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One Straw Farm Receives Sustainability Certification for Community Supported Agriculture and Market Garden

MILLHEIM, PA - One Straw Farm, a 1,600 share CSA operation based in White Hall, Maryland, has joined the ranks of Food Alliance Certified producers for socially and environmentally responsible agricultural practices.

The certification of One Straw Farm sets a precedent for other market gardeners and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations in the eastern United States. Food Alliance certification standards for farm and facility operations address a range of social and environmental issues including safe and fair working conditions, reduction of pesticide use and toxicity, soil and water and energy conservation, reduction of waste, and protection of wildlife habitat. The certification requires continuous improvement in social and environmental management practices.

Since 1985, One Straw Farm has been owned and operated by the husband and wife team of Drew and Joan Norman. They offer their homegrown vegetables through a CSA program, the Mill Valley General Store, the Waverly Farmers Market, Boordy Vineyards, Kennilworth Farmers Market, wholesale and via restaurants in the Baltimore area.

Currently the Norman's CSA operation has 40 drop-off sites, which includes 11 churches and a synagogue. The farm now serves 2,000 families through 1,600 shares.

The initiative to certify was spearheaded by Drew Norman after he attended a presentation about the Food Alliance certification program earlier this year. According to Joan, "We were interested in the certification because it is about being a good steward of the land, and was broader than just specific farming practices." Under the Food Alliance program their 175 acres of market vegetables has been certified.

Members of PASA since 1995, the Normans are looking forward to using the Food Alliance certification in their marketing plans. "We are lucky that our customers are very educated about where their food comes from, as well as various production practices. I think our customers will be excited we chose this program," Joan Norman said.

"All of us at PASA are very proud to see one of our longest standing member farms step up to the plate and help lead the way for sustainable farm certification in the Mid-Atlantic region," said PASA Executive Director Brian Snyder. "One Straw Farm is also one of the largest CSA programs in the region, with a marketing program second to none in the country, so this will no doubt have a positive impact with consumers and other farmers throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and at a very critical time for saving that precious resource."

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About PASA

With nearly 6,000 members, the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) is one of the largest and most active sustainable agriculture organizations in the U.S. Through business support and regional marketing assistance for farmers, advocacy, and public education, PASA seeks to promote profitable farms that produce healthy food for all people while respecting the natural environment. PASA's hallmark event, the Farming for the Future conference, draws thousands of participants from more than 30 states and six countries each February. For more information, visit www.pasafarming.org.

About Food Alliance

Food Alliance is a nonprofit organization that defines sustainability in agriculture and food handling operations with a comprehensive third-party certification program that addresses a wide range of consumer and industry concerns. Food Alliance certification and the Food Alliance Certified seal help food producers and handlers communicate with customers and the wider public. Certification by an independent non-profit organization, like Food Alliance, with clear standards and criteria, is a simple and effective way of demonstrating socially and environmentally responsible food production practices. There are over 330 Food Alliance certified farms and ranches throughout North America, raising beef, lamb, pork, dairy products, grains, legumes, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. For more information, visit www.foodalliance.org.