



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 6, 2009

Despite Economy, Organic Farming Conference Proves Successful

During this economic recession, when many other industries have dropping numbers, organic food is still increasing in both sales and recognition. This proved true in more ways than one at the nation's largest organic farming conference, hosted by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES). More than 2,600 people attended this year's Organic Farming Conference (OFC), which is significantly more than conference organizers anticipated.

MOSES Executive Director Faye Jones planned the first conference 20 years ago. "I can't believe how far we've come, from just 90 attendants that first year, to this. It's truly inspiring."

As far as organic food sales, in the U.S. they increased 5.6% in December 2008, according to The Nielsen Co. Although this increase is down from last year, sales are still rising.

Held in La Crosse, Wis., Feb. 26-28, the OFC featured more than 60 organic farming workshops and 140 exhibitors. The theme of the conference was looking back 20 twenty years and looking forward to the next 20 years of organics.

Governor Jim Doyle recognized MOSES for 20 years of service to Wisconsin's farmers by issuing a proclamation Feb. 27. Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture Rod Nilsestuen presented a plaque to Jones at Friday's general session. In Wisconsin alone, organic farming contributes over \$80 million to the agricultural economy.

Conference attendance increases every year because of the sense of community the conference brings. Organic Valley animal husbandry specialist Wendy Fulwider discussed why she came back for her second OFC, "It's such an incredible variety of people that are all interested in the same thing...bettering the planet."

MOSES staff constantly look for new ways to reduce the carbon footprint at the conference. This was the first year that participants composted food scraps from the mostly local, organic meals.

The OFC continues to be one of the primary sources of organic farmer networking, training and resource services in the upper Midwest. Visit the MOSES website at www.mosesorganic.org for more information about upcoming events and next year's conference.

###

Media Contact:

Eric Hatling
Development & Communications Coordinator
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES)
715-772-3153
eric@mosesorganic.org