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OREGON ORGANIC COALITION BESTOWS AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE ON SIX OREGON INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES

Regulatory Director of Organic Standards and Food Safety at the Organic Trade Association, Gwendolyn Wyard, Gives Keynote at Luncheon Celebrating Oregon's Organic Food Trade

PORTLAND, Ore. - September 15, 2015

The recipients of the 2015 Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC) Awards for Excellence were announced today at a celebratory luncheon at the Ecotrust Building in Portland, Oregon. More than 70 representatives from Oregon's farming, retail, academic, political and food production communities gathered together to honor these organic innovators.

The event featured a keynote address by Gwendolyn Wyard, of the Organic Trade Association (OTA). Throughout her 20 year career in the organic industry, Gwendolyn Wyard has been serving Oregon and the larger organic trade by expanding and innovating the regulations and standards of organic certification with integrity and passion. Wyard emphasized the positive economic and environmental impacts of organic agriculture, and the organic trade, in Oregon. "Organic supports the environment and the economy," stated Wyard. "Organic agriculture improves the health of soil, maintains and increases biodiversity, supports pollinator health, safeguards natural resources, and reduces causes of climate change. Organic can alleviate rural poverty and hunger by creating more jobs through its profitability, and by improving rural livelihoods."

OOC Awards for Excellence were given to individuals and organizations that demonstrated innovation in organic practices, service to the industry, expansion of organic business opportunities and overall achievement in the state's organic industry.

The following individuals and organizations were honored:

Advocate-Individual:

Barry Haynes, Ashland Food Co-op, Ashland, OR

Barry Haynes has supported organic production and distribution since joining the Co-op in 1995. As Produce Manager he has been instrumental in developing the Co-op's longstanding commitments with regional farmers by offering advice on shipping, cleaning and marketing their produce. Thanks to his

commitment to providing only the best to the community, organic produce sales have grown year after year. He also helped the Co-op become Southern Oregon's first certified organic retail food store in 2008.

Policy Analyst:

Gwendolyn Wyard, Organic Trade Association

Throughout her 20 year career in the organic industry, Gwendolyn Wyard has been serving the organic trade by maintaining the integrity of organic certification by developing regulations, policies and standards with integrity. Working with various organic trade organizations and policy initiatives, she has been a resource for organic production and compliance-her guidance and education has benefited organic farmers, processors and consumers in Oregon and beyond.

Processor:

Pacific Botanicals, Grants Pass, Oregon

Since 1984, Pacific Botanicals has been a certified organic crop producer. In 1994 they became a certified handler-well before the USDA National Organic Standards implementation. Their dedication to organic integrity follows the entire chain of supply-from seed, to soil to herbs sprouts-all 200 + products are certified organic.

Farm (Crops):

Denison Farms, Corvallis, Oregon

For over 30 years, Tom Denison has been growing organic produce just outside Corvallis, OR on Denison Farms. As an innovative farmer, he was one of the first to use tunnel growhouses to extend his production season. He has led efforts to provide housing for his workers at a significant personal expense, and provides education on organic farming through programs such as the Northwest Farmer to Farmer Exchange.

Farm (Livestock):

Horsepower Organics, Halfway, Oregon

David and Deborah Mader have been committed to operating organically even before becoming officially certified in 1993. As their name suggests, the farm relies on draft horse training to raise livestock and produce items like eggs, hay and rowcrops. This unique system utilizes the power of horses instead of modern machinery to complete tasks like feeding, discing, harrowing, plowing, manure spreading, mowing, fence building, and hay hauling in an environment where all animals are nurtured like family and treated with respect. To help educate and introduce others to these principles, internships are offered each year.

Retailer:

Astoria Co-op Grocery, Astoria Washington

Astoria Co-op Grocery works diligently to source organic, healthy foods for the community while fostering growth a cooperative atmosphere. Kelly Huckestein, Produce Manager, sits on the board of the North Coast Food Web Project (NCFW) and has been focused on sourcing organic and locally grown foods in the department. Walk through their produce department and you'll find that sourcing organic produce ranks highest in their purchasing priorities. The Co-op also raises funds for NCFW's Fruit Box program through donations at checkout, which goes to local school programs that provide students free organic fruit.

Organically Grown in Oregon Week is presented by the Oregon Organic Coalition, with generous support from Organically Grown Company, Oregon Tilth, Ecotrust, and Organic Valley. To see a full list of member organizations and OGOW sponsors, please visit www.oregonorganiccoalition.org.

About the Oregon Organic Coalition

The OOC is a trade support organization, working to advance the development and growth of the organic industry and community in Oregon. The OOC consists of a wide array of key players in Oregon's organic industry who volunteer their time and energy—from farmers to wholesalers and processors, as well as organic certifiers, scientists, consumers and retailers. The OOC acts as an organizing body, providing direction and endorsement of activities in promotion of Oregon's organic trade, such as the re-enlivening of OGOW every September and advocating for continued federal support for organic research at Oregon State University.

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