



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (February 9, 2006):**

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**Wilcox Farms is awarded "Salmon-Safe" Label**

**Roy, WA** - Wilcox Farms has become **the largest Northwest farm to be certified as "Salmon-Safe,"** in recognition of its efforts to protect water quality and habitat for native salmon. Certification was awarded for management of the 1,800-acre Wilcox farm in Roy, Washington, located along the Nisqually River, which provides important habitat for a variety of salmon and other fish and wildlife species.

"The **Salmon-Safe** certification is a great way for us to inform our customers about our commitment to protect water quality and habitat not only for salmon and wildlife, but also for the people who live in our community," said Barrie Wilcox, president of Wilcox Farms. "Responsible, sustainable farming practices are important to preserve the natural environment that makes the Pacific Northwest such a special and unique place. All of us at Wilcox Farms are proud to be recognized by the **Salmon-Safe** program for our strategic stewardship of agricultural lands."

**Salmon-Safe** certification is an emerging Northwest eco-label that distinguishes farms that are committed to environmentally sensitive management, specifically in regard to water quality and habitat protection. It taps into the growing market, demanded by consumers, for food products produced with environmentally sensitive methods.

Qualification is based on third-party review of farming practices by independent consultants with expertise in fisheries and sustainable agriculture. The rigorous set of guidelines used to determine certification include: preventing erosion to avoid siltation of gravel spawning beds; planting trees near streams to keep them shaded; using efficient irrigation practices to assure sufficient water is available in streams for migrating fish; and using natural methods to control weeds and pests in lieu of toxic chemicals. Detailed guidelines are available at [www.stewardshippartners.org](http://www.stewardshippartners.org).

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"As one of the largest family-owned dairy operations in Washington, Wilcox Farms is playing a leadership role in demonstrating how successful agriculture and salmon conservation are mutually supportive," said David Burger, executive director of Stewardship Partners. "The certification program builds on our efforts in the Nisqually Watershed, working with community partners to promote sustainable land management." Stewardship Partners is a Seattle-based non-profit organization that helps private landowners restore and preserve the natural landscapes of Washington State.

Wilcox Farms will begin labeling its line of organic and Omega 3 eggs as **Salmon-Safe** later this spring, and will promote the designation and inform consumers through a series of in-store promotions. Other products, including dairy, will be labeled as more of the Wilcox Farms land-base is evaluated and certified by the program.

The **Salmon-Safe** program originated in Oregon in 1997, and has a successful track record of certifying more than 100 landowners in the state (covering approximately 35,000 acres). Stewardship Partners is promoting the program throughout the Puget Sound region as a means to engage farmers in regional salmon recovery efforts. The certification program is gaining momentum and, so far, 25 farms throughout the area have been awarded the label. The wide range of **Salmon-Safe** products available includes vegetables, apples, dairy products, berries, and wine.

Because the major salmon streams in the Puget Sound region flow through the most productive agricultural valleys, farmers have a critical role to play in the successful recovery of the once abundant salmon populations whose decline has become one of the most pressing environmental concerns facing our region. Twenty percent of the land along salmon-bearing streams in Puget Sound is agricultural.

For more information on the **Salmon-Safe** program, including how to apply for certification, contact Larry Nussbaum at Stewardship Partners at 206-292-9875, or go to [www.stewardshippartners.org](http://www.stewardshippartners.org).

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