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## Press Release

For Immediate Release  
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### **Farming For California's Future -- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Releases its 2012 Farm Bill Platform --**

(San Francisco, CA) - Today, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition released its comprehensive 2012 Farm Bill policy platform, *Farming for the Future: A Sustainable Agriculture Agenda for the 2012 Food and Farm Bill*. The eleven California NSAC member organizations played an integral role in developing this platform which emphasizes a diverse, sustainable agriculture and facilitates access to the healthy food that consumers increasingly demand.

With a round of Senate Agriculture Committee hearings complete and House Agriculture Committee field hearings underway, Congress is hard at work writing a new farm bill which will define federal food and agriculture system policies and funding for a five-year period. Meanwhile, the perfect storm of economic, environmental, and health crises currently gripping our nation demands decisive farm policy reform that will ensure a sustainable future for American agriculture. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's 2012 Farm Bill platform will expand opportunities for family farmers to produce good food, sustain the environment, and contribute to vibrant communities.

*Farming for the Future* reflects a comprehensive approach to farm policy reform that will –

- Create jobs and spur local economic growth through food and farms.
- Make healthy food widely available today and for generations to come.
- Support on-farm conservation practices that protect soil and water; and benefit human health.
- Fund organic farming research and certification assistance.
- Ease access to land and drive innovation for tomorrow's farmers and food entrepreneurs.
- Support farmers through technical assistance and training.

This platform is the culmination of over 2 years of policy development work with a broad, diverse coalition of over 90 grassroots organizations from across the country.

There is broad support within California agriculture in support of programs that advance local food systems and support beginning farmers. A diverse group of California's Congressional delegation

has already signed on to co-sponsor the Local Farms, Food and Jobs Act (S. 1773, H.R. 3286). Further evidence of this is the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s position paper on the farm bill.

“California has almost 800 farmers’ markets and 350 CSA farms,” says Dave Runsten of Community Alliance with Family Farmers. “People want local food and the Farm Bill should support it.”

“As a new farmer I benefit from technical assistance and financing programs funded by the Farm Bill,” said Dave Fikel who raises organic, pastured poultry and grass-fed beef which he sells directly to local consumers. Earlier this month, Fikel of Chino, CA was chosen to speak on a panel of four beginning farmers and ranchers from around the nation at a briefing in the Congressional agriculture committee chambers on Capitol Hill. The briefing helped legislators understand the importance of initiatives that help beginning farmers and ranchers gain access to the land, capital, and markets they need to succeed.

“The organic sector continues to grow as people vote with their dollars at markets across the country, but demand for this verified label outpaces supply,” said Brise Tencer of California Certified Organic Farmers. “Federal support for organic farmers has historically been low. Funding programs that support organic research and certification assistance helps farmers and consumers.”

“Slow job recovery, a rapidly aging farm population, accelerating erosion and nutrient pollution, and atrophied regional food infrastructure can be viewed as a crisis or an opportunity,” said Prolman, NSAC Executive Director. “Done right, a new farm bill can be part of the solution, putting in place building blocks for a more sustainable future of thriving farms, healthy food, new markets, and strong communities.”

The platform can be viewed online at <http://bit.ly/2012fbplatform>

The California Caucus of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is made up of California’s most effective and established sustainable agriculture advocacy and education organizations. Caucus groups represent over 50,000 California farmer and consumer stakeholders.

The following professionals will be available to provide background information:

Organic agriculture including research and certification:

Denise Ryan, Organic Farming Research Foundation	(831) 426-6606
Brise Tencer, California Certified Organic Farmers	(831) 423-2263

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers:

Reggie Knox, California FarmLink	(831) 252-5669
Gary Peterson, Agricultural Land-Based Training Assoc.	(831) 758-1469

Local Food and Food Safety:

Dave Runsten, Community Alliance with Family Farmers	(310) <b>925-0857</b>
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Conservation Programs:

Jeanne Merrill, California Climate and Agriculture Network	(916) 441-4042
Margaret Reeves, Pesticide Action Network North America	(415) 728-0176

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