



CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy

For Immediate Release

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Environmental Awards for Organic Sector Give CCOF Much to Celebrate this Earth Day

(April 12, 2010) Santa Cruz, CA. CCOF has much to celebrate during Earth Day activities this year as a number of CCOF certified and supporting members recently received awards and recognition for their efforts in waste reduction, energy efficiency, extraordinary land stewardship, and water conservation.

CCOF certified Panorama Meats, Inc. announced that one of its founding ranches, Leavitt Lake Ranches in Vina, California, was awarded the 2009 National Environmental Stewardship Award on January 28 at the 2010 Cattle Industry Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas. Operated by Darrell and Callie Wood, Leavitt Lake Ranches earned the award for its environmental stewardship while improving production and profitability. Panorama's environmental stewardship practices on the nearly 40,000 acres of Northern California rangeland that they own, lease, or manage include restoration of vernal pools and protection of wildlife habitat for native species such as mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and upland game birds. Additionally, they have improved irrigation systems and riparian conditions, conserving habitat for spawning wild salmon.

CCOF Lifetime Supporting Business Member UNFI, on March 2, 2010, was awarded the Nutrition Business Journal's Environment and Sustainability Award for 2009. UNFI's position as an environmentally conscious natural and organic foods distributor, with access to retailers on one side and manufacturers on the other, puts them in a central position to promote organics, carbon reduction, and recycling. UNFI's Chesterfield, New Hampshire, distribution center has also been awarded the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star rating. To qualify for Energy Star, the 319,000 square-foot facility had to place among the top 25 percent of the most energy-efficient facilities in the United States. Buildings that earn the Energy Star rating typically utilize 35 percent less energy and emit 35 percent less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere when compared to average buildings.

CCOF certified Fetzer Vineyards has been recognized for the 13th year by the 2009 Waste Reduction Award Program (WRAP) of the California Integrated Waste Management Board for their outstanding achievements in reducing, reusing, and recycling. Fetzer reduced its landfill waste by 96 percent in 2008. Part of that success was achieved through Fetzer's recycling initiative, which recycles more than 968 tons of glass, cardboard, paper, plastics, metal, pallets, barrels, and other items. In 2008, Fetzer underwent a major packaging change that converted its entire line of wines to light-weight bottles. The conversion reduced the per bottle weight by an average of 14 percent, resulting in a savings of 2,173 tons of glass per year.

Also in the wine industry, CCOF certified Benziger Family Winery in Glen Ellen, California, recently gained attention for creating an almost completely closed loop water system for their winery. The closed loop system works by filtering water through three ponds, which begin with water containing grape sediment and other organic materials and ends with water nearly clean enough for human consumption. The ponds use natural resources such as organisms living on plant roots in the ponds to filter out impurities. In a normal year, Benziger Family Winery is able to completely irrigate their land without drawing any irrigation water from the ground, an impressive and innovative feat. Benziger has also been nominated for "Best Sonoma Winery" for the 2010 Best of the Bay List.

These exciting awards recognize the commitment CCOF members have to continually redefine the role organic food plays in helping us to be responsible stewards of our planet. To celebrate, CCOF is participating in two Earth Day events in Santa Cruz, California. Look for the CCOF booth at the Ecocruz Earth Day 2010 event held at the San Lorenzo Park and Beachlands on Saturday, April 17th and for the CCOF table at the Santa Cruz Downtown Farmers' Market on Wednesday April 21st. The CCOF intern team will be present to share information about the [benefits of buying and eating organic foods](#), understanding organic labeling, and nutrition benefits of eating organic while also hosting fun kid's activities.

Conversations at the booth will also be focusing on the important role organic agriculture is playing in mitigating climate change. CCOF will distribute a special issue of the *CCOF Certified Organic Magazine*, which includes a feature article written by Tim LaSalle, Executive Director of the Rodale Institute on this topic. "We want to use this opportunity to talk about how organic farming protects our environment," says Bridgett McGrath, CCOF Marketing Specialist and UC Santa Cruz Environmental Studies graduate. "Organic soil sequesters more carbon and retains more water than soil managed conventionally, which has a large impact on the amount of CO₂ going into the atmosphere."

A number of CCOF certified organic members will also be represented at both events. At Ecocruz, the beer garden will include CCOF certified member Santa Cruz Mountain Brewery. The events promise to be a great hit for kids, families, and anyone interested in organics.

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 product and to expand public support for organic agriculture.*
- *Advocacy for governmental policies that protect and encourage organic agriculture.*

CCOF certifies more than 2,160 organic operations in 34 states and three foreign countries and serves over 350 supporting members - consumers, suppliers, businesses and individuals - interested in supporting its work.

More information on CCOF can be found at www.ccof.org . For more information on CCOF member's awards visit: www.ccof.org/in-news.php

For more information on organic events visit: www.ccof.org/calendar.php

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