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Aggressive Membership Campaign Begins for Puget Sound Food Network

MT. VERNON, WA, February 23– Since the soft launch of the PSFN (“PSFN” or “The Network”) at Snohomish County’s 2009 Focus on Farming Conference on November 4, PSFN staff have been busy implementing updates and refining service benefits for its existing members. PSFN now seeks to attract area food producers, retail professionals, service providers and the general public to sign up and become PSFN members and sponsors.

In early 2009, the Northwest Agriculture Business Center, NABC, began the process of hiring staff to build a market concept which utilizes modern technology and human resources to create a dynamic information network allowing producers, buyers, individual consumers, services and community partners, to find each other, communicate needs, and develop working relationships in the Puget Sound. “PSFN is designed to connect local food producers and products to a discriminating and growing wholesale buyers market,” says Tim Crosby, Network Coordinator. “We work with our members to make connections and solve logistical problems so we can increase the availability of local food products in our twelve county region.”

In recent years, consumers have shown a growing interest in buying locally grown foods from farmer’s markets and restaurants—fresh, clean, quality foods unique to a region’s seasonality with a story to tell. Puget Sound land and waters produce a diversity of vegetables, fruits and grains, pastured meats and dairy, finfish and shellfish that consumers desire, along with artisan wines, cheeses and beers. “Shoppers might find these foods on high-end restaurant menus, specialty stores and farmers markets, but they can’t find a fair representation at regular grocers, schools or work cafeterias,” says Lucy

Norris, Regional Food System Developer, “It’s still a niche, but we think local food can be everyday food.” It seemed a concentrated effort like Puget Sound Food Network was in order.

“In addition to our core services, our members have access to relevant blog and news feeds, event calendars, community portals, market research, insights and trend reports— all in one place, says Lucy Norris. “We are focused on improving the food system as a whole by bringing all parties together to build a stronger, healthier Puget Sound.”

“Developing a strong regional food system will only happen as we grow the Network’s membership, that’s why we are offering a Founding Member half price discount to thank the businesses that join this first phase of our growth,” says David Bauermeister, NABC’s Executive Director, “The discount is good until March 31, 2010.” Individuals interested in Basic Membership may also choose to add a little extra to sponsor a small but growing farm to offset membership fees, increasing a small farm’s chances to connect with potential buyers.

Those interested in learning more about PSFN and how to become a member should visit our Web site at www.PSFN.org. PSFN will be also represented at upcoming Seattle food related events including Farmer Fisher Chef Connection, Wild Seafood Exchange Conference and NW Food Service Show. Those interested in making a tax-deductible gift or to discuss sponsorship opportunities to the non-profit NABC should visit <http://www.agbizcenter.org/donate>, or contact Lucy Norris at 360-336-3666, 206-420-1229 or email lucy@psfn.org.