



News Release

Contact: Barbara Haumann (413-774-7511, Ext. 20)

Organic Trade Association to honor organic leaders in April
Drew and Myra Goodman and Ray Fuller to be recognized for outstanding contributions to the organic community

GREENFIELD, Mass. (March 24, 2008)—The Organic Trade Association (OTA) will recognize three organic industry leaders April 28 during OTA's Annual Dinner during the All Things Organic™ Conference and Trade Show in Chicago, IL. Honored will be Drew and Myra Goodman of Earthbound Farm and Ray Fuller of Stormy Mountain Ranch, Inc.

Selected for the 2008 Organic Leadership Award, Drew and Myra Goodman, founders of Earthbound Farm in San Juan Bautista, California, have been active in organic agriculture and marketing since 1984. They have clearly made a huge impact on the organic industry and have been key drivers of its phenomenal growth over the past several decades. You cannot walk into a supermarket today without seeing their organic products.

Visionaries and pioneers, the Goodmans have paved the way for many other farms and businesses to succeed in the organic industry, particularly in mainstream supermarkets. Nominators cited the Goodmans for their good business ethics and practices, and the many ways they have given back to the organic business community. Letters of support also cited the positive way the company has handled significant challenges and its work to diligently improve practices and share those with others in the fresh produce field.

“As a fellow farmer, it has been amazing to see the integrity of mission as well as the commitment to quality, innovation and taste. While many know the Goodmans’ company Earthbound Farm for its organic salad greens, I know Drew and Myra as impeccable organic farmers with a reverence for the soil and the environment,” wrote Sylvia R. Tawse of The Fresh Ideas Group in her letter of support.

Also supporting the nomination, Bob Scowcroft, executive director of the Organic Farming Research Foundation, wrote, “Drew and Myra have brought almost 170 smaller organic family farms (under the Earthbound label), along for the ‘organic ride.’” He added, “They have personally leveraged over 30,000 acres into organic production.”

Selected to receive OTA's 2008 Organic Farming Leadership Award, Ray Fuller, owner and operator of Stormy Mountain Ranch, Inc. in Chelan, Washington, started transitioning his orchards to organic in 1985. By 1988, his orchard was granted the second organic certificate ever by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. He currently has 115 acres of apples, pears, and cherries in organic production.

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Headquarters: PO Box 547, Greenfield, MA 01302 USA • (413) 774-7511 • fax: (413) 774-6432 • www.ota.com

Canada: PO Box 6364, Sackville, NB, Canada E4L 1G6 • East (506) 260-7537 • West (250) 335-3423 • Ottawa (613) 787-2003

Washington, DC Office: (202) 338-2900

Fuller has a long list of activities demonstrating his commitment to supporting other growers, sharing his knowledge, and increasing the body of research to improve organic growing practices. He has hosted research trials on his land, and opens up his orchards for tours. He also was influential in creating the Washington Apple Growers Marketing Association's "Organic Section" and was a founding member of the Washington Organic Tree Fruit Growers Associations. He has received 15 top grower awards over the last 22 years, and is tapped to speak at many farm conferences. Fuller has marketed his fruit via Stemilt Growers, Inc., since 2003.

"He is an advocate for family operated orchards and continually develops new strategies for those in sales and marketing to try out," wrote Roger Pepperl of Stemilt, Inc., who nominated Fuller and credited him as being an integral driver of Stemilt's expanding organic program. Added Pepperl, "Not only does his fruit look perfect, but it has the flavors that an organic consumer dreams about. Above all, Ray's farming efforts always coincide with his knowledge that consumer satisfaction is the key to our success at Stemilt, as well as the key to advancing the organic industry as a whole."

Supporting the nomination, Miles McEvoy, Organic Program Manager for the Washington State Department of Agriculture, wrote, "Ray's success in growing quality organic fruit has inspired many Washington State apple growers."

"OTA is pleased to honor these three leaders who go above and beyond, who have worked diligently to advance organic agriculture and practices, and who have shared their vision and knowledge with others so generously," said Caren Wilcox, OTA's Executive Director.

OTA's Leadership Awards recognize individuals for their remarkable contributions to the organic industry. They are selected for their commitment to the organic community and tireless efforts that have positively influenced many people and organizations beyond their individual company or business.

OTA's Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony will take place Monday, April 28, starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

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The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. Its more than 1,650 members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA's mission is to promote and protect the growth of organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public and the economy.