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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 17, 2011

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The 2011 NOFA Summer Conference
UMass Amherst – August 12th-14th

Some call it professional development. Some call it time to hang out with friends who share a passion for organic food. Some call it a family vacation. For anyone wanting to learn new skills, connect with an organization dedicated to ecological sustainability, or move a green business to the next level – the 37th Annual **Northeast Organic Farming Association Summer Conference** has much to offer.

Fourteen hundred participants will converge on **UMass Amherst from August 12-14th**, 2011, to share practical knowledge on making organic food part of their careers and family life. Over [225 workshops](#) will be offered on organic farming, gardening, land care, sustainability, and homesteading. For the first time, this year, the NOFA Summer Conference will feature the [Northeast Animal-Power Field Days](#), providing access to hands-on workshops all weekend on how to utilize draft animals for work on farming and logging operations.

This year's conference will also feature special tracks of workshops around particular themes, including: Nutrient Density, Permaculture, an innovative organizing model called Transition Towns, CSA management, Beginning Farmers, Organic Land Care, and Winter Growing. Workshops on growing a wide variety of specific crops as well as raising many kinds of livestock will also be offered. [Teens](#) and [kids](#) can take advantage of hands-on learning about growing plants, animal care, and natural crafts.

Award-winning author, **Eric Toensmeier**, will deliver the [Friday evening keynote](#) address on **Regenerative and Perennial Agriculture for Climate Stabilization**. He points out that climate change is already making the planet less inhabitable, with droughts, floods, and severe weather events on the rise. He argues that a massive global switch to an agricultural system which is designed to capture carbon, together with a strategy of regional self-reliance is essential to reduce emissions, and provide food security to people everywhere. Toensmeier is the author of *Perennial Vegetables* and co-author of *Edible Forest Gardens*.

In the [Saturday evening keynote](#), **Dr. Ignacio Chapela, of UC Berkeley**, will address the rise of Genetically Modified Organism (GMOs); new genetically engineered crops destined for both the food supply and gas tanks. In March 2011, despite protests from organic farming community, advocacy groups and consumers, the USDA decided to de-regulate Genetically Modified alfalfa seed. At the same time, global biotechnology giants such as Monsanto, are developing new applications of genetic engineering technology for producing agro-fuels and even pharmaceuticals. **Dr. Chapela is currently working on developing GMO-detection technology for use by communities seeking to protect the integrity of their seed from genetic contamination.**

About NOFA

NOFA is a non-profit organization of farmers, gardeners, land care professionals and consumers working to educate members and the general public about the benefits of a local organic food system based on complete cycles, natural materials and minimal waste for the health of individual beings, communities and the living planet.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Northeast Organic Farming Association Summer Conference visit www.nofasummerconference.org or contact NOFA/Mass Public Relations Coordinator, Mindy Harris mindy@nofamass.org, or 310-663-0054.