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**Horizon Organic[®] Grants Annual HOPE and National Quality Awards
to Family Farmers Committed to Advancing Organic Agriculture**
Maine and New York Families Honored at Farm Aid 2011

BROOMFIELD, Colo., (Aug. 12, 2011) – Horizon Organic[®] today announced the family farmer recipients of two annual awards: the HOPE Award, which honors farmers who advocate organic agriculture; and the Quality Award, which recognizes the Horizon farmer who produces the highest quality organic milk in the entire Horizon milk supply.

The Hardy family of Farmington, Maine received the 2011 Horizon Organic Producer Education (HOPE) Award, while the Sheen family of Gouverneur, N.Y. was recognized with the 2011 National Quality Award, during Farm Aid's annual benefit concert at **LIVESTRONG** Sporting Park in Kansas City, Kan.

"For the past 20 years, our farmers have been the heart of Horizon Organic," said Mike Ferry, Horizon Organic president. "The HOPE and National Quality Awards give us an opportunity to recognize the impact our farmers make – not only in their local communities as advocates for organic agriculture but also with the families nationwide who choose Horizon Organic because we offer the highest quality and best tasting organic dairy products available. We're proud to honor the Hardy and Sheen families for their ongoing commitment not only to Horizon but also the entire organic movement."

HOPE Award: Henry and Teresa Hardy

Henry and Teresa Hardy involve their entire family – two daughters, a son and daughter-in-law – in running their 165-acre farm, which was started by Henry Hardy's father in the late 1940s. They transitioned from conventional to organic farming in 2003, with the help of a neighboring Horizon farmer who guided them through the process. Today, the Hardys have returned the favor by helping at least a dozen farmers transition to organic in Maine, which ranks 12th in the nation for the number of certified organic farms, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Hardys also host farm tours for students, are involved with local and statewide organic dairy, farm and conservation-related organizations, and attend fairs statewide where the family shows their registered Ayrshire cows. "It's a privilege to help others transition and experience the benefits of organic dairy farming," said Teresa Hardy. "The work we do to promote organic is part of our daily lives. It's just us; it's the way we are. We're excited and honored to receive the HOPE Award for doing what we believe in and enjoy."

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The Hardys say organic farming is good for the environment, their family and their 53 dairy cows that freely graze in the pasture and aren't given growth hormones or antibiotics. "I like knowing what's going into the cows and our own food," said Hardy.

National Quality Award – Jeffrey and Sharon Sheen

The National Quality Award recognizes farmers who deliver the highest quality milk of Horizon's more than 600 farmer partners in 23 states. Because producing safe and high quality milk is the cornerstone of the Horizon brand, in addition to the Quality Award, Horizon also pays the largest bonuses in the industry to encourage excellence.

In winning the 2011 National Quality Award, the Sheen's dairy consistently delivered the highest quality organic milk of all Horizon family farms. The Sheens, who have 40 Holsteins on their 343-acre farm, have shipped to Horizon for the past seven years.

While Sharon Sheen grew up on a dairy farm, neither she nor Jeffrey milked a cow until they started their own farm about 14 years ago. "We learned by trial and error, and I asked a lot of questions!" said Jeffrey Sheen.

He attributes winning the Quality Award to his family's constant attention to the herd and organic standards. "We've found that the simpler we keep things, the better," said Sheen. "We keep an eye on everything."

The top 10 percent of Horizon farms in each state also earned quality awards. For consideration, producers must ship organic milk to the company for one full calendar year, and the average test results for each shipment must be among the best in their respective states.

The Hardys and Sheens will be honored during Farm Aid's annual concert on Aug. 13 at **LIVESTRONG** Sporting Park in Kansas City. America's longest running concert-for-a-cause, [HYPERLINK "http://www.farmaid.org"](http://www.farmaid.org) **Farm Aid** is held annually to help further its mission to keep farm families on their land. Horizon Organic has been a major sponsor of Farm Aid since 2003.

About Horizon Organic

Horizon believes the choice for a healthy family and a healthy planet should be an easy one. Horizon offers a delicious variety of certified organic dairy products to satisfy a broad range of consumer needs. Horizon's commitment to a healthier planet includes offsetting the energy used to produce its products with clean, renewable wind power. Horizon works with over 600 active and transitioning family farmers across the U.S. Founded in 1991, Horizon was a pioneer in the organic industry, the first company to supply organic milk nationally, and remains committed to providing great-tasting dairy products that make it easy for moms to provide nutritious options for her kids. For more information about Horizon's organic dairy products, visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.horizondairy.com"](http://www.horizondairy.com) www.horizondairy.com.

About Farm Aid

Farm Aid's mission is to build a vibrant, family farm-centered system of agriculture in America. Farm Aid artists and board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp and Dave Matthews host an annual concert to raise funds to support Farm Aid's work with family farmers and to inspire people to choose family farm food. Since 1985, Farm Aid, with the support of the artists who contribute their performances each year, has raised more than \$39 million to support programs that help farmers thrive, expand the reach of the Good Food Movement, take action to change the dominant system of industrial agriculture and promote food from family farms.

