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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Farmers Conference to Help Growers Find Customers

ASHEVILLE, NC (February 4, 2010) – Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project’s seventh annual Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference will be held on February 27, 2010 at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC. The conference supports farmers’ efforts to tap into the growing interest in local food.

In the new global economy, it’s hard for local family farmers to stay in business if they only sell to wholesale markets. Each year, more farmers try new strategies such as vending at farmers markets, selling to local chefs and grocers, and working with distributors and institutional buyers such as schools and hospitals in their own communities. Farmers who have succeeded in these diverse markets, as well chefs, grocers, and distributors interested in local purchasing, will share their knowledge and network at the conference.

“The local food market is very promising for family farmers, but it’s a complex business enterprise,” says Peter Marks of Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP). “ASAP offers this conference to help farmers think like entrepreneurs.” Workshops will address topics such as farm business planning, Quickbooks accounting software, and promotional strategies.

Farmers, those seriously interested in farming, food buyers, and high school age FFA students are invited to attend the full day of networking and training. Potential buyers of locally-grown goods are also invited to attend the full conference, or come to network at lunch for no charge. Opportunities for farmer/buyer meetings are planned.

The cost for the conference is \$35, or \$50 per two farm partners. Price includes light breakfast, local foods lunch, and a resource notebook. Scholarships for FFA students, families of former tobacco growers, and those with financial need are available.

For more information or to register, visit <http://www.asapconnections.org/MOFF2010.html> or call (828) 236-1282. The conference has often sold out, so register early.

The Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference is made possible by support from the USDA Risk Management Agency, Greenlife Grocery, Carolina Farm Credit, and other funders.

ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT

ASAP is helping to rebuild the local economy, preserve rural land and heritage, encourage sustainable agricultural practices, and increase access to fresher, healthier foods. We work to keep farmers farming and to reconnect people with their food. We involve businesses, shoppers, chefs, children, seniors, healthcare providers, teachers, and all community members in the local food movement. ###