1	Santos Gomez (SBN 172741) Law Offices of Santos Gomez		
2	1003 Freedom Boulevard Watsonville, CA 95076		
3	Tel: (831) 228-1560 Fax: (831) 228-1542		
4	santos@lawofficesofsantosgomez.com		
5	Attorneys for Plaintiffs Daisy Saldana, Dolores De Marques and the Putative Class		
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7	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA		
8	COUNTY OF MONTEREY		
9 10	DAISY SALDANA and DOLORES DE MARQUES, on behalf of themselves and all others similarly Situated,	CASE NO.: 20CV003415 Filed: December 21, 2020	
11	Plaintiffs, v.	AMENDED STIPULATION REGARDING CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND	
12	QUAIL CREEK FARMS, INC., a California	RELEASE OF CLAIMS	
13	Corporation; and DQES 1-10, inclusive,		
14	Defendants.		
15	Daisy Saldana and Dolores De Marques	s (collectively "Plaintiffs") on behalf of themselves and	
16	Daisy Saldana and Dolores De Marques (collectively "Plaintiffs"), on behalf of themselves and		
17	all others similarly situated, and Quail Creek Farms, Inc. ("Defendant") hereby enter into this amende		
18	stipulation regarding class action settlement and	d release of claims.	
19		<u>PULATION</u>	
20	A. <u>DEFINITIONS</u>		
21	1. "Action" means the civil class action complaint pending in the Superior Court of the		
22	State of California in and for the County of Monterey, titled Daisy Saldana et al. v. Quail Creek Farms		
23	Inc., Case No. 20CV003415.		
24	2. "Class Counsel" means Santos C	Gomez of the Law Offices of Santos Gomez.	
25	3. "Class Members" means all non-exempt piece-rate employees of Defendant who were		
26	employed to trim cannabis in California during the period of December 21, 2016 through December		
27	31, 2020 (the "Class Period") (or if any such person is incompetent, deceased, or unavailable due to		
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military service, the person's legal representative or successor in interest evidenced by reasonable verification).

- 4. "Class Representatives" and "Plaintiffs" means Daisy Saldana and Dolores De Marques.
- 5. "Court" means the Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Monterey.
 - 6. "Defendant" means Quail Creek Farms, Inc.
- 7. "Effective Date" means the latest of the following: (a) if no Class Member makes an objection to the Settlement, the date the Court grants final approval to the Settlement; (b) if a Class Member objects to the Settlement, the later of: (i) dismissal or withdrawal of the objection by the Class Member; (ii) the date for seeking appellate review of the Court's final approval of the Settlement has passed without a timely request for review; (iii) a Class Member's appeal from the Court's final approval of the Settlement has been voluntarily dismissed, or the dismissal of an untimely appeal; or (iv) the California Court of Appeal or the California Supreme Court has rendered a final decision or order on a Class Member's appeal affirming the Court's final approval of the Settlement without material modification, including denial of any petition for review to the California Supreme Court.
- 8. "C-Corp Shareholders" means Trent Sanders, Justin Donnelly and Dennis Komick, shareholding owner/operators of Defendant during the Class Period under a Stock Purchase Agreement dated January 6, 2021, as amended, which have indemnified Defendant and its current owners from any and all liability with respect to this Action pursuant to said Stock Purchase Agreement's section 3.5(c).
- 9. "Gross Settlement Amount" ("GSA") means the amount of Four Hundred and Forty Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$440,000.00), which is the maximum amount to be paid by Defendant pursuant to this Settlement Agreement, to be paid by Defendant on a non-reversionary basis pursuant to the terms of this Settlement. The following payments will be made from the Gross Settlement Amount: (1) the cost of settlement administration; (2) the amount of attorney's fees and litigation costs awarded to Class Counsel; (3) the amount of Service Payment awarded to Plaintiffs as class representatives; (4) Defendant's share of payroll taxes on the portion of settlement benefits allocated to

wages; and (5) the settlement benefits to class members who do not exclude themselves from the Settlement.

