

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Coinjock Creek Farms receives grant for Farm Plot Rental program

Maple, NC – March 15, 2010 – Coinjock Creek Farms has been awarded a grant totaling \$9,960 from the Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA (RAFI-USA) Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund. The grant proposal as submitted outlined establishment of a Farm Plot rental program on the 5-acre farm, located in Maple, NC.

Funds from the grant award will be used to provide marketing and infrastructure development in support of a Farm plot rental program on the Maple site. Farm plots will be available for a nominal fee to individuals in the community. Plots will be “shovel ready”, providing opportunities for individuals who: may not have land, equipment, time, skill or physical ability to start a garden.

The project will demonstrate an alternative use for farmland currently in traditional commodity-based agriculture and open space – keeping the land in production and out of development. The project will also prove local food production, and retail opportunities for sale of related products: seed, tools, plants, etc.

The proposal received a wide base of support including: Currituck County Economic Development Director Peter Bishop, Currituck County Planning Director Ben Woody, Currituck County Commissioner Owen Etheridge, Currituck County Agriculture Extension Agent Tommy Grandy, Pasquotank County Agriculture Extension Agent Tom Campbell. Interest in the project has been expressed by other small farm operators in Currituck and surrounding counties of Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans and Chowan.

RAFI-USA awards grants in two categories – Farm Community Projects and Farm Producer Projects. Community Projects may be awarded funding up to a total amount of \$30,000 for project proposals involving community scale farm projects. Producer Projects may be awarded funding up to a total amount of \$10,000 for project proposals involving.

Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund Demonstration Grants are awarded on a competitive basis, with grant applications in each category grouped into four geographic regions across the state: Coastal, Piedmont, Western Piedmont and West. The Coastal region includes 28 counties stretching from Currituck at the NC/VA state line to Hanover on the NC/SC state line.

Qualifying Producers must be farmers, who are actively engaged in full or part-time farming in the Coastal Region. Priority is given to farmers who earned a significant portion of their income from tobacco at the time of the Master Settlement Agreement (1997-1998) and to projects that create an opportunity for a new generation of farmers.

Qualifying Community Groups must include qualifying farmers from the Coastal Region, and farmers must be active in the leadership of the group. Groups of farmers, farm co-ops, farmer associations, churches, local business, civic organizations, or combinations of these are eligible and encouraged to apply.

Eligible projects are those that: have a likelihood of generating new farm income; establish new markets for local products and services; develop new uses for greenhouses; add value to existing farm products by processing, packaging or marketing in a special way; make new use of tobacco facilities and equipment; maintain or create quality employment, including self-employment or opportunities for home-based businesses; make optimal use of on-farm and natural resources. High priority is given to projects that are innovative and demonstrate a new direction or opportunity for farmers in North Carolina.

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