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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****9<sup>th</sup> Annual Farm & Food Leadership Conference: September 25-26, Bryan, TX**  
***Learning How to Change the Policies That Affect Our Food System***

CAMERON, Texas – August 27, 2015 – The Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) and the Council for Healthy Food Systems (CHFS) will be presenting the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Farm and Food Leadership Conference in Bryan, Texas, on September 25-26, 2015.

Growing numbers of Texans are seeking out local and sustainably raised foods, but are unaware of how the regulatory, economic, and social structure of our food system affects what farmers can grow and consumers can buy.

“We have important opportunities to change the policies that govern our food system, but we need a diversity of people who understand the critical issues and are willing to speak up,” said Judith McGeary, attorney, farmer, and Executive Director of Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance. “One of the exciting things about the local foods movement is that it brings together all kinds of people: rural and urban, conservative and liberal, farmer and consumer. The conference reflects this unique convergence of interests.”

Friday's lunchtime keynote will be Texas State Representative Simpson. Representative David Simpson filed a bill in the recent legislative session to protect local decision-making on water issues. He will discuss why local control of water is so important and the outlook for the future. Saturday's keynote will be announced soon.

The conference program features a variety of hands-on activism workshops and experts on current food and agriculture issues, including food cooperatives, legalizing hemp, food safety laws, genetically engineered crops (GMOs), urban farming, the bee crisis, and more. Panels this year will feature *Impact of Ag Policy on Future of Young Farmers*; *The Future of Water in Texas*; and *Farm-to-School Programs and Beyond*.

The 2015 speaker lineup includes: Jordan Bednar (Tandem Farm Co.), Judith Canales (USDA Texas Farm Service Agency), Stephen Carpenter (Farmer's Legal Action Group), Gracie Cavnar (Recipe for Success Foundation), Cath Conlon (Blackwood Educational Land Institute), Brian Cummings (Eat Green LLC), Justin Duncan (National Center for Appropriate Technology), Erin Eriksen (Urban Harvest), Michelle Gagnes (League of Independent Voters of Texas), Lorig Hawkins (Texas Young Farmer Coalition), Coleman Hemphill (Texas Hemp Industries Association), Jennie Holt (Eco-Stead), Steve King (Millican Farms), Ken Kramer (Sierra Club), Russell Langley (Langley & McGeary, LLC), Annelies Lottmann (Texas Rural Cooperative Center of UTRGV), Patty Lovera (Food & Water Watch), Edwin Marty (City of Austin's Office of Sustainability), Marc McCord (FracDallas), Judith McGeary (FARFA), CJ Sentell (Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative), Andrew Smiley (Sustainable Food Center), Howard Vlieger (Independent Crop Nutrition Advisor), and Larissa Walker (Center for Food Safety).

This year's conference lead sponsors are: Edible Houston, Pam Walker (author of *Growing Good Things to Eat in Texas*), Edible Austin, Edible Dallas & Fort Worth, Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage, Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Sustainable Food Center, American National-Coleman Insurance Agency, Coufal-Prater Equipment, Pat Greer's Kitchen, and Texas State University.

For media passes to the conference, contact [Info@farmandranchfreedom.org](mailto:Info@farmandranchfreedom.org); for more information visit: [www.farmandranchfreedom.org/farm-food-leadership-conference](http://www.farmandranchfreedom.org/farm-food-leadership-conference)

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***About Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance***

*Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) is a national organization that supports independent family farmers and protects a healthy and productive food supply for American consumers. FARFA promotes common sense policies for local, diversified agricultural systems.*