- 10. "Net Settlement Amount" means the portion of the Gross Settlement Amount of Four Hundred and Forty Thousand Dollars (\$440,000.00) that remains after deductions are made for: (1) the cost of settlement administration (estimated at \$6,500.00); (2) the amount of attorney's fees (\$110,000.00 or 25% of the Gross Settlement Amount) and litigation costs (estimated at \$12,500.00) awarded to Class Counsel; (3) the amount of Service Payment awarded to Plaintiffs as class representatives (estimated at \$15,000.00 or \$7,500.00 each); (4) Defendant's share of payroll taxes on the portion of settlement benefits allocated to wages (estimated at \$6,000.00); and (5) the settlement benefits to class members who do not exclude themselves from the Settlement. Plaintiffs estimate the Net Settlement Amount at approximately \$290,000.00.
- 11. "Notice" means the Notice of Class Action Settlement, substantially in the form attached as Exhibit A, to be mailed out by the Settlement Administrator to Class Members following the Court's Order Granting Preliminary Approval.
 - 12. "Parties" means Plaintiffs and Defendant collectively.
 - 13. "Release Period" means the period of December 21, 2016 through December 31, 2020.
- 14. "Settlement" or "Agreement" means this Stipulation Regarding Class Action Settlement and Release of Claims.
- 15. "Settlement Administrator" means Atticus Administration, LLC, or any other third-party class action settlement administrator approved by the Parties and the Court for the purposes of administering this Settlement. The Parties each represent that they do not have a financial interest in the Settlement Administrator or otherwise have a relationship with the Settlement Administrator that could create a conflict of interest.

B. <u>RECITALS</u>

1. Plaintiffs filed a putative class action on December 21, 2020 in the Superior Court of the State of California, County of Monterey, Monterey Division. In the Complaint, Plaintiffs alleged the following claims for relief on behalf of non-exempt piece-rate employees of Defendant who were employed to trim cannabis in California during the period of December 21, 2016 through December

31, 2020, prior to the sale of Defendant by and under the supervision of the C-Corp Shareholders: (1) Failure to Pay Overtime Wages; (2) Failure to Pay All Wages at the Correct Rate for Time Spent in Rest and Recovery Periods; (3) Failure to Provide All Required Meal Periods; (4) Failure to Provide Accurate Itemized Wage Statement; (5) Failure to Pay All Wages Owed Upon Termination; and (6) Restitution Pursuant to Bus. & Profs. Code sections 17200 et seq. In addition to the above claims, prior to and at mediation, Plaintiffs asserted a claim for failure to provide all required rest periods.

- 2. The Parties have concluded that it is desirable to settle this matter to avoid the expense, inconvenience, distraction, and uncertainties of continued litigation. Defendant does not admit, and expressly denies, the allegations in the Complaint, including the additional rest period claim, and further denies any liability or wrongdoing of any kind, under any federal, state, or local law or regulation.
- 3. On September 15, 2021, the Parties participated in a private mediation before experienced mediator Retired Judge Maria-Elena James. While the Parties made progress at the mediation, they were unable to reach a class settlement. Thereafter, the Parties continued settlement discussions and agreed to jointly request an early mandatory settlement conference. On May 17, 2022, the Parties participated in an early mandatory settlement conference with Judge Vanessa W. Vallarta. With the assistance of Judge Vallarta, the Parties were able to reach a class settlement. This Stipulation Regarding Class Action Settlement and Release of Claims formalizes the Parties' agreement.
- 4. Class Counsel have conducted a thorough investigation into the facts of this case, including extensive interviews of Plaintiffs and some class members, reviewing relevant documents and researching the applicable law and potential defenses. Class Counsel also reviewed the class data produced by Defendant in response to formal class discovery, and additional class data and information Defendant informally produced in advance of the mediation and the mandatory settlement conference. Based on this review, Class Counsel determined Defendant's maximum potential liability. Class Counsel are of the opinion that the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and is in the best interest of the Class Members in light of all known facts and circumstances, including Defendant's defenses. Defendant agrees that the Settlement is fair, reasonable and adequate.

5. The Parties agree that the filing of this Settlement is for settlement purposes only and if, for any reason, it is not approved, the Settlement will be of no force or effect. In such event, nothing in the Settlement shall be used or construed by or against any party as a determination, admission, or concession of any issue of law or fact in the Action; and the Parties do not waive, and instead expressly reserve, their respective rights with respect to the prosecution and defense of this Action as if this Settlement never existed. Defendant expressly reserves its rights to challenge the propriety of class certification should the Court not approve the Settlement.

