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Family Farmers to Challenge Campaign of Misinformation
California Healthy Foods Coalition formed to promote innovation

Sacramento –To promote agricultural innovation and inform Californians about the benefits of biotechnology, a new coalition announced today its plans for public education and grassroots programs.

The California Healthy Foods Coalition is a statewide group composed of organizations and community leaders including the California Farm Bureau Federation, California Cattlemen's Association and California Women for Agriculture.

"Family farmers understand some people have questions about biotechnology," said California Farm Bureau President Bill Pauli. "Our coalition will provide people with the facts and will support agricultural innovations that will improve the quality of life for California consumers."

Consumers will be the ultimate beneficiaries of agricultural biotechnology, he said. New technology holds great promise for protecting the environment, enhancing food production, improving health care, building California's economy and creating local jobs.

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The coalition says biotechnology holds great promise to improve the quality of life for all Americans through the research and development of agricultural-based medicines for cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, AIDS and other life-threatening illnesses.

Unfortunately, Pauli said, political activists hope to qualify ballot measures in several California counties that would harm family farmers and the consumers they serve, by banning biotechnology.

"If family farmers didn't welcome innovation and new farming practices, we could not feed the world, nor could we survive economically," Pauli said. "There is no justification for restricting the family farmers' ability to utilize the kind of breakthroughs and ingenuity we celebrate in every other facet of life. In a world of camera phones and Palm Pilots, why should farmers be made to use the outdated equivalents of 8-track tapes and carbon paper?"

For more information on the California Healthy Foods Coalition and its membership, visit www.feedingthefuture.org.

The California Farm Bureau Federation has retained the services of Marko Mlikotin, president of River City Communications, to provide strategic counsel and media relations for the coalition. Emily Robidart of the California Farm Bureau will serve as its policy director.

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