



CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy

For Immediate Release

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CCOF Streamlines Organic Certification with Online Services

(July 30, 2008) Santa Cruz, CA – CCOF streamlined the certification process this week with the introduction of a range of online services for certified clients and applicants. The new digital documentation includes online certification applications, renewals and payment options as well as e-forms covering key areas of certification such as requests to add acreage, review input materials and expedite services.

CCOF plans to grow revenue by 12% annually and double the number of certified operations to 4000 by 2013. The streamlining of the certification process while maintaining the highest level of organic integrity is a key strategy for achieving this goal.

“As we strive to meet the needs of clients, it’s critical we maximize the use of technology,” stated CCOF Director of Certification Services, Jake Lewin. “We are proud to be the first organic certification agency to implement such a comprehensive suite of electronic services and to demonstrate to our clients our ongoing commitment to bringing them customer service improvements, online services and cost-savings.”

The move to electronic documents aims to reduce both the paperwork and time involved in key certification service areas. CCOF anticipates that the introduction of the new online services will be welcomed by its wide range of certified operations. Less time spent on organic certification documentation activities means farmers can spend more time out in the field rather than in the office. And processors and handlers will be able to divert resources to other administrative tasks or areas of manufacturing.

“The new online services will certainly assist certified operations with their paperwork,” said Malcolm Ricci of CCOF certified Bolthouse. “We will definitely be using them. The paperwork for organic certification was cumbersome and time-consuming. In the past we’ve downloaded the papers, scanned our own documents and cut and pasted text. On one occasion we even tried to duplicate the necessary forms ourselves. The new online documents solve this problem. Being able to type in the information directly and then email the form back with attachments will make things much simpler and save us a lot of time”.

CCOF has long been a leader and innovator in organic certification. The new online services are a part of a much larger organizational strategy to make use of the best available technology. This includes migrating to a new data management system using state-of-the-art European certification software. “The new database software will vastly improve upon our existing internal certification operations and will increase our ability to grow as the demand of organic certification rises.” stated Amanda Paulson, Director of CCOF Information Technology.

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. Today CCOF certifies more than 1,800 organic farmers, processors, handlers, retailers, and private labelers, and over 800 products and services in 29 states and six countries. 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.*

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