C. <u>TERMS OF SETTLEMENT</u>

Plaintiffs, on behalf of themselves and the Class Members, and Defendant agree as follows:

- 1. Gross Settlement Amount: The C-Corp Shareholders and/or Defendant shall pay to the Settlement Administrator the non-reversionary Gross Settlement Amount of Four Hundred and Forty Thousand Dollars (\$440,000.00). The Gross Settlement Amount shall include payments for: (1) the cost of settlement administration; (2) the amount of attorney's fees and litigation costs awarded to Class Counsel; (3) the amount of Service Payment awarded to Plaintiffs as class representatives; (4) Defendant's share of payroll taxes on the portion of settlement benefits allocated to wages; and (5) the settlement benefits to class members who do not exclude themselves from the Settlement. Defendant estimates there are 54 Class Members. The Parties agree that the Gross Settlement Amount resolves the class claims of up to 60 Class Members. If the actual number of Class Members exceeds 60, the Parties agree to negotiate in good faith an additional amount to cover the claims of the additional Class Members, without prejudice to further contributions by the C-Corp Shareholders.
- 2. Payment to the Settlement Administrator: The Settlement Administrator shall pay to itself the court-approved administration fees (estimated at \$6,500.00). These costs, which will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, will include, *inter alia*, the costs for the Settlement Administrator to: (i) conduct address traces to locate Class Members as necessary; (ii) prepare and mail the Notice of Class Action Settlement; (iii) track requests for exclusion; (iv) respond to Class Member inquiries; (v) distribute all payments required by the Settlement; (vi) report taxes in connection with the Settlement; and (vii) perform any other duties necessary for administration of the Settlement. The Settlement Administrator will also create a Web Page wherein it will provide class members relevant documents,

including but not limited to, the Notice of Class Settlement in both English and Spanish, Class Counsel's contact information for class members to use should they have questions about the Settlement or their rights as class members.

- 3. Attorney's Fees, Expenses and Costs: Defendant will not oppose Class Counsel's application to the Court for an award of up to One Hundred Ten Thousand Dollars (\$110,000.00 or 25% of the Gross Settlement Amount) in attorneys' fees and for an award of up to Twelve Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$12,500.00) for litigation costs and expenses, to compensate Class Counsel for the work already performed in this case and all work remaining to be performed in documenting the Settlement, securing Court approval of the Settlement, and ensuring that the Settlement is fairly administered. Plaintiffs and Class Counsel will not have the right to revoke this Settlement in the event the Court fails to approve the amount of Attorneys' Fees and Costs sought by Class Counsel. Any portion of the Attorneys' Fees and Costs not awarded to Class Counsel will be added to the Net Settlement Amount. The Settlement Administrator will issue to Class Counsel a Form 1099 with respect to the payment of the Court-approved attorneys' fees and costs.
- 4. <u>Service Payment to Class Representatives</u>: Defendant will not oppose Plaintiffs' request to the Court for an award of up to Fifteen Thousand Dollars (up to \$7,500.00 for each Class Representative), for their service as Class Representatives ("Service Payment") in addition to any payment each Plaintiff may otherwise receive as a Class Member. The Settlement Administrator will issue to each Plaintiff a Form 1099 for the Service Payment.
- 5. <u>Employer's payroll taxes</u>: Then Settlement Administrator will pay the employer's payroll taxes on the W-2 wages paid to the Class Members from the Gross Settlement Amount. The Parties note that Defendant agreed to increase the initially agreed upon Gross Settlement Amount from \$435,000.00 to \$440,000.00 instead of paying the employer's taxes separately. Plaintiffs estimate the employer's taxes are not significantly more than the additional \$5,000.00 Defendant agreed to pay.
- 6. <u>Distribution to Class Members</u>: Each member of the Class who does not exclude himself/herself from the Settlement will receive his/her pro-rata share of the Net Settlement Amount based on the number of pay periods he/she worked for Defendant during the Class Period.

