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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORGANIC VALLEY COUNTING DOWN TO 25TH ANNIVERSARY

*Farmer-Owned Cooperative Turns 25 in March 2013;
Celebrates 25 Years of Cultivating Goodness and Commitment to Organic*

LA FARGE, Wis.- *January 16, 2013* - Organic Valley, the nation's largest cooperative of organic farmers and a leading organic brand, today announced it will celebrate its 25th anniversary in March 2013.

Organic Valley began in 1988 with a group of Wisconsin farmers who shared a love of the land and a belief that a new, sustainable approach to agriculture was needed in order for family farms and rural communities to survive. Frustrated by the loss of nearly 2,000 family farms each week and the staggering number threatened with extinction, these farmers set out to create a solution: organic agriculture.

"The success of Organic Valley proves that organic agriculture can be a lifeline for America's struggling family farms," says George Siemon, C-E-I-E-I-O. "In an era of rising and falling agricultural prices, Organic Valley farmer-owners can count on a stable, living wage to stay in business on their land. We are humbled and extremely thankful that the original spirit of our founding farmers, and the co-op model, has sustained our organization for 25 years."

In January 1988, a time when family-owned farms were on the brink of extinction—"get big or get out"—a handful of farmers gathered in Southwestern Wisconsin's "coulee region," where glacial valleys have produced unique topography ideal for small-scale agriculture. A small poster inviting area farmers to join George Siemon at the county courthouse for an informational meeting was all it took to gain momentum; they became the founding farmers of CROPP Cooperative (Cooperative Regions of Organic Producer Pools), officially founded on March 13, 1988, with the mission of keeping family farmers on the land.

The farmers decided that following a cooperative model—where each farmer was an owner of the organization—would best ensure each had a voice in how their products were produced, marketed and sold. Today, in an era where corporations dominate all facets of business, Organic Valley remains an independent farmer-owned cooperative to nurture local communities and maintain the voice of farmers on a mission.

"Organic Valley is the kind of company that shows the complete beauty of organic leadership. They have saved and supported small family farmers around the country while providing households with food that is delicious and good—both for people and the planet," says Maria Rodale, Chairman and CEO Rodale Inc., and Co-chairman, Rodale Institute. "I congratulate

them on their success, their independence, and their innovation!"

Today, CROPP Cooperative, under its brand name Organic Valley, is the largest organic farming cooperative in North America, with more than 1,814 farmer-owners in 35 states and three Canadian provinces, representing approximately 9 percent of the entire nation's certified organic farming community. In addition to providing farmers a way to stay in business, organic agriculture fulfilled their vision for a sustainable agriculture: farming without antibiotics, synthetic hormones, toxic pesticides or GMO feed; raising animals on pasture, where they belong; and ensuring the land will be preserved for future generations.

"CROPP [Organic Valley], by its example, has demonstrated how two viewpoints on the goal of organic farming can be successfully merged. CROPP has both saved family farms and provided healthier food," says Dr. Charles Benbrook, research professor, at the Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, Washington State University. "Without setting out to do so, CROPP has invented a way to capture and share wisdom that is greater than the sum of its parts."

In the past 25 years, Organic Valley has helped cultivate many new young organic farmers. In 2012, the cooperative's average farmer age decreased to 49, while the national average remains at 57. Generation Organic™ represents Organic Valley's farmers aged 16 to 35—the future faces of agriculture—who demonstrate a commitment to sustainable farming and believe in the power of organic to change the world. In 2013, Organic Valley will present a steady stream of activities designed to heighten public understanding and support for ways we can work together to secure the health of our planet, our people and our food.

"We have lots of work ahead of us as we face an uncertain climactic future," reflects Siemon. "We inherently believe that our mission-driven, values-based cooperative model has served us well in the past 25 years in overcoming obstacles, and will continue to serve us in the next 25."

Organic Valley will be celebrating with a yearlong schedule of activities, including cause partnerships and giving back to the community. In addition, a commemorative book of stories about Organic Valley and its beginnings will be published this month, and a few 25th anniversary limited edition products will also be launched. Organic Valley will host an anniversary party at Natural Products Expo West on Saturday, March 9, 2013, outside of the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, CA. For more information about Organic Valley's 25th anniversary and a history of the cooperative, go to <http://www.organicvalley.coop/about-us/overview/our-history/>.

Organic Valley: Independent and Farmer-Owned

Organic Valley is America's largest cooperative of organic farmers and one of the nation's leading organic brands. Organized in 1988, it represents 1,814 farmers in 35 states and three Canadian provinces, and achieved \$860 million in 2012 sales. Focused on its founding mission of saving family farms through organic farming, Organic Valley produces a variety of organic foods, including organic milk, soy, cheese, butter, spreads, creams, eggs, produce and juice, which are sold in supermarkets, natural foods stores and food cooperatives nationwide. With its regional model, milk is produced, bottled and distributed right in the region where it is farmed to ensure fewer miles from farm to table and to support our local economies. For further information, and to learn about Organic Valley's 25 years of sustainable agriculture as it celebrates its anniversary in 2013, visit www.organicvalley.coop. Organic Valley is also on Twitter @OrganicValley and Facebook www.facebook.com/OrganicValley.

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