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June 19, 2006

Dear Friends:

The Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA (RAFI-USA), in cooperation with The National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture (NCSA) and the National Organic Coalition (NOC), is seeking your collaboration and support for participating in one or more in a series of dialogues on the future of organic. The goals are to help identify proactive steps at this historical moment and to strengthen U.S. organic integrity. Many of us have devoted our lives to building this more sustainable system of agriculture and as we all know, organic is facing some very difficult challenges as well as many potentially great opportunities –

To name just a few:

- Rapid growth and demand continuing to out strip supply,
- Many new players entering the marketplace,
- Continued consolidation and concentration over the production and supply chain
- Regulatory, legal and legislative instability
- 2007 Farm Bill
- Growing energy crisis and global climate change;

Much is at stake in how we manage this growth and what strategies and goals we set for our future.

RAFI, NCSA, and NOC are seeking your help to take seminal steps in 2006 toward a National Organic Action Plan and a National Summit in 2007/2008. Such a plan is necessary to realize the fullest potential of organic and to ensure that the farmers, the public and the progressive organic businesses can help to strategically shape our future.

Beginning this summer we, along with many partners, will lay the groundwork by:

- Creating and convening a planning team for a National Organic Action Plan;
- Developing plans for regional dialogues for late 2006 and 2007; and
- Developing plans for a U.S. Summit on a National Organic Action Plan in late 2007 or early 2008.

In the face of rapid growth and demand for organic, the future of the USDA label hangs in the balance. Safeguarding hard-won organic-label gains must remain a priority for friends of organic, but defending organic against its attackers is, by definition, a reactive and piecemeal strategy.

A more proactive and comprehensive approach is required to protect and grow organic for the future. Reconnecting with the grassroots and reinvigorating grassroots voices -- especially the voice of U.S. farmers -- in activities to develop a National Organic Action Plan, can create

structures to link grassroots voices with the federal debate as well as dialog and action to shape the future of organic.

While restoring the U.S. farmer's voice in organic is a major objective of this work, it will also give civil society organizations and progressive businesses their rightful place in designing the future of organic agriculture. The regional dialogues can help strengthen leadership within the regions and contribute leaders and ideas for the summit on the National Organic Action Plan. Completion of this work can produce buy-in from multiple stakeholders, identify leaders for the work ahead, and generate a set of informed ideas for the agenda, architecture and processes of a National Organic Action Plan.

Simply put, we are asking for your help to hold in-person and electronic dialogue meetings in each region of the United States.

We are asking you to support this project in signing up to be a part of this dialogue, by filling out the coupon below.

Thank you in advance for your participation,

Michael Sligh, Rural Advancement Foundation International

msligh@rafiusa.org

RESPONSE FORM:

Name: _____

Address, City, State, Zip _____

Farm or Organization Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

1. Are you interested in participating in a regional dialogue about the future of organic?

Y _____ N _____

2. Are you interested in helping to organize a regional dialogue?

Y _____ N _____

3. Are you interested in participating in a National Summit on the future of organic?

Y _____ N _____

4.

Are you interested in receiving periodic updates and/or proposals seeking your response?

Y _____ N _____

***Please return this form to: Liana Hoodes. 3540 Route 52, Pine Bush, NY 12566 or
Email: Liana@hvc.rr.com. Questions: 845-744-2304***