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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Farmers Conference to Help Growers Thrive in 2011 and Beyond

ASHEVILLE, NC (December 15, 2010)—What does 2011 hold for farmers? The nation's chefs, in a poll by the National Restaurant Association, cited locally sourced meats, seafood, and produce as the number one restaurant trend for next year. The USDA's 2007 Census of Agriculture showed that direct market opportunities for farmers—sales to restaurants and consumers—are increasing. And, in our area, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) estimates that more than \$30 million of local food was sold in 2010, a number that's up three-fold from years past and is expected to continue to rise.

To ensure farmers have the information they need to thrive during this exciting time, ASAP is holding their 8th annual Marketing Opportunities for Farmers (MOFF) conference Saturday, February 26, 2011 on the campus of Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC. Each year, farmers, buyers, and agricultural experts from around the region convene at MOFF to share concepts and knowledge during a variety of workshops. They leave with the business and marketing tools needed to make a lasting impact on the landscape of the Southern Appalachians.

This year's workshop topics include structuring labor on the farm, managing a CSA, selling to local restaurants, farmers market regulations, agritourism, business and marketing planning, beginning and advanced Quickbooks for farms, and much more.

ASAP invites experienced and beginning farmers, those seriously interested in farming, food buyers, and high school FFA students to attend the day of networking and training. Potential buyers of locally grown goods are also invited to attend or to network during lunch at no charge.

Early bird registration, before February 1, is \$30 or \$45 per two farm partners. The cost is \$35 or \$50 per two farm partners beginning February 1. Price includes a light breakfast, local lunch, and resource notebook. Scholarships for FFA students and those with financial need are available.

For more information or to register, visit www.asapconnections.org/MOFF2011.html or call (828) 236-1282. The conference has often sold out, so attendees should register early. MOFF is made possible with support from Greenlife Grocery, Carolina Farm Credit, and other funders.

ABOUT APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT (ASAP)

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food.

Over the last decade, ASAP has spearheaded a Local Food Campaign to support people throughout the Southern Appalachian region in making those connections. The regional campaign provides consumers with the *Local Food Guide*, a free print and online directory of the area's family farms, farmers tailgate markets, and businesses that use local agricultural products. ASAP also clearly identifies and defines "local" through their Appalachian Grown™ certification program, organizes the Asheville City Market, and coordinates the Mountain Tailgate Market Association. To learn more about ASAP's work, visit asapconnections.org, or call 828-236-1282. Search their online Local Food Guide at buyappalachian.org.

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