



CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy

For Immediate Release

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Organic Farming Takes Important Step Forward with Biodiversity Conservation

Santa Cruz, CA, January 5, 2006 - To continually improve and strengthen the implementation of organic standards, CCOF, the largest organic certifier in the United States, has partnered with the Wild Farm Alliance (WFA) to promote and develop biodiversity conservation guidelines for organic farming. CCOF is the first national certifier to work extensively with the WFA on its organics and biodiversity project. Together, these two groups support habitat conservation, water quality, and wildlife preservation in national organic farm standards and certification. While current organic standards clearly require the protection of biodiversity resources on and around organic farms, until now, organic growers lacked clear guidelines on how to achieve this. As the world faces a mounting biodiversity crisis, these groups hope to lead the way for agriculture to be an increasingly positive force for the environment.

CCOF and several of its certified organic growers worked with WFA by actively developing and testing biodiversity strategies on real-life organic farms. Under this project, WFA developed biodiversity guidelines for organic farmers and organic certification agencies in the United States. WFA also produced booklets for both farmers and organic certifiers to help them understand how to implement biodiversity considerations into their ongoing activities. These guides have been sent to every certified organic grower and certifier in the country.

“As a leader in the development and support of organic farming for more than 30 years, CCOF continually strives to improve and evolve organic standards and farming practices. The biodiversity efforts of the Wild Farm Alliance represent an important step forward towards increasingly meaningful organic food products” said Jake Lewin, CCOF’s Director of Marketing. Jo Ann Baumgartner, WFA’s Director, explains that “Biodiversity is clearly a component of U.S. organic standards. Our work helps clarify the requirements and assists both farmers and certifiers understand how to address them.”

In an important development, the WFA biodiversity guidelines have been accepted by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and integrated into their model organic certification application. This is an important step towards the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Organic Program enforcing these requirements for all organic farmed products in the United States.

About CCOF

CCOF, a nonprofit organization formed by a group of grassroots activist farmers in 1973, is the oldest and largest organic certifier 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.

About the Wild Farm Alliance

The Wild Farm Alliance was established by a national group of wildlands proponents and ecological farming advocates who share a concern for the land and its wild and human inhabitants. Their mission is to promote a healthy, viable agriculture that helps protect and restore wild Nature. www.wildfarmalliance.org

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