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LOCAL FARMING ORGANIZATION RECIPIENT OF USDA GRANT FOR BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS

SPRING VALLEY, WI, Nov. 10, 2009 – A USDA grant to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers was recently awarded to the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES).

The MOSES grant of \$151,515 is being used to fund the “Developing Farm Financial Knowledge of Beginning Organic and Sustainable Farmers” project. The three year project is designed to respond to the needs of beginning farmers involved with organic and sustainable agriculture to better understand farm financial management.

“New farmers need to have a sound understanding of farm financial management in order to have a successful farming operation,” says Jody Padgham, education director at MOSES. “This project will help farmers who choose to farm using organic and sustainable practices learn tools and systems to further that understanding.”

The 2,285 farmers participating in this project will learn how to use a diversity of simple tools and resources to assess their financial situation and achieve their farm financial goals. One of the project products will be a comprehensive, easy to understand book on farm financial management with an emphasis on using data to increase profitability. Additional day-long trainings and a support website will be developed to bring key concepts to a broader audience.

MOSES was one of 29 institutions to receive the USDA grants from a pool of more than \$17 million earmarked to help beginning farmers and ranchers and enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of U.S. agriculture. The funding was announced by U.S. Agriculture Deputy Secretary, Kathleen Merrigan in Elgin, Minnesota last week, and is part of the USDA initiative, “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food,” which was launched in September 2009.

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) is a Spring Valley-based nonprofit education-outreach organization working to promote sustainable and organic agriculture. MOSES serves farmers striving to produce high-quality, healthful food using organic and sustainable techniques. These farmers produce more than just food: they support thriving ecosystems and vibrant rural communities.

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