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SURVEY SHOWS STRONG SUPPORT FOR CALIFORNIA FAMILY FARMS

Whether they live in big cities or small towns, whether they're registered Democrats or Republicans, Californians agree: California farmers make a major contribution to the state's economy and job base. A new statewide survey shows that voters overwhelmingly recognize the importance of maintaining family farms and ranches.

More than 86 percent of those surveyed agreed that California farmers are major contributors to the economy and jobs. Survey participants in the San Francisco Bay Area and greater Los Angeles agreed with the statement by majorities of more than 80 percent.

Another strong majority, 68 percent, agreed with a statement that, in order to provide California consumers with safe and affordable food, the state should protect family farmers from high taxes and excessive regulation. The survey also showed that a plurality of nearly 47 percent believed the state does too little to protect family farms and ranches.

"It's encouraging to know that Californians stand behind the family farmers and ranchers of our state," California Farm Bureau Federation President Bill Pauli said. "We will harness that support as we work with the governor and the Legislature on efforts to protect the farming way of life for the benefit of California consumers."

The survey comes as Farm Bureau launches its most aggressive public education and political program to date. Under the title Protecting California Family Farms, the program places greater emphasis on educating leaders about the importance of California agriculture and enhances current programs that influence the outcome of public policy and elections.

The Protecting California Family Farms program includes a 10-point plan of policy objectives affecting issues that include enhancing markets, promoting environmental benefits, improving government accountability and assuring consumer confidence in food safety. The plan may be viewed on the California Farm Bureau Web site at www.cfbf.com/familyfarms/.

The survey—commissioned by the California Farm Bureau—sampled 900 likely voters statewide, with a margin of error of 3.3 percent, and was conducted by McLaughlin and Associates.

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Editors: If you wish to receive a hard copy of the survey, please contact Jean Hughes at jhughes@cfbf.com.