Carolyn O'Donnell

California Strawberry Commission

831-763-5435; codonnell@calstrawberry.org

Cal Poly Names Industry Expert to Lead New Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center

Center is the result of innovative partnership between California Strawberry Commission and Cal Poly's College of Food, Agriculture & Environmental Sciences

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly's College of Food, Agriculture & Environmental Sciences (CAFES) has named Gerald Holmes to head its new Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center.

The Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center is a one-of-a-kind concept rooted in the hands-on learning model that defines Cal Poly. The center will focus on applied research that incorporates both teaching and learning experiences for Cal Poly students, faculty and California strawberry farmers.

"The strawberry industry is critical to the state of California, and the new Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center will play a leading role in ensuring its strength now and into the future," said Andy Thulin, interim dean of the college. "Dr. Holmes brings the perfect mix of academic and private industry experience to this job."

Applied research and innovation across multiple disciplines, coupled with access to real-world issues will enable Cal Poly and the California Strawberry Commission to achieve their shared vision of establishing a world-class center focused on the sustainability of California strawberry farming, currently a \$2.4 billion industry. In his new role, Holmes will provide overall strategic leadership to the center, working collaboratively with both industry and academia.

Holmes has deep industry and academic experience in plant pathology and most recently worked at Valent U.S.A. Corp. developing fungicide applications. Prior to that, he spent 12 years at North Carolina State University in the Plant Pathology Department and three years as a plant pathology farm advisor with the University of California Cooperative Extension in Imperial County.

Holmes is active in many professional organizations and has been recognized for his excellence in extension, research and outreach by numerous industry and academic groups. His research and extension work has resulted in more than 200 peer-reviewed journal articles, published abstracts and book chapters.

Holmes earned his undergraduate degree in agronomy from Cal Poly, Pomona, and his doctorate in plant pathology from the University of California, Riverside. He will start his new role June 2, 2014.

About Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences

Cal Poly is a nationally ranked comprehensive polytechnic university located in San Luis Obispo, Calif. The College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences is comprised of expert faculty members who take pride in their ability to transform academically motivated students into innovative professionals ready to solve the complex challenges associated with feeding the world in sustainable ways.

Students have access to state-of-the-art laboratories including ranchland, orchards, vineyards and forests, all of which provide the basis for Cal Poly's renowned Learn by Doing methodology. These living laboratories, combined with the attention of expert faculty members dedicated to their students' success, offer a powerful combination of rigorous academics with hands-on experiences that lead to fulfilling careers. For more information, visit www.cafes.calpoly.edu.

About the California Strawberry Commission

The California Strawberry Commission is a state government agency representing all of California's strawberry shippers, processors and farmers. With an emphasis on food safety education, commission activities focus on production and nutrition research, trade relations, public policy, marketing and communications. California produces more than 85 percent of all strawberries grown in the United States. For more information, go to www.californiastrawberries.com.

#

