



CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy

For Immediate Release

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CCOF Supports Landmark California Industrial Hemp Legislation

February 22, 2005 (Santa Cruz, CA) – In a move to secure unique economic opportunities for California’s organic farmers, CCOF has announced its support of industrial hemp legislation introduced by Assemblyman Mark Leno, 13th District (San Francisco). To show its support, CCOF will participate in a press conference with Assemblyman Leno at the California State Capital, Room 1190, at 9:00 AM on Wednesday, February 23.

This legislation provides for the legal production of industrial hemp in the state and represents an important move forward for California’s consumers, farmers and agricultural community. Currently, numerous hemp based products are produced in Canada and imported into the state for processing and sale. This bill provides the opportunity to bring the several thousand acres of hemp production to California where farmers can enjoy the income opportunity and rotation crop options.

Because the majority of hemp food products sold are certified organic, CCOF sees this as an important step towards expanding the market viability of organic growers in the state. “CCOF is aware of companies that are ready to develop production contracts with organic growers as soon as this legislation is passed. With the U.S. hemp foods industry poised for dramatic growth, CCOF is pleased to see the courageous actions of Assemblyman Leno, Whole Foods Markets, Nutiva Hemp Foods and all the other organizations that are supporting this legislation” said Vanessa Bogenholm, CCOF Board Chair and owner of VB Farms.

“We contacted many of our growers throughout the state and found that they were excited about this opportunity and welcomed hemp production options for their farms. In a time when business in California is harder than ever and agricultural industries depend on every opportunity, every new crop and income option cannot be ignored. As the certifier of more than 75% of California’s organic acreage, CCOF welcomes every new crop planted in the state,” said CCOF’s Director of Marketing and International Programs Jake Lewin.

Under the bill, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) will oversee hemp production locations and issue specific production permits. Nutiva Hemp Foods, a leading supplier of organic hemp food products, is projecting a need for well over 10,000 acres of contracted hemp acres in 2008. CCOF fully supports awarding these contracts to California’s organic growers. Assemblyman Leno’s legislation makes this a very real possibility.

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Press conference to be held on February 23 at 9:00 a.m. in the California State Capitol, Room 1190

WHO: **Assemblyman Mark Leno**, 13th District (San Francisco)
Vanessa Bogenholm, VB Farms, Chair of California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)
Other legislators and speakers to be announced
Representatives from Whole Foods Market
John Roulac, President of Nutiva (Sebastopol-based hemp food brand)
Candi Penn, Executive Director of the Hemp Industries Association
David Bronner, President of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps (Escondido)

WHAT: Press conference on New Industrial Hemp Legislation
WHEN: Wednesday, February 23, 2005, at 9:00 a.m.
WHERE: California State Capitol, Room 1190, Sacramento, California

About CCOF

CCOF, a nonprofit organization, was founded in 1973 and is one of the nation's largest and oldest third-party organic certifying agencies. 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 product and to expand public support for organic agriculture.*
- Advocacy for governmental policies that protect and encourage organic agriculture.*

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