

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Food Alliance Honors Sustainable Farms and Ranches

Portland, OR: Tomorrow evening the Portland-based nonprofit organization, Food Alliance, will celebrate outstanding contributions to sustainable agriculture at its Annual Dinner. The sold out event will take place at the RiverPlace Hotel in Portland. The dinner will feature Food Alliance certified foods prepared by prominent Portland chefs and volunteers from the Chefs Collaborative.

Three *Keeper of the Vision* awards will be presented to Oregon and Hawaii farmers and ranchers certified by Food Alliance. Food Alliance certification is awarded to farmers and ranchers who meet a strict set of environmental and social criteria spanning soil and water conservation, pesticide reduction and elimination, preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat, animal welfare, and fair and safe labor conditions.

This year's award recipients are:

Bill and Karla Chambers of Stahlbush Island Farms in Corvallis. Stahlbush Island Farms is one of the region's best known and most successful fruit and vegetable grower/processors. Food Alliance is proud to honor Stahlbush's thorough implementation of sustainability principles and celebrate their business success. Stahlbush uses a variety of farming practices that reduce the need for pesticides and protect water resources.

Jack and Theresa Southworth, of Southworth Brothers Ranch near John Day, Oregon. The Southworth Ranch is being honored for environmental stewardship. Jack and Theresa's family ranch got its start in the late 1800s. In recent years, they have fenced and restored damaged streams and implemented a variety of progressive range and grassland management techniques that have benefited wildlife and the larger ecosystem. The ranch is also a member of Oregon Country Beef, a 40-family beef cooperative that sells beef to restaurants and natural food stores on the West coast.

Richard and June Ha of Mauna Kea Banana Company in Hilo, Hawaii. Mauna Kea is being honored for outstanding human resource practices. While they operate in a highly competitive commodity industry, Mauna Kea offers a profit-sharing plan, full health benefits, overtime and vacation pay, all based on the belief that satisfied workers who are treated well by their employers make solid contributions to the company's long term success.

Talking about this year's award recipients, Deborah Kane, Food Alliance's executive director, said, "These three awardees have shown remarkable leadership in advancing the principles of sustainable agriculture, as stewards, employers and examples to their peers. We applaud and thank them for bringing us good food for a healthy future."

For more information about Food Alliance, go to www.thefoodalliance.org.