

>>> <sheila@marinorganic.org> 6/19/2008 5:42 PM >>>

Dear Carmen Fewless,

Marin Organic is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that represents organic producers in Marin County, producers whose livelihoods are based on a respect for nature and a sense of place. Our goal has been to restore the ecological and social values to agriculture and realign traditional expectations of farming with a holistic understanding of ecology. Marin Organic aims to re-empower local communities, foster environmentally sound agriculture and celebrate local food production. Our work has lead Marin Organic to be at the forefront of a movement which is creating a healthy, sustainable, and safe environment for humans and wildlife.

More than three years ago, Marin Organic introduced the Salmon Safe program to Marin County in an effort to go beyond the organic standards and acknowledge those producers who were working to care for the riparian zones on their property and reduce runoff and erosion. Salmon Safe works with farmers to encourage the adoption of ecologically sustainable agricultural practices that protect water quality and native salmon. Operations endorsed by independent professional certifiers are promoted with the Salmon-Safe label. The inspector checklist attached will give you a sense of the scope of the program and the criteria used when examining a property. Currently there are 12 Salmon Safe certified properties in Marin County, ranging in size from a few acres to more than 500.

Marin Organic would like to request that Salmon Safe be able to serve as a program that producers can use to demonstrate their efforts to meet the new Grazing Waiver requirements. As you may note from the checklist, those producers who have passed Salmon Safe have demonstrated a very high level of care for their land and the watershed, in many ways going beyond the basic requirements of the waiver. Those producers who do not pass the Salmon Safe certification at first are given a checklist of tasks and actions, giving them an opportunity to apply for assistance and implement projects that will reduce runoff and erosion. Having Salmon Safe acknowledged as a means of demonstrating a producer's efforts to meet the grazing waiver requirements will provide an market incentive for producers to meet the waiver requirements and exceed them -- improving both water quality and, hopefully, increasing the economic viability of their

operation.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

With Kind Regards,

Sheila Foster
Development Director
Marin Organic
415-663-9667 x105