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For Immediate Release

## **Food Alliance partners with International Certification Services to provide certification to farms, ranches, and food processors nationwide**

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Portland, OR: Food Alliance, a leading certifier of sustainable agricultural practices, has announced a partnership with International Certification Services to provide Food Alliance certification to farms, ranches and food processors nationwide.

Through the partnership, Food Alliance will transfer administration of its certification inspections to International Certification Services (ICS). Food Alliance will retain responsibility for the quality of the certification program, including the development of certification standards, promotion of the certification program, and service to certified businesses. ICS will take responsibility for recruiting and training inspectors, scheduling inspections, reviewing inspector reports, issuing certification decisions and maintaining certification records.

Food Alliance made the decision to outsource administration of its inspections as a means to manage the increasing number of requests for certification coming from across the United States.

With offices in Oregon and Minnesota, Food Alliance now has over 200 certified farms and ranches in 16 states – representing approximately 3.3 million acres of farm and rangeland. The number of Food Alliance certified farms and ranches has grown by an average of 34% in each of the last three years.

Scott Exo, Food Alliance's executive director, said, "We chose ICS because they are an internationally respected, ISO-accredited organization with a 25-year history in certification. Their extensive expertise, professionalism and longstanding commitment to sustainable agriculture make them an ideal partner for Food Alliance."

Partnering with ICS gives Food Alliance access to a network of professional inspectors across North America. With its sophisticated certification management database and remote data-entry capability, ICS will provide fast and efficient service – shortening the time from application to decision while maintaining the quality and credibility of the Food Alliance program. ICS can also provide multiple certifications with a single inspection – including organic certifications – reducing both cost and time for growers serving diverse markets.

Robert Simmons, Senior Executive Partner for ICS, said, "We look forward to meeting the needs of Food Alliance and its growing number of certified farms and ranches. This partnership will create new and dynamic opportunities for both Food Alliance and ICS certified clients."

ICS will begin administering Food Alliance certifications on July 1, 2005.

Food Alliance ([www.foodalliance.org](http://www.foodalliance.org)) is a non-profit organization, with offices in Portland, Oregon and St. Paul, Minnesota, that is dedicated to creating market rewards for sustainable agriculture. Food Alliance's certification standards cover:

- Reduction or elimination of pesticide use through Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Conservation of soil and water resources
- Protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat
- Provision of safe and fair working conditions
- Provision of healthy and humane care for livestock

Food Alliance certification also prohibits the use of hormones or sub-therapeutic antibiotics, genetically modified organisms, and certain pesticide ingredients that have been identified as an acute risk to human and environmental health.

International Certification Services, Inc. (ICS) has been offering quality certification services since 1980 and is currently operating in 13 countries. ICS carries multiple accreditation including USDA ISO 65, International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), USDA National Organic Program, and Conseil des appellations agroalimentaires du Québec (CAAQ). ICS is headquartered on the beautiful North Dakota prairie in Medina, North Dakota.

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