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## UNIQUE TRAINING PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT NEW AND BEGINNING URBAN FARMERS

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**New Orleans, LA** — The [Recirculating Farms Coalition](#) and the [New Orleans Food and Farm Network](#) are jointly hosting a sustainable urban farmer training program in New Orleans, Louisiana in November and again in Spring 2013. With the goals of ramping up a local food economy and bringing affordable healthy food and green jobs to areas most in need, the program is designed to support new and beginning farmers by providing mentoring from experienced farmers, best growing practices, business plans and other critical information.

"We need more affordable healthy food in New Orleans, and that means we need more farmers. This program will provide new and beginning farmers with the information, skills and connections necessary to build and operate farms that are sustainable both ecologically and economically," said Marianne Cufone, Executive Director of the Recirculating Farms Coalition.

Participants will attend lectures, discussions, and hands-on workshops about growing techniques, land stewardship, business management, marketing strategies, and compliance with agricultural and environmental laws and regulations. Following the program, trainees will be able to participate for up to five days in an apprenticeship on local farms. Registration is mandatory to attend, but participation is free of charge.

The program is especially unique because it joins recirculating water-based growing methods – like hydroponics (growing plants in water without soil), and aquaponics (growing plants in water without soil and fish together in one system) with traditional soil-based farming. One big advantage of [recirculating farms](#) is that they can be built virtually anywhere — indoors, on rooftops, or in oddly shaped urban lots where soil is paved or otherwise not fit for growing food. This makes them especially useful in cities like New Orleans.

Sanjay Kharod, Executive Director of the New Orleans Food and Farm Network, said, "This is an exciting opportunity to nurture a new generation of farmers and provide economic opportunity in underserved communities. Promoting sustainable urban agriculture will bring stable jobs and fresh, healthy food to the places that need them most."

For more information or to sign up for the program e-mail: [NOLAfarmers@noffn.org](mailto:NOLAfarmers@noffn.org) or call **(504) 483-6967**

Funding for the training program was supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant #2012-49400-19676. To find more resources and programs for beginning farmers and ranchers please visit <http://www.Start2Farm.gov> a component of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.

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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 eco-efficient farms using clean, recycled water. We believe these recirculating farms can create stable green jobs and supply sustainably grown food — fruits, vegetables, herbs and humanely-raised seafood — in diverse communities nationwide, and someday, worldwide. The Recirculating Farms Coalition is headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. <http://www.recirculatingfarms.org>

Through public education, training, and assistance in creating food-growing gardens in backyards, schools, churches, and even abandoned lots, NOFFN helps to “grow the growers” — those who have become community leaders in advancing food security. A significant focus for the organization is developing sustainable, successful farmers and ranchers in low-income and socially disadvantaged communities of the greater New Orleans area. <http://www.NOFFN.org>