



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Amy Brown  
[amyb@seed-pr.com](mailto:amyb@seed-pr.com) or 503.341.3795

### **Oregon Organic Coalition Honors Four Organic Industry Leaders**

**PORTLAND, Ore.** - *March 3, 2009* – Four leaders in Oregon’s organic trade were honored with *Awards for Excellence* by the Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC) at the close of the first annual *Organicology* conference held last week in Portland and sponsored by OOC member organizations.

Winners were selected in four categories: Farmer (Crops): Charles Duryea, Grateful Harvest Farm, Junction City; Farmer (Livestock): Jos and Deanna Poland, Poland Farms, Madras; Retailer: First Alternative Co-op, Corvallis; and Organic Policy Analyst U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio, Springfield.

“These award winners are representative of the leaders who have helped shape the state’s organic landscape and they are indicative of the pivotal role that Oregon continues to play in the advancement of the organic industry,” said Lynn Coody, Chair of the Oregon Organic Coalition. “The continuing growth of Oregon’s supply and demand for organic production is a testament to the industry’s commitment to quality as well as its environmental stewardship.”

Oregon Tilth-certified organic acreage grew from 5,702 acres on 147 certified farms in 1997 to 61,918 acres on 346 certified farms in 2007, more than a 900 percent increase in one decade.

#### **About the Winners**

Charles Duryea and his family were recognized for their innovative, 26-acre Junction City farm where they grow 50 varieties of certified organic vegetables, fruit crops, cane berries and orchard fruit. **Grateful Harvest Farm** runs a community-supported agriculture (CSA) subscription operation that delivers fresh produce to customers weekly during the growing season and recently set up a certified organic commercial kitchen to process organic fruit leather, dried fruits and vegetables, and kimchi. The farm also sells to select retail groceries and at the Lane County Farmers Market.

**Jos and Deanna Poland of Poland Farms** in Madras converted a conventional dairy to organic practices three years ago, building a Holstein herd that now numbers 220 cows. In 2007 the Polands won an Exceptional Quality Award from Horizon Organic, an award recognizing the top 10 dairies in each state that produce for Horizon Organic. The Polands conduct on-farm research in conjunction with Oregon State University to ensure that the forages that are at the heart of their management practices are of the best possible quality.

**First Alternative Co-op**, which started humbly in a tiny house in Corvallis in 1970, is now a cooperative grocery owned by more than 7,100 members, with two successful stores that provide the largest selection of organic and natural foods in Corvallis. Organic is the norm, not the exception, at the co-op. “First Alt” also presents information on organic topics through classes, films, booths at events, newsletters and school field trips. In 2007 it was named “Business of the Year” by the Corvallis Chamber Coalition.

**U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio of Oregon’s Fourth District**, recognized for his role as an organic policy analyst, was a friend of Oregon’s organic farmers long before he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1986. DeFazio introduced and led passage of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) in the U.S. House, based on Oregon standards. The bill provided the legislative authority for establishment of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Organic Program (NOP), which now regulates the production and sale of organic foods in the U.S. and serves as the foundation for international negotiations on organic standards.

DeFazio co-founded and has continuously co-chaired the bipartisan Congressional Organic Caucus, which is dedicated to enhancing the availability and understanding of the production and processing of organic agricultural products and monitors federal policies that impact the research and policy needs of organic producers and processors.

### **Oregon’s Organic Trade Continues Record Growth**

The number of certified organic food processors in Oregon increased from 36 to 157 between 1998 and 2008 and wholesale organic produce sales increased from approximately \$1.5 million in 1988 to more than \$80 million in 2007. Direct sales through farmers markets have also increased the sales of organic produce; about 90,000 people visit Oregon farmers markets weekly during the growing season—many of them shopping for organic produce, with the number of markets expanding from 10 in the early 1990s to an estimated 88 in 2008.

The **Oregon Organic Coalition** was formed in 2005 to advance the development and growth of the state’s organic trade industry and organic agricultural community. Through research at Oregon State University, marketing programs and conferences, the OOC brings together representatives of the organic trade and stakeholders to provide direction and endorsements of activities that promote Oregon’s organic industry. For more information, visit [www.oregonorganiccoalition.org](http://www.oregonorganiccoalition.org)

The *Organicology* [www.organicology.org](http://www.organicology.org) conference was cosponsored by Oregon Tilth, Organic Seed Alliance, Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Association and Organically Grown Company.

# # #