



## Media Release

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DO NOT RELEASE BEFORE 7:00 P.M., JULY 26, 2006  
**Farm Bureau Member Contact:** Mike Cavaletto 471-3689

The San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau is proud to announce Mr. Mike Cavaletto as the 2007 recipient of the Agriculturist of the Year award. South County citrus and avocado grower, Cavaletto was selected to receive SLO Co. Farm Bureau's highest honor in appreciation to his unwavering support to the agriculture community.

Established in 1988, the Agriculturist of the Year award serves to honor SLO County Farm Bureau members for their dedicated service toward the betterment of the agricultural community. The award will be presented to Cavaletto at Cattlemen and Farmers' Day, Thursday, July 26, at the Mid-State Fair in Paso Robles. The awards ceremony, beginning at 6:45p.m., will include the presentation of the awards for Cattleman, CattleWoman and Agriculturalist of the Year.

Cavaletto attended Santa Barbara High School where he was active in 4-H and FFA. After graduation, he joined the International Farm Youth Program and traveled to Honduras to learn about agriculture in that country. He was among those in the first graduating class at Cal Poly San Dimas 50 years ago and also volunteered with the Army Reserve upon graduation.

The Cavaletto family has a deeply rooted history for farming on the Central Coast. Prior to the turn of the century, members of the Cavaletto family settled in Santa Barbara County to grow wine grapes. Due to Prohibition in the 1920's, the Cavaletto's shifted their agriculture practices to grow walnuts and then finally to citrus and avocados. Following in his family's footsteps, Mike eventually planted three separate citrus and avocados orchards in Riverside County in partnership with local growers who he remains in partnership with today. While in Goleta he was a member and director of the Goleta Lemon and SeaBoard Lemon cooperatives, promoting the sale of lemons around the world.

In 1959, Cavaletto married his wife Mary Lou in Santa Barbara and together they raised two daughters Lisa and Laurie.

In 1971, after living and working on his citrus and avocado farm in Goleta, Cavaletto, moved to San Luis Obispo County to start a new citrus and avocado orchard in Nipomo. Upon moving to Nipomo, he also co-founded C&M Nursery with former partner and Nipomo native Eugene Mehlschau. Today, C&M Nursery markets citrus and avocado trees in a variety of sizes to commercial growers and home and garden retailers in the Western U.S.

A founding member of the Farm Credit West Board of Directors, Cavaletto has served on the board for nearly 23 years, where he held the offices of Chairman of the Board and Vice Chairman of the Board in the late 80's and early 90's. Seeing a need for local agriculture groups to share information and work together on local issues, Cavaletto, was among the founding Board member of the SLO County Agricultural Task Force in 1993.

Cavaletto has been a member of Farm Bureau for nearly 50 years. He joined the San Luis Obispo Farm Bureau in 1970 after previously serving as a valued member of the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau and Goleta Farm Center Chairman. Now, he supports the Nipomo Farm Center and advocates for his industry and agricultural lifestyle with passion derived from years of experience.

When asked to comment about being awarded Agriculturist of the Year, he said, "I have never received such an amazing honor," he said. "It is an honor to be included with the agriculturalists who have been awarded before me." For more information about Cattlemen and Farmers' Day go to [www.slofarmbureau.org](http://www.slofarmbureau.org).

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Mission Statement:

"To lead San Luis Obispo County in the protection, promotion and advocacy of agriculture for the benefit of our members and community"