

For Immediate Release



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CCOF and Oregon Tilth Announce Planned Merger

Joining Forces to Grow the Organic Movement Together

(May 21, 2012) Santa Cruz, Calif./Corvallis, Ore. – CCOF and Oregon Tilth, two of the nation’s leaders in the organic movement and certification, have announced plans to merge. Together, the two organizations, as CCOF Tilth, will strengthen the visibility and voice of organic, one of the fastest growing sectors of U.S. agriculture. Membership of both organizations will be asked to ratify the merger before October 31, 2012.

“Both Oregon Tilth’s and CCOF’s origins date back to the 1970s amidst growing interest in the benefits of organic farming,” said Chris Schreiner, Executive Director of Oregon Tilth. “We both have deep roots in the organic movement.”

“The merger will create the strongest mission-driven certification program in the country,” said CCOF Executive Director Cathy Calfo, “supported by a trade association of nearly 4,000 certified farmers, ranchers, and processors, and a robust educational foundation.”

The two organizations have a long history of collaboration. During the 1980s, CCOF and Oregon Tilth formed the Western Alliance of Certifying Organizations to ensure integrity and consistency in organic certification. In the 1990s, the two nonprofits helped form the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), which determines if input products are allowed for use in organic production and processing.

During the past decade, organically grown products have become the fastest growing sector in agriculture as consumers have become more concerned about how their food is grown and processed. Sales of organic products have increased annually by as much as 20% and represent a \$31 billion sector of the agricultural industry.

Farmers and food processors who currently use CCOF or Oregon Tilth labels on their product will be allowed to continue to do so; however, a new CCOF Tilth label will be released this fall.

For more information visit www.ccoftilthmerger.org.

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About CCOF and Oregon Tilth

CCOF (California Certified Organic Farmers), a nonprofit organization, was founded in 1973 and is the nation's oldest and largest third-party organic certification agency. 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 2,321 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.

Oregon Tilth is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support and promote biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture through education, research, advocacy and product certification. Its programs educate producers, consumers, and public leaders about agricultural practices that conserve natural resources, prevent environmental degradation, and produce a fair and healthful food supply.

Oregon Tilth certifies more than 1400 organic operations in 46 states and 6 countries, and serves over 200 supporting members.

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