

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Fisher-Merritt Family of Food Farm named  
MOSES Organic Farmer of the Year**

La Crosse, WI – The 2010 Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Organic Farmer of the Year award was presented to John, Jane and Janaki Fisher-Merritt, who own and operate Food Farm, an organic vegetable farm near Wrenshall, MN.

Since 2003, the annual MOSES Organic Farmer of the Year Award has been presented to an outstanding organic farmer or farm family to recognize farmers who practice outstanding land stewardship, innovation and outreach. It is awarded during the annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference in La Crosse, the largest organic farming conference in the nation. The Organic Farming Conference is in its 21<sup>st</sup> year.

For many years, the Fisher-Merritts have brought fresh organic vegetables to the greater community of Duluth, MN.

“We’re a community-supported farm that is more diversified than most CSA (community supported agriculture) farms, with a big root cellar so we can deliver winter and summer shares,” said John Fisher-Merritt. “Our first delivery year was 1994, and when we started in northern Minnesota, people had never heard of the idea, so it was a novel idea, but people quickly took to it.”

The Fisher-Merritts approach their farm as a living organism, and manage their soil so it can be farmed forever. Diversity of production includes grazing poultry as part of the system to improve soil, lessen weeds and manage insect populations.

In 2000, the Fisher-Merritts designed and built an innovative energy efficient "root cellar/cooler" which has enough storage to supply their CSA members and the retail stores in Duluth with root crops throughout the winter. This root cellar uses the natural cooling/heating capacity of the earth. A series of fans thermostatically bring in or limit outside air to control a variety of air temperatures for different crops, including the many tons of carrots, potatoes, and squash. For an entire year this large storage area uses less than \$200 in electricity.

The Fisher-Merritts farm in a way that allows each of them to explore interests other than farming, enhancing their community with their contributions of art and culture, including a local film festival that takes place in a barn.

MOSES is a non-profit organization working to promote sustainable and organic agriculture through trainings, workshops, educational initiatives, and by providing free resources to farmers striving to produce high-quality, healthful food using organic and sustainable techniques.

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