

NATIONAL ORGANIC ACTION PLAN SUMMIT: **February 25-26, 2009, LaCrosse, Wisconsin**

The National Organic Action Plan Project (NOAP) is a collaborative civil society initiative engaging organic community participants across the country. The NOAP project has been traveling the United States during the past 3 years seeking input from a broad range of the organic grassroots community – farmers/producers, consumers, trade, urban and rural groups, and industry – to articulate their vision for the future of organic food and farming in the next decades.

This Plan will establish a broad set of goals for organic agriculture over the next decade. It will also identify potential mechanisms for meeting those goals and benchmarks for evaluating progress. The scope and vision could include both governmental and non-governmental goals as to where organic should go and how to get there, from federal policy priorities for Organic, to acreage and sales goals for the future. These goals would incorporate quantitative and qualitative measures to accurately track the substantial societal benefits provided by organic agriculture.

In February 2009, a 1-1/2-day Summit will be held to review the results of the national input, and work from the draft plan currently being developed to build consensus for a Plan. This Plan can then be used by policy advocates, such as the National Organic Coalition in advancing federal policy objectives in Washington; state and local governments to work on other policy initiatives; and consumers, retailers and industry to advance innovative marketplace goals to ensure the integrity of organic in their local arena.

The active participation of a broad spectrum of organizational and individual leadership within the organic community is a core guiding principle of the NOAP process. As such, RAFI and our NOAP partners are committed to finding resources for a diversity of voices to attend the Summit. We are working with regional and national organizations to enable them to identify potential funding sources that will support their participation and investment of organizational resources. This will also potentially assist these groups in establishing new funding relationships, furthering their capacity for involvement in future collaborative work.

The Summit will take place February 25-26, 2009 in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, just prior to the country's largest organic farming conference -- the Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Organic Farming Conference. For more information about the MOSES Conference, go to: <http://www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html> . Register for both early as space is limited.

The National Organic Action Plan Project is a collaborative project led by RAFI-USA which provides overall programmatic development and organizing support. The National Organic Coalition helps guide the discussion as it relates specifically to the US federal policy arena. Other organizations co-sponsoring the Summit include Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES), the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture and the Center for Food Safety.

For more information contact: Sally Lee [p: 919-542-1396; sally@rafiusa.org] or Liana Hoodes [p: 845-744-2304; Liana@hvc.rr.com]