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December 21, 2009

CALIFORNIA MID-STATE FAIR RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

The California Mid-State Fair (CMSF) board of directors announced today that the Fair received an Agricultural Award of Excellence Best of Division from the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE). The award was received for the new Mission Square and commercial kitchen project, launched during the 2009 Fair.

There are a total of fifteen Agriculture Award categories, each divided into five divisions by attendance, that a fair could enter. Mission Square originally was awarded for *Special Agricultural Educational Program for the Fairgoing Public*, and then was later selected *Best of the Division* for all agriculture entries. The CMSF competed against many large state fairs, such as, Missouri State Fair, Kansas State Fair, and Oregon State Fair. "We were very excited that Mission Square was selected as the outstanding agriculture program by IAFE," stated Vivian Robertson, fair CEO. "It is true honor for the community and the many individuals who shared the passion and our agriculture educational goal of Mission Square."

The California Mid-State Fair embraced the term "localvore" with farmers, olive oil producers, wineries, chefs and sponsors to prepare the largest locally grown celebration the area had ever seen. Designated as the key spot where the fairgoer could discover the bounty of Agriculture on the Central Coast, Mission Square featured a wine bar, an educational vineyard, visual displays and an entertainment venue. The highlight was the Idler's Demonstration Kitchen, a permanent state of the art culinary experience. Complete with chef demonstrations, wine flights, music, and competitive exhibits the new area was a hit with the fair going public as well as the media. With a single goal to help the fairgoer embrace the "buy local" theme and the realization of how much agriculture is actually produced in a 100-mile radius, Mission Square was a unique and sophisticated approach to agriculture education. The fair even embraced the "Learn By Doing" philosophy of Cal Poly, have Agricultural Business Management students who developed parts of the exhibit thru senior projects and the fair management classes.

The award was presented during the Agricultural Awards Breakfast on December 1, 2009 during the 119th IAFE Convention. "This is the highest honor the California Mid-State Fair has received from the industry," recalled Robertson, "However, the true praise should go to the many people, companies, and visionaries that made the area

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the show place it is today.” John Deere, who is an avid supporter of the fair industry around the world, sponsors the IAFE award’s program.

The 2010 California Mid-State Fair is schedule to run July 21 – August 1, were we will be celebrating “Endless Summer Fun”. For more information regarding the agriculture award or the upcoming fair, please contact the main office at (805) 239-0655.

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