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Organic Industry Leaders Join Together To Help Organic Farmers

Nature's Path Organic Foods and Organic Valley Support Rodale Institute's Farmers Can Be Heroes Campaign

Richmond, BC and La Farge, Wisconsin – February 17, 2009 Giving back is good business. That's why two leading organic food manufacturers, Nature's Path Organic Foods, North America's number one maker of organic cereal and Organic Valley, America's largest cooperative of organic farmers, have joined with *Organic Gardening* magazine to support the Farmers Can Be Heroes program of the Rodale Institute, a leader in on-farm organic research and education.

Farmers Can Be Heroes is an outreach and education program designed to portray organic farmers as the heroes who not only feed us, but are on the frontline mitigating climate change and preserving the earth for future generations. The Farmers Can Be Heroes website (www.hero-farmers.org) offers an online course for conventional farmers interested in transitioning to organic, as well as other tools and information. The program seeks to influence farmers to transition to organic methods as well as convince consumers to "become a hero" by buying organic products to support "hero" organic farmers.

Consumers can support hero farmers and the Rodale Institute by purchasing one Organic Valley product and one Nature's Path product and then mailing in both proof of purchases. In return, they will receive a free, one-year subscription to *Organic Gardening* magazine and a chance to win a year of free breakfasts (organic milk and cereal). Furthermore, Organic Valley and Nature's Path will contribute \$1 each for every proof of purchase mailed in for a contribution of up to \$50,000 to the Rodale Institute's Farmers Can Be Heroes program. The money will be used to enhance curriculum and outreach to farmers.

“Organic farming is an issue near and dear to our hearts at Nature’s Path – we’ve even purchased our own organic farmland which we crop share with local farmers,” said Arran Stephens, CEO and founder of Nature’s Path. “We’re thrilled to support the Farmers Can Be Heroes program because we are absolutely committed to preserving and transitioning organic farmland. This campaign allows us to join together with likeminded organizations that we admire to further support organic farmers as well as educate consumers about their importance.”

"In 1988, when we formed Organic Valley, agriculture was in crisis. Conventional farming methods employing synthetic chemicals and focusing on high yields were firmly entrenched, and there weren't a lot of voices out there advocating for nurturing the soils and farming in harmony with nature. J.I. Rodale was one of the exceptions," said George Siemon, one of the founding farmers and chief executive officer of Organic Valley. "He was in many ways the founding father of organic agriculture in America and an inspiration to all the early pioneers of today's organic movement. Partnering with Rodale on the Farmers Can Be Organic Heroes program is a natural evolution for us, and we're proud to join with Nature's Path and *Organic Gardening* magazine to support such a worthy cause."

“With today’s warming atmosphere, increased toxic load of our water ways and water sources, soil loss, and increasing concerns for human health, there is no work more compelling than the research and education the Rodale Institute is performing,” said Tim LaSalle, PhD, CEO of Rodale Institute. “Finding ways to produce food that is healthier and safer for families while providing the single largest means to take CO2 out of the atmosphere and store it in the soil is critical to our commitment to the world. Organic production of food begins the return of health to the planet while making for healthier people. Become a life saving hero with us, and eat organic!”

Information about the campaign and the benefits of organic farming will be featured prominently on both Nature’s Path and Organic Valley products. The campaign website for the public will be live on March 12, featuring a \$2.00 coupon and more information about participation at www.organicheroes.org.

Retailers can participate by visiting www.organicvalley.coop/promos.

About Nature’s Path

Founded in 1985, Nature’s Path Organic Foods is headquartered in Richmond, British Columbia and employs around 350 people at its four facilities in Canada and the United States. The privately held, family-owned company produces breakfast foods and snacks sold in specialty foods stores and retailers in 40 countries around the world. The company’s innovative brands include *Nature’s Path*®, *Flax Plus*, *EnviroKidz*®, *Weil by Nature’s Path*™, and *Optimum*®. Visit Nature’s Path online at www.naturespath.com.

About Organic Valley

Organic Valley is America's largest and oldest cooperative of organic farmers and is one of the nation's leading organic brands. Organized in 1988, Organic Valley is owned by 1,341 organic farmers in 34 states and one Canadian province, and achieved \$432.5 million in 2007 sales. Focused on its founding mission of saving family farms through organic farming, Organic Valley produces a variety of organic foods, including organic milk, soy, cheese, butter, spreads, creams, eggs, produce and juice, which are sold in supermarkets, natural foods stores and food cooperatives nationwide. The same farmers who produce for Organic Valley also produce a full range of delicious organic meat under the Organic Prairie Family of Farms label. For further information, call 1-888-444-MILK or visit www.organicvalley.coop and the cooperative's farmer website, www.farmers.coop.

About The Rodale Institute

Rodale Institute is a non-profit research and education organization focused on regenerative agriculture and its impact on health and the environment. For six decades the Rodale Institute has demonstrated the benefits of organic farming through innovative research on its research farm, the world's largest research facility of its kind. The Institute has trained farmers throughout the country and abroad in methods that replenish the soil, sequester carbon, thereby aiding the environment, increase nutrient density and provide drought resistance.

Most recently Rodale Institute launched a free Transition to Organics online course and provides information and expertise for farmers, policy-makers and consumers about how regenerative agriculture can help solve global warming, improve nutrition and prevent worldwide famine. www.rodaleinst.org

About Organic Gardening

Organic Gardening is the longest running sustainability media property in the USA. We were green when the world was black and white. Our visionary founder J.I. Rodale is widely recognized as the father of the natural food and natural living movements in America. Responsibility to the earth was the reason Rodale began publishing Organic Gardening magazine 65 years ago, and it is precisely the mission of the magazine today – creating a healthier world, one home at a time.

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