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**ARE YOU AN ORGANIC INNOVATOR?
NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR OREGON ORGANIC COALITION'S 2012
AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE**

Governor Kitzhaber Proclaims September 9-15, 2012 "Organically Grown in Oregon Week"

SALEM, Ore. – *June 21, 2012* – Nominations are now being accepted for candidates for Oregon Organic Coalition's 2012 Awards for Excellence, the annual recognition of farmers, food processors, researchers, retailers, and individuals who are leading the state's organic sector. Winners will be announced during the Oregon Organic Coalition's awards luncheon on Wednesday, September 12, 2012, a highlight of Organically Grown in Oregon Week.

To be considered for this prestigious award, nominees are required to qualify in a variety of categories, including innovation in organic practices; service to the industry; expansion of organic business opportunities; and overall achievement in the state's organic industry. **The nomination deadline is August 1, 2012** and applications are available at <http://www.oregonorganiccoalition.org/award.html>. 2011 winners included Sauvie Island Organics, Bliss Unlimited – makers of Coconut Bliss, Sundance Natural Foods, Mountain Rose Herbs, Jim Weaver (Organic Advocate) and Laura Barton (Organic Policy Analyst).

In recognition of the importance of organic farmers, processors and distributors to the state, Oregon Governor John A. Kitzhaber renewed a proclamation declaring **September 9-15, 2012, *Organically Grown in Oregon Week***.

"Oregon's organic agricultural trade is a vital segment of Oregon's economy, and I'm proud to recognize it and its leaders with *Organically Grown in Oregon Week*," says Governor Kitzhaber. "Thanks in large part to the Oregon Organic Coalition, Oregon continues to be one of the leaders of the movement toward sustainable, environmentally-responsible farming. *Organically Grown in Oregon Week* is a great way to highlight our continued innovation in and commitment to the field of organics. "

2012 marks the 24th anniversary of *Organically Grown in Oregon Week*, a tradition that began in 1988 as a means for celebrating Oregon's organic industry and recognizing the leaders of Oregon's organic movement. The week-long celebration of the organic agricultural industry will include regional events, along with tastings of local organic foods and beverages, farm tours,

grassroots events, and the Oregon Organic Coalition's Awards Luncheon on September 12th, at the EcoTrust Building in Portland. For information about participating in *Organically Grown in Oregon Week* contact Stacy Kraker at 541.461.6473 or skraker@organicallygrown.com

The Governor's proclamation highlights the rapidly expanding organic sector of the state's agricultural economy. According to the most recent data, the amount of land being used to produce certified organic products has expanded to 156,000 acres, with more than 444 certified organic farms. Today, Oregon's organic agricultural trade brings in more than \$106.46 million in farm gate sales annually, with over 7% projected growth.

In his proclamation, Governor Kitzhaber also acknowledges Oregon's unique stature as a leader in organic agriculture, highlighted by the first organic standards legislation in 1973, the first published organic certification standards in 1987, and the first establishment of a statewide advocacy group – the Oregon Organic Coalition – to help promote the organic industry.

Organically Grown in Oregon Week is presented by the Oregon Organic Coalition, with generous support from Organically Grown Company, Oregon Tilth, Organic Valley and Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides.

About Oregon Organic Coalition

The Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC) was formed in 2005 to advance the development and growth of the state's organic agricultural community and trade. OOC brings together representatives of the organic trade as the stakeholders of the organic food system. Together, they support research on organic systems at Oregon State University, advocacy, alliances with like-minded groups, marketing programs and conferences, and provide direction and endorsements for activities that promote Oregon's organic industry.

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