

Farm Beat: Event will benefit Stan State, fair

BY JOHN HOLLAND - JHOLLAND@MODBEE.COM

09/19/2014 5:07 PM | Updated: 09/19/2014 11:14 PM



Future producers of food and beverages will benefit from an Oct. 2 event involving wine and cheese tastings.

The 12th annual Taste of the Valley will raise money for the agriculture studies department at California State University, Stanislaus, and the Friends of the Fair Foundation, which supports the county fair. The event will be from 6 to 9 p.m. at the fairground, 900 N. Broadway, Turlock. Tickets are \$50.

Taste of the Valley, sponsored by Rabobank, will feature food from Hilmar Cheese Co. and 15 other vendors and restaurants. It will be paired with drinks from 20 wineries and several craft beer producers. Silent and live auctions will be held.

Tickets can be purchased at www.stancofair.com (<http://www.stancofair.com/>) or from Sandra West at the fairground office, (209) 668-1333 (tel:(209)%20668-1333), ext. 303. Donations of auction items can be arranged at the same number.

Elsewhere on the Farm Beat (the wine part of it):

Kautz Farms, which grows wine grapes in the Lodi and Murphys areas, is one of three finalists for this year's Leopold Conservation Award for sustainable agriculture in California.

Owners John and Gail Kautz are in the running for the \$10,000 honor because of efforts such as drip irrigation, natural pest control and reuse of winery wastewater for irrigation.

The award is named for the late Aldo Leopold, author of "A Sand County Almanac" and a leader in the early conservation movement. It will be presented Dec. 8 by the Sand County Foundation, the California Farm Bureau Federation and Sustainable Conservation.

The other finalists are Full Belly Farm, which grows diverse organic crops in Yolo County, and Hafefeld Ranch, an organic cattle producer in Kern County.

U.S. wine exports rose 15 percent by volume from January through June compared with the same period in 2013, the Wine Institute reported this week. About 90 percent came from California, including the big wineries in and near Stanislaus County.

Exports totaled 26.8 million cases valued at \$752 million in the first half of 2014, the San Francisco-based group reported. It represents the California industry, which has been doing well thanks to strong demand and large harvests in 2012 and 2013.

U.S. exports for all of 2013 totalled \$1.55 billion, the fourth straight annual increase.

Delicato Family Vineyards, based in Manteca, has launched a luxury red blend called Juxtapoz. The wine, priced at a suggested \$24.99, is from grapes grown mainly in the Napa Valley, along with a few other North Coast areas.

First out is a 2012 vintage that blends syrah, zinfandel, petite sirah, malbec and cabernet sauvignon. More information is at www.dfvwines.com (http://globalmessaging2.prnewswire.com/clickthrough/servlet/clickthrough?msg_id=7796914&adr_order=201&url=aHRocDovL3d3dy5kZnZ3aW5lc5jb20v).