



Food and Job Crises Spawn New Nationwide Farming Coalition

The Recirculating Farms Coalition Launches U.S. Campaign for Local, Fresh Food and Green Jobs

Media Contacts: Marianne Cufone: (813) 785-8386 or mcufone@recirculatingfarms.org
Denise Hughes: (917) 549-2621 or dhughes@recirculatingfarms.org

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San Francisco, CA — Today, a new organization, the Recirculating Farms Coalition, is officially launching a national campaign to promote growing local, fresh food and create green jobs. Its focus is on eco-friendly farms that use clean, recycled water in place of soil to grow plants (hydroponics), fish (aquaculture), or a combination of both plants and fish (aquaponics). The new collaborative brings together educators, farmers, chefs, non-profit organizations and many others to help create an accessible, sustainable and healthy food system in the United States.

Marianne Cufone, Executive Director of the Recirculating Farms Coalition, said, "The current U.S. unemployment rate is 9.1 percent, and about one in six people are struggling to buy food. Building recirculating farms in diverse communities nationwide can provide fresh, local food and create stable jobs in a sustainable business, two things the U.S. very much needs right now."

Recirculating farms use innovative ways to be space, energy, and water efficient. They can be as small as a desktop for personal use, or large enough for commercial operation. They can raise a wide range of fish and plants without taking water from or draining to the ocean. This means there are not concerns about accidental escapes from the farm into the wild. These farms can supplement sustainable wild caught seafood, rather than being a competitor. Recirculating farms can grow fish, vegetables, flowers, fruits, herbs and more.

"Fishermen are joining together with others - academics, chefs, farmers - in this coalition to raise awareness about how recirculating farms use clean recycled water to grow fresh local food and importantly - do so without hurting our oceans or the fishing communities that rely on them," said Zeke Grader, Executive Director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations. "This is the direction our nation needs to take to increase overall fish supply without polluting our bays and oceans or endangering wild fisheries."

Many farms can re-use up to 99% of their water, and also recycle waste. Well-designed farms can run without antibiotics, or other drugs and chemicals, and use renewable energy.

The Recirculating Farms Coalition was created to be a hub for farmers, policy and law makers and consumers; a way to make connections, learn and join together in supporting recirculating farms. The organization also plans to provide training for farmers, build a model farm for teaching and demonstration and actively engage the public on recirculating farming issues.

Cufone explained, "The United States is in one of its worst economic situations ever. We need change, now. Building recirculating farms will help address the food and job crises by empowering communities to create new jobs growing their own food, in a way that is healthy for both us and our planet."

The Recirculating Farms Coalition is a collaborative group of farmers, educators, non-profit organizations and many others committed to building local sources of healthy, accessible food. Through research, education and advocacy, we work together to support the development of energy efficient farms that use clean recycled water to grow food. We believe that these recirculating farms can create stable green jobs and supply sustainably-grown plants, fruits, vegetables, and humanely-raised seafood in diverse communities nationwide, and someday, worldwide. See: <http://www.recirculatingfarms.org>