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Watsonville Coast Produce to be Honored as Food Industry Donor of the Year

Local Nutrition Summit to convene more than 180 Local Agencies and Programs

Santa Cruz, CA, October 13, 2008—Watsonville Coast Produce, located in Watsonville, will be honored as Second Harvest’s Food Industry Donor of the year for their contribution to the fight against hunger and malnutrition locally. Watsonville Coast Produce has donated to Second Harvest more than 1.6 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables since 2001, providing nutritious food to the over 47,000 children, seniors and working poor families Second Harvest and its network of 180 agencies and program serves each month. This type of long-term relationship is part of their philosophy of “partners working together.” Their goal is to achieve success through creating trusting relationships with their customers and with their community.

“The partnership we share with the food industry is critical to being able to meet our community’s growing need,” said Willy Elliott-McCrea, Executive Director of Second Harvest. “The food Watsonville Coast Produce has donated translates into over 1.3 million meals for working poor families in Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties.”

Since 1974, Watsonville Coast Produce has provided customers with a full-line of organic and conventionally grown fresh fruits and vegetables as a wholesale distributor. Their relationships with independent grocery stores, restaurants, hospitals and schools run deep.

As Doug Petersen, co-Owner and General Manager notes, “Supporting Second Harvest makes good business sense. We have a symbiotic relationship. We need a home for our overstock fresh fruits

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and vegetables and Second Harvest has a clear need for good, nutritious food for the many people in need in our community.”

The Second Harvest Annual Nutrition Summit is dedicated to improving accessibility to the fresh fruits and vegetables that should be staples in the diets of working poor families, seniors, and children—regardless of income. The Summit is the only event of its kind in the area, bringing together representatives from the county’s most vital service programs to focus on proven strategies to get healthy food and information into the hands of those who need it most. The event is scheduled from 9am to 1pm, with Assemblyman Laird’s opening address at 9am and Superintendent Watkins’ keynote address at noon.

State Assemblyman John Laird and County Superintendent of Schools Michael Watkins will address a crowd representing over 180 local social service agencies and programs, as well as the general public, at Second Harvest Food Bank’s 3rd Annual Agency Nutrition Summit, October 13th, at Twin Lakes Church. Celebrating the theme “Healthy Eating, Healthy Children,” the dignitaries will speak about the importance of good child nutrition and its effects on child development and school performance. Additional topics include childhood obesity, creating healthy habits, and the correlation between preventable childhood disease and nutrition.

This year’s summit is sponsored by Dominican Hospital, Network for a Healthy California, New Leaf Markets and the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust.

The mission of Second Harvest Food Bank is to educate and involve individuals to end hunger and alleviate malnutrition in our communities. Second Harvest Food Bank was the first food bank in California, and is the second oldest in the nation. Last year alone, Second Harvest distributed 6.5 million pounds of food to hungry seniors, children, and working poor families on the Central Coast.

Photo Opportunity:

9:05 am	<i>Opening Address by State Assemblyman John Laird</i>
11:15 am	<i>Press Conference/Interviews with: County Superintendent of Schools Michael Watkins Willy Elliott-McCrea, Executive Director, Second Harvest Food Bank</i>
12:00 pm	<i>Keynote Address by County Superintendent of Schools Michael Watkins</i>
12:15 pm	<i>Presentation of Food Industry Donor of the Year Award</i>

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