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Famous For Buffalo, Star B Ranch & Hop Farm Now Welcomes a Wolf to the Ranch

Ramona, CA: The nationally-recognized Star B Ranch & Hop Farm made news in 2008 when, after nearly 30 years of owning and operating one of the country's most successful Buffalo ranches, they decided to add the growing of hops to their 1200 acre business. Now, with 6 years of experience in hop farming, Star B Ranch is about to make news again by adding a Wolf to their business...a Wolf Hop Harvester, that is!

Built in and shipped from Germany, Star B Ranch's Wolf Hop Harvester has arrived, all 9,000 pounds of her, just in time for the upcoming harvest in early August. The WHE 170 model, this harvester is designed to handle as many as 340, 10 foot plants per hour, quickly stripping the bines and separating the cones from the leaves and stems. By comparison, the process of hand-picking hops takes nearly 45 minutes to separate the hop cones from each long, prickly bine.

"While picking hops by hand can be a fun experience," said Eric March, a member of the Star B Ranch management team that includes his wife, Amie, and his in-laws Ken and Denice Childs, "but hand-picking is extremely time consuming and automatically limits the size of crop growers like ourselves can handle." So, March said, the family decided to invest in the German-engineered Wolf because these machines are proven and trusted by small scale hop farmers throughout Europe and the U.S.

March continued: “Star B Ranch is already know for the quality of our natural, chemical free, San Diego Grown hops, and now, with the addition of the Wolf, we will be able to efficiently harvest the hops we already grow, as well as have the opportunity for growth and expansion. Star B hopes to provide a niche product to add local flavor for Southern California’s burgeoning Craft and Homebrewing movement.”

San Diego County has been called the “Craft Beer Capital of America” with nearly 90 craft breweries and brewpubs already licensed and an estimated 30 more pending licensing. Star B Ranch & Hop Farm began growing hops in 2008 and currently focuses on Cascade and Nugget varieties, selling dry hops, harvest-wet hops and rhizomes. Star B hops have been featured in beers made by: Monkey Paw Pub Brewery, Helms Brewing Co., Chuck Alek Independent Brewers, San Diego Brewing Company, Julian Brewing Company and Ballast Point Brewing Company.