



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOING BEYOND ORGANIC:
SALMON-SAFE & OREGON TILTH ROLL OUT "SALMON-SAFE ORGANIC" LABEL:
OFFERED TO ORGANIC FARMERS WHO FURTHER PROTECT WATER & WILDLIFE

Joint label to help educate consumers about the importance of local, ecologically sustainable agriculture on the West Coast.

(Portland, OR) Salmon-Safe, one of the nation's leading regional eco-labels, has joined with Oregon Tilth, the leading West Coast organic certifier, to launch a high profile effort to integrate sustainable food production and wildlife preservation in the salmon watersheds of the Pacific Northwest.

"We think it's a great complement to the new National Organic Program," said Pete Gonzalves, executive director of Oregon Tilth. "Working with Salmon-Safe is a way for us to bring additional value to family-scale organic farmers in the Northwest that are devoted to protecting our watersheds but still have to compete with industrial farming from outside our region."

Three organic farms in southern Oregon's Applegate River basin are the first to receive certification under the joint guidelines. Certified farms include Herb Pharm, an 85-acre grower of medicinal herbs and the nation's leading herbal extract company, as well as two smaller organic operators. Oregon Tilth and Salmon-Safe will offer the program to Tilth's entire 220 farm West Coast grower base.

"Organic farmers have led the way to a better, healthier agriculture," said Dan Kent, Salmon-Safe managing director. "By incorporating organic practices as the foundation for a farming system that is anchored in the conservation of our salmon watersheds, we hope to advance ecologically sustainable agriculture nationally."

A new streamlined Salmon-Safe organic "overlay" standard was jointly developed by Oregon Tilth and Salmon-Safe by comparing Salmon-Safe's certification program with the national organic standard. The overlay standard includes additional riparian area management and judicious irrigation water use requirements that are either not covered, or are covered only indirectly, under organic certification. "While organic farmers tend to be among the best farmers in their watersheds, we've worked with organic farms that have a ways to go to meet our habitat protection guidelines because of casual irrigation practices or inadequate riparian buffer protection," said Kent.

Since 1997, Salmon-Safe has worked with both organic and conventional growers with the objective of minimizing ecological impacts from agriculture. Leading organic operators such as the Organic Valley cooperative of dairies and Lundberg Family Farms have received Salmon-Safe certification for their pioneering efforts to farm in an ecologically sustainable manner.

Teresa Marquez, national marketing director for Organic Valley, said, "We're happy to see a fast track to Salmon-Safe certification for our membership of family-owned organic dairies. We know our consumers want to buy organic, environmentally friendly, and locally sourced milk; Salmon-Safe helps us deliver that message."

To raise awareness of the program, the Portland advertising firm Livengood/Nowack has created a print advertising campaign targeting the organic farming community. "Thanks organic farmers," says the first in a series of print ads that Oregon Tilth and Salmon-Safe will be placing in organic industry trade publications.

For organic crops to earn the Salmon-Safe logo, they must be produced according to rigorous conservation guidelines. These guidelines include using cover crops to minimize erosion into streams, promoting natural methods to control weeds and pests, planting trees near streams to keep them cool enough for fish to thrive, and improving irrigation practices.

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More information about Salmon-Safe is available by visiting www.salmonsafe.org. Salmon-Safe has worked cooperatively with more than 70 private landowners and certified approximately 30,000 acres of farmland in critical salmon watersheds, primarily in Oregon. The Salmon-Safe public education campaign has been featured in more than 200 natural food stores and supermarkets throughout the West. Consumers Union, publisher of Consumers Reports, gives Salmon-Safe high marks for its certification program rigor and objectivity.

More information about Oregon Tilth is available by visiting www.tilth.org. Oregon Tilth is a non-profit research and education organization certifying organic farmers, processors, retailers and handlers throughout Oregon, the United States, and internationally. As a member-driven organization with chapters throughout the state, and members around the world, Oregon Tilth's mission is to support and promote biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture. Since 1974, Tilth has brought together individuals from rural and urban environments working to advance organic and sustainable food production practices.