

For Immediate Release:

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**Recirculating Farms Coalition Executive Director Marianne Cufone:
“We’re Glad The NOSB is Taking Time to Make
The Right Decision on Hydroponic and Aquaponic Systems”**

New Orleans, LA (April 21, 2017) – Today, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), an advisory committee to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program, delayed a final recommendation on whether hydroponic and aquaponic farms should continue to be eligible for USDA Organic certification.

In response to that crucial decision, Marianne Cufone, executive director of the Recirculating Farms Coalition, issued the following statement:

“We’re very pleased that the NOSB is taking more time to make this important decision. U.S. consumers, farmers, and the organic industry as a whole deserve a thoughtful, deliberate process on this issue. Taking away the organic label from hydroponic and aquaponic farmers who spent the time and resources to meet USDA Organic standards would be a devastating blow to their livelihoods. It also would send a discouraging message to new and young farmers and many others that U.S. agriculture and particularly the National Organic Program does not value commitment to sustainability and innovation.”

“Recirculating farms, like many hydroponic and aquaponic operations, can use less water, space and energy than most traditional in-ground and raised-bed growing methods using dirt. Many facilities already meet or can even exceed existing organic regulations. When the NOSB meets in the fall, it should take a strong stand and support these smart, sustainable farming techniques.”

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About Recirculating Farms:

A recirculating farm uses nutrient rich, clean recycled water, in place of what is traditionally considered soil, as a basis to grow food. These farms can grow vegetables, flowers, fruits, herbs and other plants (hydroponics), fish (aquaculture), or both plants and fish together (aquaponics). These are mostly closed-loop, land-based farms that can run without antibiotics or other drugs or chemicals and use renewable energy. These farms do not need to be connected to any natural waters for sourcing or drainage, and can therefore grow a wide range of products without the threat of releasing them into the wild, or creating competition with fishermen who make their living selling popular local fish.

About RFC:

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 eco-efficient farms that recycle water and waste, as the basis to grow food.

To learn more about recirculating farms, visit: www.recirculatingfarms.org and www.betterfishfarming.org.