

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

Office of Economic Development
and International Trade

Colorado Department of Agriculture

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HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP HELPS COLORADO ORGANICS GO GLOBAL

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – March 22, 2012 – Colorado organic producers may find it easier to export to the European Union (EU) following the announcement of an historic equivalency agreement between the US and EU. Beginning June 1, 2012, organic products certified in Europe or in the US may be sold as organic in either region.

Previously, growers and companies wanting to trade products on both sides of the Atlantic had to obtain separate certifications beyond the USDA National Organic Standards, which could mean a double set of fees, inspections, and paperwork. This partnership eliminates significant barriers, especially for small and medium-sized organic producers. All products meeting the terms of the equivalency agreement can be traded and labeled as certified organic produce, meat, cereal, or wine.

“Colorado has a reputation for producing high quality organic products and I’m excited that our farmers and ranchers will now have greater access to ship those products around the globe,” said Tom Lipetzky, Markets Division Director for the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA). “This agreement will, hopefully, have a great impact on our organics exports—particularly for millet and wheat.”

This unique agreement will also have a positive impact on Colorado’s economy. “Increasing the export of Colorado goods and services to global markets keeps Colorado competitive,” said Ken Lund, Executive Director of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT).

“The partnership with European Union makes doing international business even easier for Colorado growers which can lead to business expansion, job growth and increased economic vitality.”

The US and EU are the two largest organic-producers in the world, with nearly 340 organic producers in Colorado alone. CDA is accredited by the USDA as an organic certification agency and certifies nearly 190 Colorado operations. Additional operations are certified by outside third party agencies. The program assures consumers that certified “organic” products are produced without prohibited substances and adhere to the national Organic Program Standards.

This new partnership was announced on February 15 at BioFach 2012, the world’s largest trade show for organic foods held annually in Germany. CDA, in partnership with the OEDIT, led a delegation of eight Colorado companies to BioFach last month. Those companies exhibited their organic products through a shared booth space free of charge, thanks to an export-promotion grant that CDA and OEDIT received last year from the US Small Business Administration. The Colorado exhibitors reported acquiring 62 qualified international buyer leads, made \$115,000 in sales at the show, and anticipate making at least another \$750,000 in sales within the next 12 months.

“BioFach was a great opportunity to meet with potential international buyers, make sales right on the show floor and promote Colorado’s strong organic sector,” said Wayne Roth of Roth Organic Farms, one of the Colorado companies that exhibited at BioFach. “I was thrilled to hear about the new US – EU Agreement, and am confident that it will help organic farmers throughout Colorado increase their international sales.”

For more information on Colorado’s organic industry, including a list of companies that exhibited at BioFach 2012, visit www.coloradoagriculture.com/organic.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture and OEDIT offer a variety of programs to assist Colorado companies in developing or expanding their exports. Funding support is available from the USDA and SBA to assist individual companies in expanding their exports.

For more information on international trade, contact CDA marketing specialists:

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