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USDA TO CONDUCT FIRST WIDE-SCALE SURVEY OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

SACRAMENTO – The 2007 Census of Agriculture counted more than 20,000 U.S. farms engaged in organic production. To learn more about how the growth of organic farming is changing the face of U.S. agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will soon conduct its first wide-scale survey of organic production.

“The Organic Production Survey comes in direct response to the growing interest in organics among consumers, farmers, businesses and others,” said Vic Tolomeo, Director of the USDA-NASS California Field Office. “This is an opportunity for organic producers to share their voices and help ensure the continued growth and sustainability of organic farming in the United States.”

The survey will look at many aspects of organic farming during the 2008 calendar year – from production and marketing practices, to income and expenses. It will focus not only on operations that are currently engaged in organic production, but also on those making the transition to organic agriculture.

“The results will help shape future decisions regarding farm policy, funding allocations, availability of goods and services, community development and other key issues,” Tolomeo noted. “In addition, the information can help producers make informed decisions about the future of their own farming operations.”

NASS will mail the survey in early May to all known organic producers in the United States. They are required to respond by June 17. NASS will publish results in winter 2009.

“Participants can mail back their forms, but we encourage them to complete the survey online at www.agcensus.usda.gov. It’s convenient, it’s secure and it saves the government money on return postage and data entry,” Tolomeo said.

Survey participants are guaranteed by law (Title 7, U.S. Code) that their individual information will be kept confidential. NASS uses the information only for statistical purposes and publishes data only in tabulated totals.

For more information about the Census of Agriculture and the Organic Production Survey, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

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