



FARMS Leadership Program 2004/05

September Field Day: Vineyards of Sonoma County



On Tuesday September 28, 2004, 23 students selected from Cloverdale, Geyserville, Rancho Cotate, and Summerfield Waldorf High Schools kicked off their participation in the FARMS Leadership Program through a visit to the **Kendall Jackson Wine and Education Center**. Many professional mentors joined in the effort.

Genevieve Taylor of **Four Winds Inc.** donated time to help the group with initial teambuilding and team challenge activities. Four Winds operates a dynamic ROPES Challenge course in western Sonoma County.



Through a question & answer session in the site's demonstration vineyards, the students learned from **Kendall Jackson's Wine Educator Jim Cutcher** about the site, and highlights in history of grape production.

The students learned about winegrape production, Sonoma County's leading agricultural commodity, and the growth season conditions that characterized an earlier than normal 2004 harvest.

Marilyn Thompson, Senior Agricultural Research Associate of the UC Cooperative Extension lead students through a sugar testing exercise that grape growers use to determine ripeness of grape varietals.

Cloverdale High's Coordinator, Margaret Baumgratz, led student through a botany exercise to differentiate winegrape varietal growth characteristics.

Steve Thomas, a vineyard manager for Kendall Jackson, brought a portable crusher/de-stemmer and let the students experience the crush process first hand.

Saralee's Vineyards generously donated 150lbs of syrah grapes for the crushing exercise.



Diane Hichwa, Executive Director of the Sonoma County Bird Rescue Center, introduced students to live raptors, and explained the beneficial role that raptors can play for natural rodent control and crop protection in vineyard settings.

The **California Pistachio Commission** provided samples and nutritional information about California Pistachios, a top agricultural commodity in the state.

Sam's For Play deli prepared a box lunch for the participants and mentors.