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- 7. Non-Reversionary; Cy Pres: The settlement is completely non-reversionary and the entire Net Settlement Amount will be distributed to Class Members who do not exclude themselves from the Settlement. In the event settlement checks issued to Class Members are not cashed or deposited within 180 days after mailing of the Payments, the checks shall become null and void and any funds remaining from such uncashed checks shall be paid to the not-for-profit California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. as the designated *cy pres* beneficiary. The Parties and their counsel each represent that they do not have a financial interest in California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. or otherwise have a relationship with it that could create a conflict of interest.
- 8. Tax Allocation of Class Member Distributions: The Parties agree that the Settlement payments to Class Members will be treated as follows: 20% of the payments shall be allocated to wages and 80% shall be allocated to interest and penalties. To the extent required by law, the Settlement Administrator shall be responsible for issuing Class Members a Form W-2 with respect to the portion of settlement benefits allocated to wages and a Form 1099 with respect to the portion of settlement benefits allocated to interest and penalties. Neither this Settlement, nor any of its attachments, should be interpreted to contain or constitute representations or advice regarding any U.S. federal or state tax issue. Defendant makes no representation as to the tax treatment or legal effect of the payments called for hereunder, and Plaintiff and Class Members are not relying on any statement, representation, or calculation by Defendant in this regard. Plaintiff and Class Members understand and agree that they will be solely responsible for the payment of any taxes and penalties assessed on the payments described herein and will defend, indemnify, and hold Defendant free and harmless from and against any claims resulting from treatment of such payments as non-taxable amounts, Class Members will be specifically informed that neither Defendant or Class Counsel make any representations regarding the tax implications of any amounts paid under this Settlement, and that if any Class Member has any questions regarding those implications, he/she can and should consult a tax expert.
- 9. <u>Funding and Distribution Dates</u>: Within ten (10) business days after the Effective Date, the Settlement Administrator shall advise the C-Corp Shareholders and Defendant of the total amount of funds needed to satisfy Defendant's obligations under the Settlement, which is acknowledged to satisfy the C-Corp Shareholders' indemnification obligations under the Stock Purchase Agreement.

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funds needed under the Settlement no later than twenty (20) business days after receiving notice from the Settlement Administrator regarding the total amount required to fund the Settlement. The Settlement Administrator shall distribute payments required under the Settlement within fifteen (15) days from the date it received the required funds from Defendant or the C-Corp Shareholders. The Settlement Administrator shall prepare a disbursement report and submit it as an exhibit to a signed Declaration regarding disbursement of the settlement funds no later than thirty days (30) days after all funds, including the *cy pres* payment, are disbursed.

D. NOTICE, EXCLUSION AND OBJECTION PROCEDURES

- 1. Within fifteen (15) days following the Court's entry of an Order Granting Preliminary Approval of the Settlement, Defendant shall provide to the Settlement Administrator a database or spreadsheet listing the name, last known home address, social security number, and number of pay periods each Class Member worked during the Class Period (the "Class List").
- 2. Within ten (10) days after receiving the Class List from Defendant, the Settlement Administrator shall send the Notice, in English and Spanish, to each Class Member by first class mail. The Settlement Administrator shall provide a copy of the amount each Class Member (identified with only a numerical identifier and the Class Member's complete name) is projected to receive, to Class Counsel to use to answer questions from Class Members and to help the Settlement Administrator administer the Settlement.
- 3. The Settlement Administrator shall use reasonable standard skip tracing devices as necessary to verify the accuracy of all addresses before the initial mailing date to ensure that the Notice is sent to all Class Members at the addresses most likely to result in immediate receipt of those documents. It shall be conclusively presumed that any Notice so mailed and not returned as undeliverable within thirty (30) days of the mailing shall have been received by the Class Member. With respect to any returned Notices, the Settlement Administrator shall use reasonable diligence to obtain a current address and mail a Notice to such address.
- 4. Class Members shall have forty-five (45) days from the initial mailing of the Notice by the Settlement Administrator to request exclusion from the Settlement by submitting a request in

writing to be excluded from the Settlement to the Settlement Administrator. If disputes about the validity or timeliness of any request for exclusion arise, the Parties shall meet and confer. If the Parties cannot resolve the dispute, the Parties agree to jointly request the Court's assistance in resolving the issue.

