

**For Immediate Release**

## **Central Bean Company Certified by Food Alliance for Sustainable Practices**

### **Quincy, WA (February 7, 2007)**

Central Bean Company has been certified by the non-profit organization Food Alliance for incorporating sustainable practices in its bean handling and processing operation. These practices include provision of safe and fair working conditions, and conservation of energy and water. Bean suppliers, including Haricot Farms, have also been certified for sustainable agricultural practices, including soil and water conservation, use of integrated pest management, and protection of wildlife habitat.

Central Bean Company is a family-owned company established in 1983 in Quincy, Washington. Central Bean contracts with Central Washington farmers to produce the finest quality dry beans. "We are proud of our area growers and their agronomic practices," said Central Bean president Tom Grebb. "As a company, we definitely want to support and promote local farmers who achieve high production and quality while implementing good integrated pest management practices and stewarding the soil for future generations."

Central Bean Company already occupies a unique niche in the industry, as one of the few bean processing facilities in the country using a lot identity preservation system. "Each grower's dry beans are identity preserved in small bins and conditioned separately," explained Tom Grebb. "This allows our customers to choose dry beans that match their quality criteria, including initial appearance, size and consistency, splits, soak time, cook time, and appearance after cooking."

"We recognize environmental performance as another dimension of quality that adds value for our customers," said Tom Grebb. "Food Alliance certification helps us tell that environmental story in a credible way."

Central Bean is launching a line of branded, Food Alliance certified beans and bean products, which it plans to target to food service and restaurant companies like Bon Appétit Management Company and Chipotle Mexican Grill. "I think these companies that have made public commitments to social and environmental responsibility are going to be very interested to learn about our products," said Tom Grebb. "I'm confident, with the direct seed systems we're now promoting to our contracted growers, that we can deliver a higher net environmental benefit than even organic growers. The benefits to soil health, the reduction in erosion, the fact that we're sequestering carbon out of the atmosphere – it's just undeniable."

Tom Grebb has seen other benefits from direct seed production, including elimination of expensive treatments to prevent sclerotinia rot, and reduced fuel costs and wear and tear on equipment.

Food Alliance director Scott Exo noted: "A lot of claims are being made about 'natural' and 'green' products. Third-party certification ensures that buyers can verify the origin of the product and the conditions under which it was produced. That transparency enables credible claims, and helps build customer trust and loyalty."

### **About Central Bean Company –**

Central Bean Company Inc. is a family-owned company established in 1983 at Quincy, Washington. Central Bean products include small red beans, navy beans, pinto beans, black beans, light red kidney beans, dark red kidney beans, great northern beans, pink beans, dry bean flour, and seven bean soup mix. Each contracted grower's dry beans are identity preserved in small bins and conditioned separately. This allows monitoring the quality standards of each grower, each field and even each load

delivered for conditioning. Central Bean supplies dry beans to many canneries and packagers in the US, as well as exports overseas. The dry beans are derived from the Columbia Basin Region of Central Washington State grown from several thousand acres by numerous growers.

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### **About Food Alliance**

Food Alliance is a non-profit organization that certifies farms, ranches and food processors for sustainable agricultural and production practices. Businesses that meet Food Alliance's standards, as determined by a third-party site inspection, use certification to make credible claims for social and environmental responsibility, differentiating their products and strengthening their brands. Food Alliance certification standards can be reviewed on the web and include:

- Safe and fair working conditions
- Healthy and humane care for livestock
- No hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics
- No genetically modified crops or livestock
- Reduction of pesticide use and toxicity
- Conservation of soil and water resources
- Protection of wildlife habitat
- Planning for continuous improvement

Food Alliance launched its certification program in 1998 in Portland, Oregon, with a single apple grower selling in three area grocery stores. Today, there are over 250 Food Alliance certified farms and ranches in 17 U.S. states and one Canadian province. These producers manage over 4 million acres of range and farm land, raising beef, lamb, pork, dairy products, mushrooms, dried beans and lentils, wheat, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. An increasing number of Food Alliance Certified processed products are also becoming available, including cheeses, bread, oil, and frozen and canned fruits and vegetables. Food Alliance has offices in Portland, Oregon and St. Paul, Minnesota, and will open an office in California in 2007.

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