



CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy

For Immediate Release

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CCOF Provides Financial Support to Organic Producers

(January 7, 2009) Santa Cruz, CA – CCOF announced today two initiatives to financially assist organic producers; a disaster relief program and help with accessing The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cost Share Funding Program, an integral part of the 2008 Farm Bill.

CCOF has offered relief funding to certified organic members who have incurred losses due to natural disasters for the past three years. In 2008, they received 22 applications for relief funding and made 22 awards totaling \$15,000 to organic farmers in California and Texas. The majority of recipients had been affected by a cold snap in April 2008, which resulted in freezing conditions and crop loss. Other recipients of the relief funds were victims of the fires in northern and southern California last year.

“Our Disaster Relief Program has made a positive impact on our members over the past three years,” states Peggy Miars, CCOF Executive Director, “The awards compensate members for some or all of the annual cost of being certified. The money is our way of helping them get their business back on track.”

The second initiative is related to the 2008 Farm Bill in which the USDA provided funds to be distributed to operations that have been certified organic by a USDA accredited certifier. CCOF has developed a guide and resources to help members secure these funds.

One of the successes of the 2008 Farm Bill for the organic sector was the large increase in Cost Share Funding. Certified organic operations that are eligible can apply to be reimbursed up to 75 percent of their organic certification costs, to a maximum of \$750 per year. “We are in difficult economic times and farmers and food producers are affected too,” says Claudia Reid, CCOF Policy Director. “This money can help our members stay in business and we believed it was important to make the process of getting together the necessary paperwork and supporting documentation as easy as possible. CCOF has received 140 requests for support materials to date, which represents almost 7% of our membership base, and we expect this number to grow.” added Reid.

More information on these initiatives and CCOF can be found at www.ccof.org.

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 2,000 organic operations in 35 states and four foreign 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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