



## NEWS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

June 20, 2002

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### **Local Wheat Farmer Earns Food Alliance Seal of Approval**

Portland, Ore.—The Food Alliance, a Portland, Oregon non-profit that recognizes farms and ranches using environmentally friendly practices, recently awarded its seal of approval to Stubbs Farm in Lacrosse, WA.

The Stubbs are using a system of grain cultivation called 'direct-seeding', in which crops are sown directly into the stubble from a previous crop. By avoiding plowing and other heavy movement of the soil, the Stubbs and a growing number of direct-seed farmers are achieving a host of environmental benefits. Soil erosion commonly resulting from tilled, fallow fields is dramatically reduced; fuel usage (and the attendant pollution) is cut in half, and year round cover provides wildlife habitat.

Asked why his family made the transition to direct-seeded, annual grain production in the late 1990s, Mike Stubbs said, "We were watching our yields and our soil quality decline, as our topsoil continued to head for the river. Since we made the transition, we're seeing the soil stay where it belongs, and we're enjoying the production benefits of more soil moisture, organic matter, and earthworms. It's really restored our sense of pride in being good caretakers of the land, challenging the stereotype some have of the farmer who is indifferent to erosion, wildlife habitat, and water quality issues."

In an effort to help generate marketplace rewards for approved farms, The Food Alliance has been working with bakers and other food industry leaders to create markets for Food Alliance-Approved Northwest-grown grain products. The Stubbs are joining with two other Food Alliance-Approved direct-seed producers—K&J Farms of Harrington, WA, and Lazy YJ Farms of Rearden, WA—to tap the artisan bread market. Several other producers have Food Alliance applications pending.

Scott Exo, Northwest regional director for The Food Alliance, said, "The Stubbs are precisely the kind of agricultural innovators our organization seeks to highlight. More and more people are looking for foods from area farms that respect and protect our natural resources; our seal of approval is a means to meet that consumer demand."

The Food Alliance is dedicated to increasing awareness of the link between environmentally friendly farming practices and the protection of natural resources. The Food Alliance provides an independent, third-party approval process for farmers who are reducing or eliminating pesticide use, protecting soil and water resources and providing safe and fair working conditions. Growers who meet these strict eligibility requirements proudly display The Food Alliance seal of approval on their products. The seal began appearing in produce aisles and on packaged products throughout the Northwest in 1997. Since July 2000, sustainable farmers and ranchers in the Midwest have participated in the program via the Midwest Food Alliance, based in St. Paul, MN. Success with this initial partnership, and growing demand for sustainably-produced products, led The Food Alliance to establish a national office in January. More information about The Food Alliance and its certification standards can be found on our website.

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