



COUNTY OF YOLO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2008

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The Big Tomato – March 15

(Woodland, CA) – Coming soon! The Big Tomato, presented by the Yolo County Agricultural Marketing Initiative and the Yolo County Farm Bureau will celebrate Yolo County's number one crop. This special event, free and open to the public, will be held March 15, 10:00 a.m. to noon, at the Davis Farmers Market.

March is the traditional beginning of the tomato planting season in Yolo. Starting March 10, 300 million processing tomato transplants will go into Yolo County farmland and another 9,000 acres will be direct seeded. Additionally, California grows and processes 90% of the processing tomatoes consumed domestically, and Yolo County is the third largest production county in the state. The focus of the Big Tomato event is to educate people about the connection between what more than 37,000 acres of Yolo County's agricultural land grows – processing tomatoes – and what we eat, not just in Yolo County, but in California and nationwide. Think pizzas, lasagna, spaghetti, soups, stews, enchiladas, chili, BBQ, and ketchup for a start. Tastings of food from a number of the area's most popular restaurants will be offered. Among the participants are Oliveto Restaurant from Oakland; Tuco's Wine Bar and Cafe, Osteria Fasulo, The Mustard Seed and the Village Bakery of Davis; the Davis Joint Unified School District school lunch team; Buckhorn Catering and Monticello Bistro of Winters; Tazzina Bistro of Woodland Moody's Bistro of Truckee; and Nugget Markets.

Attendees of The Big Tomato can look forward to the following:

- More than 1,500 processing tomato seedlings, courtesy of Ag-Seeds Unlimited, will be handed out, free of charge, for people to plant in their own backyard. Additionally, 1,000 recipe booklets created by Yolo's own award-winning cookbook author, Georgeanne Brennan, will also be given away.
- Participants can view educational exhibits about processing tomatoes, from how they are grown to how they reach our tables. The Yolo County Farm Bureau will be displaying the 2007 winners of their annual art contest, and there will be displays of the hundreds of different labeled cans representing the variety of products produced from tomatoes, ultimately to be donated to the Food Bank of Yolo County.
- Children will have their own special section where they can explore the life of processing tomatoes through art and activities, courtesy of Yolo County Cooperative Extension. Additionally, during the week of March 10, every second grade classroom in the county, through the Yolo County Office of Education in partnership with the Yolo County Farm Bureau, will receive a packet of processing tomato seeds (courtesy of Ag Seeds Unlimited) with growing instructions and a set of tomato-based curriculum appropriate for the age level.

Co-sponsors of The Big Tomato include: Ag Seeds Unlimited, Campbell Soup Company, California League of Food Processors, Cache Creek Casino and Resort, California Tomato Growers Association, ConAgra Foods, Inc., Davis Farmers Market Foundation, Del Monte Foods, Morning Star Packing Company, H. J. Heinz Company, Pacific Coast Processors, SK Foods, Slow Food Yolo, Yolo County Supervisor Duane Chamberlain, Robert Mondavi Institute for Food and Wine at UC Davis, University of California Agricultural Extension, Yolo County, Unilever Best Foods, Yolo County Visitors Bureau, Tomato Products Wellness Council, The Wave TV 21.

For more information go to www.atasteofyolo.com or, contact the Yolo County Agricultural Marketing Initiative: Ann M. Evans at annmevans@aol.com or (530) 756-4892 or Georgeanne Brennan at gbrennan@yolo.com or (530) 795-4995.

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