



CENTRAL VALLEY PRUNING CONTEST HONORS VINEYARD WORKERS

DELANO, CA (January 16, 2019) - Central Valley Farmworker Foundation (CVFF) held its 1st Annual Central Valley Pruning Contest in Delano, California. Central Valley farmworkers had the opportunity to showcase their pruning skills and earn the title of "Champion" during the 1st Annual Central Valley Pruning Contest at Pandol Vineyards last Saturday.

The contestants were judged on quality, safety, speed, and knowledge of the vineyards by judges from the University of California, and a representative of Sutter Homes Family Vineyards.

Farmworkers who competed brought their family, friends, and co-workers to see the competition. "I brought my husband, children, mother-in-law, and co-workers to the competition," said Yolanda Saldivar of Pandol Vineyards and participant of the competition. Dozens of farmworkers participated in the pruning competition and nearly 200 community members from Kern, Fresno, Tulare, and Madera County attended the 1st Annual Competition.

Each of the participants pruned 5 vines in four minutes in the preliminary competition. Those with the highest scores went on to a semi-final round, which produced the finalist for the last round of the competition: three in the women's division and three in the men's.

"As we entered the semi-finals it became more competitive, and at times, only one point determined whether the participant passed to the final," said Andres Mendez of Sutter Homes Family Vineyards and a judge of the 1st Annual Competition.

All contestants took home pruning contest t-shirts and were treated to lunch, and free health screenings provided by Delano Regional Medical Center. Also in attendance to distribute information and resources were the following organizations: Komoto Pharmacy, Wonderful College Prep Academy, and Bakersfield College.

The winners of each division took home \$1000 for first place, \$750 for second place, and \$500 for third place.

Women's Division Winners

1st place: *Maria de Jesus Sanchez*, **Grapery**. Winnings: \$1000 in cash and a trophy of the event.

2nd place: *Mireya Espinoza*, **Milicic and Sons**. Winnings \$750 in cash and a trophy of the event.

3rd place: *Sonia Arredondo*, **Jasmine Vineyards**. Winnings \$500 in cash and a trophy of the event.

Men's Division Winners

1st place: *Indalecio Mora*, **Milicic and Sons**. Winnings: \$1000 in cash and a trophy of the event.

2nd place: *David Machuca*, **Jasmine Vineyards**. Winnings \$750 in cash and a trophy of the event.

3rd place: *Jose Ivan Ledezma*, **HMC Farms**. Winnings \$500 in cash and a trophy of the event.

Sponsors

Premier sponsor for the event: **Balco Tools**.

Supporting sponsors for the event: **AGRO Labor Services Inc, J&S Farm Labor Contractor, and Ofr Inc.**

About the Central Valley Farmworker Foundation:

Founded in 2016, the mission of the Central Valley Farmworker Foundation is to serve and support farmworkers by providing programs and services to better their quality of life.

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