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## **LOCAL MANTECA PUMPKIN GROWER TEAMS WITH WAL-MART TO CELEBRATE AMERICA'S FARMERS**

*Program Salutes Locally Grown Agriculture*

**STOCKTON, Calif.,** Oct. 22, 2007 – As Californians search for the perfect pumpkin this Halloween season, Wal-Mart Stores announced today that Van Groningen & Sons of Manteca, a California pumpkin grower, will be showcased as part of the company's national *Salute to America's Farmers* program.

Wal-Mart's *Salute to America's Farmers*, launched in September 2006, is a campaign to spotlight the company's commitment to support locally-grown agricultural products. Each month, Wal-Mart showcases a local grower from selected states.

"Farming isn't just our business, it's a way of life," said Ryan Van Groningen. "Our goal is to provide high-quality products to Californians and Wal-Mart provides an opportunity to do just that."

Van Groningen & Sons is a family-owned company, which has been a Wal-Mart partner for more than a decade. Henry Van Groningen, Sr. started the California business in 1922. While the business has evolved over the years, it is still family-owned and operated, growing, sweet corn, watermelons, pumpkins, squash, alfalfa, almonds and walnuts.

"The 'California Grown' campaign applauds Wal-Mart for its support of the state's agriculture industry," said Maile Shanahan Geis, marketing director of the Buy California Marketing Agreement. "Working with local producers such as Van Groningen & Sons illustrates Wal-Mart's commitment to providing fresh, wholesome and high-quality choices to Californians."

Wal-Mart's commitment to California businesses includes hundreds of companies and Van Groningen & Sons represents one example of the many agriculture products featured in local stores.

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“We understand that consumers want to purchase quality products that help support the local economy and we’re proud of our ability to bring wholesome, home-grown selections to our customers,” said Ron McCormick, Wal-Mart Stores vice president for produce. “This commitment not only allows us to offer fresh, quality selections but also generate savings on distribution costs that we can pass on to our customers.”

Wal-Mart’s relationships with U.S. suppliers extend beyond its support of local agriculture. In 2005, Wal-Mart spent \$200 billion on merchandise through its relationship with 61,000 U.S. suppliers. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc spent \$25,275,865,734 for merchandise and services with 3,973 suppliers in California in FYE 2007. As a result of these supplier relationships, Wal-Mart supports 249,898 supplier jobs in California.

NOTE TO EDITOR: To schedule an interview with Van Groningen & Sons or obtain a photo for use, contact Nicole Leddy at 916-325-2931 or email at [nicole.leddy@porternovelli.com](mailto:nicole.leddy@porternovelli.com).

*\*supplier figures provided by Dun & Bradstreet*

**About Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT)**

Every week, millions of customers visit Wal-Mart Stores, Supercenters, Neighborhood Markets, and Sam’s Club locations across America or log on to its online store at [www.walmart.com](http://www.walmart.com). The company and its Foundation are committed to a philosophy of giving back locally. Wal-Mart (NYSE: WMT) is proud to support the causes that are important to customers and associates right in their own neighborhoods, and last year gave more than \$270 million to local communities in the United States. To learn more, visit [www.walmartfacts.com](http://www.walmartfacts.com), [www.walmartstores.com](http://www.walmartstores.com), or [www.walmartfoundation.org](http://www.walmartfoundation.org).

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