- 5. Class Members who submit a timely and valid request for exclusion will not be bound by the release provisions of the Settlement and will not be entitled to receive any settlement benefits under the Settlement.
- 6. If 10% or more of Class Members request exclusion from the Settlement (i.e., opt out), Defendant, at its sole option, may abrogate the Settlement, in which case the Settlement shall be null and void. Defendant shall exercise this right within ten (10) days after notification by the Settlement Administrator of the total number of Class Members who submitted a valid request for exclusion. If Defendant abrogates the Settlement pursuant to this paragraph, Defendant shall pay the Settlement Administrator for the costs of settlement administration prior to receiving notice from Defendant about abrogation of the Settlement.
- 7. Class Members shall have forty-five (45) days from the initial mailing of the Notice by the Settlement Administrator to submit any objections to the Settlement and advise of their desire to appear at the Final Fairness Hearing. The Notice shall include specific instructions to Class Members for submitting objections, which must be sent in writing to the Settlement Administrator.

E. <u>RELEASE OF CLAIMS</u>

1. <u>Class Members' Released Claims</u>: Each Class Member who does not submit a timely and valid request for exclusion shall, upon the Effective Date, be deemed to have released any and all claims against Defendant and any former or present parent, subsidiary, affiliated companies, corporations, joint ventures, owners, officers, directors, members, managers, employees, partners, principals, heirs, shareholders, agents, accountants, auditors, consultants, representatives, attorneys, insurers, investors, administrators, and any other successors, predecessors, assigns, divisions, or legal representatives, including without limitation the C-Corp Shareholders and Trent Sanders (the "Representative of the C-Corp Shareholders" in the above-captioned action) (the "Released Parties"), from any and all claims, rights, demands, liabilities, factual or legal theories, and causes of action

under California law giving rise to potential liability for acts or omissions during the Release Period which were asserted in the Complaint or which could have been asserted based on the facts alleged in the Complaint arising at any time during the Class Period. The Released Claims include, to the extent based on the facts alleged in the Complaint, claims for: failure to pay overtime wages, failure to pay wages at the correct rate for time spent in rest and recovery periods; failure to provide required meal periods; failure to provide accurate wage statements; claims for waiting time penalties; unfair competition; and claims for costs and attorneys' fees in connection therewith (other than as payable under this agreement). Plaintiffs are also releasing the rest period claim which they discovered and resolved during the course of the litigation.

2. <u>Additional Attorney's Fees Released by Class Counsel</u>: In consideration for an award of attorney's fees, expenses and costs in accordance with this Settlement, Class Counsel irrevocably and forever waive any and all claims to any further attorney's fees and costs in connection with the Action.

F. COURT APPROVAL

- 1. Plaintiffs shall promptly move the Court for the entry of an Order Granting Preliminary Approval of the Settlement.
- 2. In accordance with the Court's Order Granting Preliminary Approval of the Settlement, Plaintiffs, after the Settlement Administrator has mailed the Notice to Class Members and the time for Class Members to request exclusion from or make an objection to the Settlement has expired, shall move the Court for the entry of an Order Granting Final Approval of the Settlement.
- 3. This Settlement shall not take effect until the Court has entered an order granting final approval of the Settlement and that order has become final after any objections to the Settlement or any appeals from the order granting final approval of the Settlement have been resolved. If for any reason this Settlement is materially modified on appeal, then this Settlement will become null and void, no payment under this Settlement will be made, and the Settlement shall not be used nor be admissible in any subsequent proceeding either in this Court or in any other Court or forum.
- 4. The Parties agree to waive appeals from the Court's order granting final approval of the Settlement with the following exceptions: (1) the Parties may appeal if the Court materially modifies the Settlement; (2) Plaintiffs may appeal if the Court awards attorney's fees, expenses, costs or a

1 Service Payment in an amount less than requested by Plaintiffs. Any appeal with respect to the amount 2 of attorney's fees, expenses, costs or Service Payment shall not affect the finality of the Settlement in 3 any other regard or delay the payment of settlement benefits to Class Members or the payment of 4 administration costs to the Settlement Administrator; and (3) Defendant may appeal from any Court 5 order not granting the Court jurisdiction over any plea by Plaintiffs and/or Defendant against the C-6 Corp Shareholders for failure to pay any and all amounts herein due and payable under the Settlement 7 Agreement; for example and not by way of limitation, as also required by the Stock Purchase 8 Agreement; it being understood and agreed that the Court may have original jurisdiction over any

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G. **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. The respective signatories to the Settlement represent that they are fully authorized to enter into this Settlement and bind the respective Parties to its terms and conditions.

failure to pay the Gross Settlement Amount by the C-Corp Shareholders.

