

Special Sections

Foundation doubles 2007 investment in research, education

Published on 05/01/2009 05:16pm By Ashley Bentley

As the deadline approaches for applications for 2009 grants, the Organic Farming Research Foundation reflects on 2008, when it provided a record \$436,000 for research projects in the U.S. and Canada. That total is more than twice 2007's total.

The Santa Cruz, Calif.-based foundation supported 12 organic research and education projects in the fall and 15 in the spring.

The research project focuses in 2008 included seed breeding, biodiversity enhancement, pest control and nutrient management on organic farms, according to a news release. The foundation also partnered with Stretch Island Fruit Co. for additional support on projects to improve organic fruit production. Stretch Island Fruit Co. processes fruit for organic fruit snacks and is owned by Kellogg Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Stretch Island contributed to three research projects, which involved fish extracts for integrated disease, insect and fertility management in blueberries; optimizing mulch and fertilizer use in blueberries and evaluating day-neutral strawberries.

The foundation also added an education and outreach component this year and funded four fall projects in that vein. These projects included development of a bilingual organic farming training and mentorship program, an initiative to manage farm habitat for wild pollinators, development of a handbook for organic market garden crop planning and development of Web resources for organic high tunnel production.

The deadline for competitive grants submissions for 2009 is May 15. Requests for proposals for research, education and outreach project funding are available at the foundation's Web site, <http://ofrf.org>.