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-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

Organic Pasture and Standards Meetings

Workshops assist producers comply with new rules and policies

By its very nature organic farming is dynamic and, as any organic farmer knows, changes occur season to season and day to day. Weather, markets, and pest pressure keep farmers on their toes and adaptation is necessary to be successful. Not only do organic farmers need to be knowledgeable in how their production practices change over time, but how national policies affect how they farm and do business. To help organic producers manage changes in the policy arena, Pennsylvania Certified Organic offers their Pasture Rule and Winter Standards Meetings, held this year on January 18, 2012 at the Midway Mennonite Reception Center in Lititz, Pennsylvania.

The Pasture Rule Meeting will begin at 10 AM with a facilitated discussion among producers on successful pasture management techniques and pasture rule compliance, followed by breakout sessions on writing pasture management plans and calculating dry matter intake on pasture for ruminants. Livestock producers are encouraged to come with questions, observations, and progressive ideas to share with other producers on how you manage pasture, set up your grazing system, document dry matter intake, and ensure adequate grazing throughout the growing season. Come ready to share your ideas and learn new techniques!

Following the pasture discussions the PCO Certification and Policy Staff will provide participants updated organic standards and policy information on crops, livestock production, materials, and organic product handling and processing. Specific items on the agenda include sprayer use, livestock bedding policy, origin of livestock, poultry outdoor access, and poultry houses coming in and out of certification. Other hot topics to be discussed include pesticide residue testing, animal welfare, and unannounced inspections.

PCO's Pasture Rule and Winter Standards Meetings promise to be useful and informative, and are a must for organic producers looking for detailed information on changes to the National Organic Program regulations.

Registration Information for PCO's Winter Standards & Pasture Rule Meetings

Date/time: January 18th, 10-12 Pasture Rule Meeting, 12-1 Lunch, and 1-3:30 Standards Meeting

Location: Midway Mennonite Reception Center 210 East Lexington Road Lititz, PA

Cost: Both meetings are free for PCO members; lunch is included. Standards Meeting is free for non-members. Fee for non-members to attend the Pasture Rule Meeting is \$40.

To Register: Contact the PCO office by phone, email, or fax by Friday, January 6th*: kathryn@paorganic.org, (p) 814-422-0251, (f) 814-422-0255 or register online at: www.paorganic.org/standardsmeeting2012

*Pre-registration is preferred but walk-ins will be welcomed.

Pennsylvania Certified Organic is a non-profit organization that educates and certifies organic growers and handlers in Pennsylvania and the surrounding region. PCO certifies more than 500 farming and food production operations, including produce, field crops, herbs, wild crops, dairy products, poultry products, value-added products, livestock, mushrooms, maple, snack foods, coffee, tea, cosmetics, and more.

PCO is accredited by the USDA and offers certification to the USDA, Canadian and European Union organic programs.

To learn more about PCO or to apply for organic certification, call 814-422-0251 or visit our website at www.paorganic.org.

Photo:

PCO's Policy Director, Kyla Smith, explains how to keep field and pasture records to PCO-certified dairy farmers at the Pasture Rule meeting in Troy, PA.