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OFRF to Testify before First-ever Hearing on Organic Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives

Economic issues in organic agriculture to be focus of April 18th hearing

WASHINGTON, DC (April 18, 2007) - In an historic moment for organic farmers, the House Agriculture Committee is holding its first-ever hearing on organic agriculture and business on Wednesday, April 18, at 10:00am EDT. Mark Lipson, Policy Program Director for the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF), will testify before the Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture.

Lipson's testimony, titled "Overview of Federal Policy for Organic Agricultural Research and Development," will focus on obstacles facing the growth of domestic organic production and the gaps in organic production research and education, specifically touching on the following points:

- The strong demand for increased knowledge about production and marketing, and the need for increased information delivery and education for both transitioning and veteran organic growers;
- An overview of federal organic research, education, and development to date and specific areas and targets for increased funding;
- Obstacles organic farmers face in obtaining credit and fair crop insurance premiums

A complete copy of Lipson's testimony is available here:

http://ofrf.org/policy/federal_legislation/070418_lipson_housetestimony.pdf. Lipson is the author of OFRF's Searching for the O-Word and co-author of the soon to be published National Organic Research Agenda. He also co-founded OFRF's Organic Farmers Action Network. In addition to working for OFRF since 1995, Lipson has been an active partner in Molino Creek Farm, a certified organic vegetable operation in Davenport, California, since 1983.

"We want to publicly thank Agriculture Committee Chair Collin Peterson and Ranking Member Bob Goodlatte, as well as Subcommittee Chair Dennis Cardoza and Ranking Member Randy Neugebauer, for creating a forum to address the needs and issues of

America's 10,000 organic farmers," said Bob Scowcroft, Executive Director of OFRF. "These farmers have experienced decades of challenges in honing their craft, and we humbly look forward to representing them and assisting them in educating the members of the Subcommittee and of Congress.

"The creation of this Subcommittee, the first of its kind, provides organic farmers with an opportunity to cultivate new ground in Congress. With the reauthorization of the Farm Bill under way, that opportunity has never been more important," said Scowcroft.

The Organic Farming Research Foundation was founded in 1990 to foster the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming practices. Working organic farmers from across the United States comprise the majority of OFRF's Board of Directors.

OFRF established the Organic Farmers Action Network in 2006. More than 600 organic farmers from all 50 states voice their opinions on organic policy issues directly to their Representatives through OFAN.

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