

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Celeste Settrini is 2008 Ag Woman of the Year**

Soledad, CA – Celeste Settrini was recognized as the Ag Woman of the Year for San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties at an annual event hosted by Ag Against Hunger today at Paraiso Vineyards in Soledad.

This annual luncheon recognizes a woman who has contributed significantly to the success of the tri-county agricultural industry. The Ag Woman of the Year award is a surprise to all guests including the recipient. More than 260 people were in attendance to recognize Settrini.

This year the committee chose a woman who has worked tirelessly for the agricultural industry in the Salinas Valley, across numerous commodities, on a local, state and national level. Settrini has been affiliated as both member and board representative in numerous agricultural organizations, including the San Benito County Fair, Monterey County Fair, Monterey County Agriculture Education, Inc., 4-H, FFA, Produce for Better Health Foundation, National Jr. Hereford Association, United Fresh Vegetable Association, American National Cattlewomen and Ag Against Hunger. She has also been involved in many community organizations such as Salvation Army of Monterey County, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, Multiple Sclerosis Society and more.

Settrini is a fourth generation Monterey and San Benito County cattle rancher and a member of Monterey County Cattlemen and Monterey County Cattlewomen, as well as serving as a liaison for the cattle industry on the board of the Central Coast Ag Task Force. She has also served as a livestock auction announcer for the Monterey County Fair for over 15 years and organized the first Cattlemen's Day at this fair.

Settrini is statewide California Women for Agriculture's First Vice President and president-elect in 2010 as well as a member of the Salinas Valley Chapter.

The Agricultural Woman of the Year award seeks to honor unique leadership qualities held by women working within the local agricultural industry. These qualities include a selfless spirit of engagement in promoting and celebrating agriculture with one's heart, mind and soul; and a perpetuation of the pioneering traditions and tenants of independence, integrity, and innovation from our agricultural history, for and with humanity.

Previous Ag Women of the Year include: Sharan Lanini (1994); Claudia Smith (1995); Karen Miller (1996); Susan Gill (1997); Betty Ichikawa (1998); Mary Hansen (1999); Elia Vasquez (2000); Connie Quinlan (2001); Kay Filice (2002); Dorothy Errea (2003); Nita Gizdich (2004); Mary Orradre (2005); Lorri Koster (2006); and Margaret D'Arrigo-Martin (2007).

This year's keynote speakers included Ag Against Hunger's founders: Jess Brown of Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, Tim Driscoll of Valley Pride and Willy Eliot-McCrae of Second Harvest of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. They spoke about their inspiration for creating the almost 20-year old organization, and the importance of providing fresh fruits and vegetables to people in need.

Ag Against Hunger is a non-profit agency providing fresh donated produce to food banks in the tri-county of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties, then statewide and out-of-state when the fresh produce needs of local food banks are satisfied. Since 1990, area growers and shippers have donated over 145 million pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables to help feed the hungry.

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**Photographs Included:**

Celeste 1: Celeste Settrini accepting Ag Woman of the Year Award

Celeste 2: Additional photograph of Celeste Settrini accepting Ag Woman of the Year Award

Celeste 3: Celeste Settrini with parents Anita and Gus Settrini

Celeste 4: Celeste Settrini with members of the Salinas Valley Chapter of California Women for Agriculture