



CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Jake Lewin
Director of Marketing, CCOF Inc.
(831) 423-2263, Ext 21
jake@ccof.org

CCOF Expands Organic Farming Assistance Program

Santa Cruz, CA, October 25, 2005 - After completing a successful pilot project, CCOF is expanding the Going Organic farmer training, education, and mentoring program. Utilizing renewed funding from the California State Water Board, the Going Organic program will train 40 new organic growers through educational meetings and one-on-one mentoring with experienced organic farmers. This is estimated to increase organic acreage by nearly 5% in the program's regions.

"Converting to organic production is an important environmental and health benefit for any farmer to undertake. Many growers want to convert to organic but need critical on-the-ground assistance. Going Organic allows farmers to support and learn from each other through the process," said Fred Thomas, Going Organic Project Coordinator.

Under the program a series of CCOF regional chapters will participate to provide local support unique to each geographic area. Trainees and their mentors will meet at organic farms and receive one-on-one assistance with transitioning to organic production during the growing season. They will compare notes, share ideas, and receive guidance in completing the organic certification paperwork. The program will also feature research on organic farm water quality. The California State Water Board recognizes the "use of organic farming practices" as a management practice to improve water quality.

In addition to regional meetings, eight key seminars will be held to discuss organic farming techniques, the organic certification process and more. If you are located in California's Central Valley, San Joaquin Valley, or the Napa and Sonoma region and are interested in getting involved, CCOF is currently accepting applications for trainee farmer participants in addition to the important mentor farmer positions. Enrollment forms and additional information are available at: www.ccof.org/programs.php.

Fred Thomas, Going Organic Project Coordinator, Chico, CA 530-891-6958, fred@cerusconsulting.com.

About CCOF

CCOF, a nonprofit organization formed by a group of grassroots activist farmers in 1973, is one of the oldest and largest organic certifiers in North America. CCOF's purpose is to promote and support organic agriculture in California and elsewhere 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.

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