- 2. The Parties agree to cooperate fully with each other to accomplish the terms of this Settlement, including but not limited to, execution of such documents and to take such other action as may reasonably be necessary to implement the terms of the Settlement. The Parties shall use their best efforts, including all efforts contemplated by this Settlement and any other efforts that may become necessary by order of the Court, or otherwise, to effectuate the terms of this Settlement.
- 3. The Parties represent, covenant, and warrant that they have not directly or indirectly, assigned, transferred, encumbered, or purported to assign, transfer or encumber to any person or entity any portion of any liability, claim, demand, action, cause of action or right released and discharged in this Settlement.
- 4. Nothing contained in this Settlement shall be construed or deemed an admission of liability, culpability, negligence, or wrongdoing on the part of Defendant, and Defendant denies any such liability. The Parties have entered into this Settlement with the intention to avoid further disputes and litigation with the attendant inconvenience and expenses. This Settlement is a settlement document and shall be inadmissible in evidence in any proceeding, except an action or proceeding to approve, interpret, or enforce its terms, and will not be offered or received as evidence in any other action or proceeding to establish any liability or admission on the part of Defendant or to establish the existence

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1 of any condition constituting a violation of, or a non-compliance with, federal, state, local or other 2 applicable law. 3 5. This Settlement may be executed in counterparts, and when each party has signed at 4 least one such counterpart, each counterpart shall be deemed an original, and, when taken together with 5 other signed counterparts, shall constitute execution of the Settlement, which shall be binding upon and 6 effective as to all Parties. 7 IT IS SO STIPULATED AND AGREED. **Plaintiffs** 8 9 Dated: March , 2023 10 Daisy Saldana 11 Dated: March , 2023 Dolores De Marques 12 **Defendant** 13 14 Dated: March , 2023 15 16 For Quail Creek Farms, Inc. 17 **C-Corp Shareholders** 18 19 Dated: March , 2023 Trent Sanders 20 21 Dated: March , 2023 **Dennis Komick** 22 23 Dated: March , 20232 24 Justin Donnelly 25 26 27 28

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4	least one such counterpart, each counterpart shall be deemed an original, and, when taken together wit		
5	other signed counterparts, shall constitute execution of the Settlement, which shall be binding upon and		
6	effective as to all Parties.		
7	IT IS SO STIPULATED AND AGREED.		
8	<u>Plaintiffs</u>		
9	Dated: March 23 , 2023	Daisy Saldana	
11	Dated: March 23, 2023	Dalunes - Margin	
12		Dolores De Marques	
13	Defendant	X °	
14	Dated: March , 2023	DocuSigned by:	
15		By: Its:	
16		For Quail Creek Farms, Inc.	
17	C-Corp Shareholders		
18			
19 20	Dated: March , 2023	Trent Sanders	
21			
22	Dated: March , 2023	Dennis Komick	
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24	Dated: March , 20232	Justin Donnelly	
25		Justin 170michy	
26	///		
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	Amended Stipulation Regarding Class Action Settlement and Release of Claims 12		

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1	Approved as to form	
2	Dated: March , 2023	LAW OFFICES OF SANTOS GOMEZ
3		D.
4		By: Santos Gomez
5	*	Attorneys for Plaintiffs and the Putative Class
6	Dated: March 15, 2023	FENTON & KELLER
7		By: Brulley Cevany
8		Bradley J. Levang Attorneys for Defendant Quail Creek Farms, Inc.
9		Attorneys for Belondant Quan Creek Failins, inc.
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1	Approved as to form	
2	Dated: March 24, 2023	LAW OFFICES OF SANTOS GOMEZ
3		$\mathcal{A}_{I}/\mathcal{A}_{I}$
4		By: Santos Gomez
5	5.	Attorneys for Plaintiffs and the Putative Class
6	Dated: March 15, 2023	FENTON & KELLER
7		By: Gralley Cevany
8		Bradley J. Levang
9		Attorneys for Defendant Quail Creek Farms, Inc.
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