



CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy

For Immediate Release

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Educational Conference To Discuss How Organic Practices Help Mitigate Climate Change

(December 30, 2009) Santa Cruz, CA – CCOF’s 2010 Educational Conference, titled “Healthy Soils, Healthy Food,” will discuss how organic practices throughout the food supply chain can help mitigate climate change. Participants will hear how organic farming, processing and, consumer activities can lead to a healthier environment and improved food system. The conference, sponsored by True Organics and by CCOF’s North Valley Chapter, takes place February 6-7, 2010 at the University Farm Pavilion at the College of Agriculture, CSU Chico.

The conference will kick-off with a keynote speech by Tim LaSalle, Executive Director of the Rodale Institute on how regenerative organic farming through carbon sequestration and water conservation provides a solution to global warming. This will be followed by a panel discussion on agriculture and climate change and break-out sessions on the importance of soil, eco-friendly food processing and how retailers and consumers, through the power of their food dollars, can have influence. Day two of the weekend conference includes tours of CCOF certified operations including CSU’s Organic Farm and Dairy, LaRocca Vineyards and Winery and Lundberg Family Farms. Attendees will have the opportunity to interact with speakers, to learn hands on solutions, to find out what policies are being developed, to learn how to influence those policies, and to take away valuable knowledge and solutions that can be implemented on their farms, in their operations or through their purchasing habits.

“There’s never been a more important time to take on this subject matter,” states Claudia Reid, CCOF Policy and Program Director who planned the agenda. “We are very pleased to bring together this group of experts to talk about climate change and how it affects their activities.” Panel participants include representatives from California Climate and Agriculture Network and the Environmental Defense Fund, Coalition on Greenhouse Gases.

The three breakout sessions will cover topics of interest to growers, master gardeners, food processors, retailers, and consumers. The ‘Why Soil is Crucial’ session is especially relevant to producers. “In the fight against global warming, agriculture has historically been an underestimated and undervalued tool, known primarily for the negative impact of its inputs. Yet Rodale Institute research* positions organic farming that favors soil health as one of the most powerfully effective strategies we have for mitigating and adapting to global warming”, states LaSalle in an article in CCOF’s *Certified Organic* magazine. “By decreasing agriculture’s fossil-fuel based inputs and greatly expanding the amount of CO₂ stored as soil carbon, organic farmers can have a positive role in saving our planet.”

The ‘How Can Processing be Eco-friendly’ discussion group includes representatives from Earthbound Farm, Dixon Ridge Farms, and Lundberg Family Farms. Earthbound Farm has been

farming organically for over 25 years and is now the first in the sector to make their salad clamshell containers from 100% post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic – products like soda and water bottles that have been used and then recycled. They estimate that every year their switch to PCR plastic will save 424,224 million BTUs of energy, 68,307 gallons of water; 16,191 tons of CO₂ emissions and 1,308,623 pounds of solid waste. Dixon Ridge Farms continues to work towards moving “off the grid” and full-energy efficiency using innovative technologies including the addition of a 50kW generator to convert walnut shells into renewable energy. Lundberg Family received a 2008 Environmental Protection Agency Green Power Leadership Award for its voluntary efforts to address climate change after installing a solar array that covers a full acre in addition to two solar photovoltaic arrays on the company warehouses, generating up to 15% of total power. As a participant in Green Power Partnership, Lundberg also offsets its total electricity use through the purchase of Renewable Energy Credits.

The consumer and retail break out panel includes, amongst others, participants from the Consumers Union; Albert’s Organics, a subsidiary of UNFI, one of the nation’s largest distributors of natural and organic produce; as well as the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) who are behind the ‘Buy Fresh, Buy Local’ campaigns in California.

The conference provides something for everyone interested in food production and the role it can play in mitigating climate change,” states Tina Cosentino, CCOF Program Specialist and conference coordinator. “We’re hoping for a high turn out and lots of good, vibrant discussion throughout the day, with everyone being able to take home ideas for action they can implement on their farm, in their company or at home.”

CCOF’s Annual Meeting on the evening of Saturday, February 6, is also an integral part of this organic annual convention. Annual Meeting attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the accomplishments of CCOF in 2009 as well as give input to the organization’s future strategic planning process. The meeting, which is open to CCOF members and the general public, will be followed by a reception featuring organic food and beverages and will provide an ideal opportunity for anyone looking to network in the organic community.

More information on CCOF’s Educational Conference and Annual Meeting can be found on the Programs and Events section of their website, www.ccof.org.

References:

*The Rodale Institute’s Compost Utilization Trials (CUT), which took place over a nine-year period, trapped the soil carbon equivalent of more than 7,000 pounds of carbon dioxide in their soils, thanks in part to the composted carbon content of leaves that might otherwise have been released as CO₂. If 7,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per acre could be withdrawn from the atmosphere and stored on all 434 million acres of American cropland, nearly 1.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide would be sequestered per year, mitigating close to one quarter of this country’s total fossil fuel emissions. This is the equivalent of taking one car off the road for every two acres.

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 four countries and serves over 350 supporting members - consumers, suppliers, businesses and individuals - interested in supporting its work.

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

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