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NEWS RELEASE

September 5, 2008

For Immediate Release

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Cropping Systems Workshop and Farm Tour Set for October 2

Cover crops, long-term legume based crop rotations, and organic or “natural” production practices are useful management strategies for improving a farm’s profits while offering conservation benefits. These practices and others can reduce purchased input use, erosion, and agricultural chemical runoff, and can also provide unique market opportunities.

Thursday October 2, 2008, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Buzz Café in Sabetha, Kansas, is the date set for a one-day workshop and farm tour on how the above practices can help farmers weather the challenges in today’s agriculture. The program and tour are open to Extension, NRCS, and WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy) representatives, and farmers.

“Integrating Management Strategies for Sustainable Cropping Systems” includes a morning program covering Organic Transition, Crop Rotation Planning and Cover Crops presented by Ed Reznicek, a panel session on Marketing Alternative Crops featuring Oren Holle, Eugene Edelman, and Ed Reznicek, and information in new Farm Bill programs to help with adoption of sustainable farming practices and organic transition.

Reznicek is an organic farmer from Goff, Kansas, and general manager of Kansas Organic Producers, a marketing cooperative handling organic grains sales for about 60 organic farmers in a three state area. Oren Holle, is an organic farmer near Bremen, Ks., and is president of Kansas Organic Producers, as well as president of OFARM, a multi-state organization of organic marketing associations. Eugene Edelman is an organic farmer near Sabetha, Ks. raising organic grains and marketing organic livestock through the Natural Beef Cooperative of Good Natured Family Farms.

At 1 p.m. the afternoon session moves to Hartter Feed and Seed in Sabetha, a locally owned feed and seed mill handling both conventional and certified organic

grain and products. At about 2:30 the group will move to the Eugene Edelman farm for a look at an organic farming operation.

Registration is \$10 which covers lunch and snacks; RSVP by September 30 to the Kansas Rural Center at 785-873-3431 or ksrc@rainbowtel.net; Make checks payable to KRC, Box 133, Whiting, Ks., 66552, or pay at the door. Registration is open to the first 35 registrants as space for the a.m. program is limited.

The workshop and tour are part of a series of similar programs being held in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas, to educate Extension and vo-ag educators, NRCS and others about management practices common to sustainable agriculture and organic farming. Supported by a grant from USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program through the University of Nebraska, co-sponsors include the North Central Region SARE Program, University of Nebraska, Kansas State University, Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops, and the Kansas Rural Center. -30-