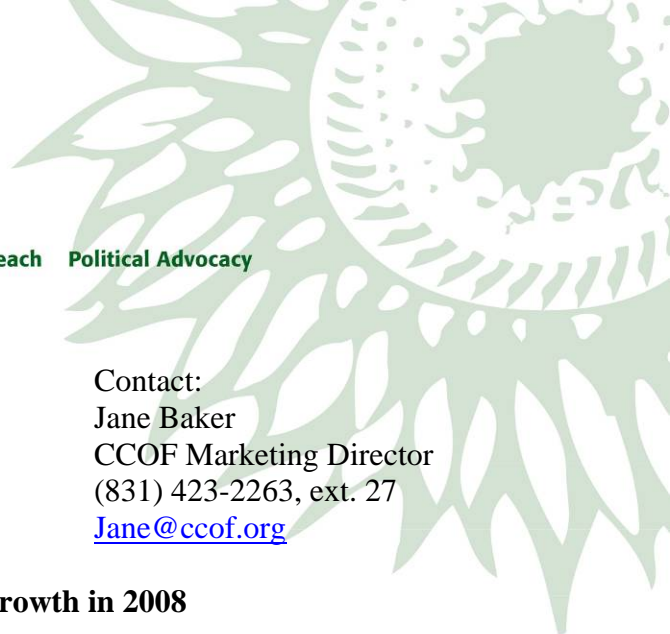




CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy



For Immediate Release

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CCOF celebrates another year of growth in 2008

(December 16, 2008) Santa Cruz, CA. CCOF, one of the nation's largest and oldest organic certification agencies is celebrating another year of growth. In 2008, the number of operations certified by CCOF surpassed the 2,000 mark as the organization grew by 11%, certifying an additional 199 operations. CCOF now certifies farmers, processors, handlers, retailers and private labelers in 35 states and four countries.

The growth in organic acreage was even higher at 14.3%, up from 488,340 acres in 2007 to 558,137 acres in 2008. These statistics illustrate a continuing trend of certified operations converting more and more acres to organic production. Another interesting trend is in the number of small to medium sized growers who are expanding their operations to include post-harvest activities, such as storage, packaging and handling, which adds greater value to their organic production. Over 30% of CCOF members are now involved in some form of handling of produce. The result of which is an increase in the grower/handler category of certification by 33.8%.

In crops, one substantial growth area in 2008 was the certified acreage of berries, up 25% (757 acres) from 2007. This increase reflects the growing consumer popularity of certified organic strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries. There was also substantial growth in the certified acreage of fruit and vegetables. In the vegetables category, the growth in organic carrots, sweet potatoes, garlic and peas stands out. Certified organic acreage of carrots grew by 12,057 acres, a staggering 104% increase. Sweet potato acreage was up 360 acres, a 93% increase, while garlic acreage increased 52% (130 acres) and peas acreage was up 48% (71 acres). Total certified organic vegetable acreage increased by 29,365 acres, a percentage rise of 46.3%. Total certified organic fruit acreage increased by 4,749 acres with nectarines leading the way with a growth of 219 acres (43%). This growth is a consequence of more land coming out of transition into certified organic status as farms have completed the move towards organic production.

CCOF also saw continued growth in organic wine and tea production in 2008. CCOF now certifies 45 wine producing operations, up from just 28 a year ago. This is an astounding growth of 61% in wineries that are certified organic. The number of certified tea producers, including herbal tea processors, increased from 20 in 2007 to 29 in 2008, a 44% growth rate.

Further information on CCOF statistics can be found at www.ccof.org/pdf/CCOFStatistics09.pdf

About CCOF

CCOF (California Certified Organic Farmers), a nonprofit organization, was founded in 1973 and is one of the nation's oldest and largest third-party organic certifying agencies. CCOF certifies, educates, advocates and promotes organic through:

- *A premier organic certification program for growers, processors, handlers, and retailers.*
- *Programs to increase awareness of and demand for certified organic products and to expand public support for organic agriculture.*
- *Advocacy for governmental policies that protect and encourage organic agriculture.*

For further information on CCOF visit: www.ccof.org