

**For Immediate Release**

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***Body and Soil Farm Health Conference—healthy soil for healthy bodies***

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—December 29, 2009—Healthy soil, nutrient-rich foods and a healthy body! Explore the relationship between healthy soil and healthy bodies at Hawai‘i Island’s first Body and Soil Farm Health Conference on January 23 and 24 at Wai‘aha Whole Systems Farm in Holualoa, Kona. The early registration discount ends on January 8.

The conference, “Culturing the Micro-Flora of the Body & Soil,” focuses on ecological agricultural practices to grow nutrient-rich food for healthy bodies. Cutting-edge ideas in the health and agriculture fields and successful sustainable agricultural practices for farms and gardens will be presented.

“Attendees will learn how to foster biological diversity and sustainability in their gardens and farms and to grow nutrient-dense foods that have direct and indirect health benefits,” said Steve Sakala, conference organizer and Wai‘aha Farm manager.

According to Sakala, Wai‘aha Farm is hosting the conference because “we believe a sustainable society must be built on a sustainable agricultural foundation, which means building and growing healthy soils. If we grow nutrient rich foods they will contain the beneficial flora we need. In addition, the agricultural practices that enable farmers to grow nutrient rich foods are the best-use practices that actually enhance the soil by promoting conditions for beneficial micro-flora. From this foundation, then, comes health and wellness for the entire community.”

The conference features nationally recognized experts on sustainable agriculture and global health, speaking on topics ranging from cover crops and soil science to heavy metals and how they affect nutrient uptake in the body. The public is invited to meet and greet the speakers at 6 p.m. Thursday, January 21, at the Wai‘aha Farm community hall. Call 808-756-7945 for directions. Presenters include:

- Jerry Brunetti, 2008 ACRES USA Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient and a consummate communicator of the connection to food as medicine and farm as “farmacy.” Brunetti will speak to the collaborations of the various inhabitants in the human gut.
- Theresa Vernon, mineral tissue hair analysis expert and licensed acupuncturist. She is an expert on treating chronic fatigue syndrome along with metal toxicity to free up the ability for the body to uptake nutrients properly.
- Dr. Paul Hepperly, Fulbright Scholar, compost and cover crop specialist; Rachel Carson Scientist, former director of Rodale Research and senior scientist and a recognized expert

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in greenhouse gases and our food system. He worked from 1999 to 2002 with organic ginger farmers on Hawai'i Island, helping to manage ginger bacterial wilt. He has more than 35 years in agricultural research, management, education and information outreach. His conference presentation ranges from biochar, innovative compost methods, cover cropping, and tillage reduction, to the energy requirements of our food system.

- Michael Martin Melendrez, humus and Micorrhizal Fungi specialist. Owner of Soil Secrets, he coined the term “soil food web” in the seventies and is an expert on humus building and microbial inoculation. He will explain what we can do to grow our soils to prepare for growing plants.

The conference includes a trade show with local holistic and ecological vendors and on-farm demonstrations on whole systems integration with animals, cover crops, and composting. Registration includes locally sourced, nutrient-rich meals. Campers are welcome.

Registration:

- Registration by January 8 for the conference is \$125; \$150 after January 8;
- Day registration (Saturday or Sunday only), \$70 by January 8; \$80 after January 8;
- Camping Friday, \$15; Saturday \$15; both, \$25;
- Trade show booth with full conference registration for two, \$400 by January 8; \$450 after January 8.

For conference information, registration or trade show participation, visit <http://kohalacenter.org/bodysoilconference/about.html> or call 808-756-7945.

The Hawai'i Island conference is presented by Maui Aloha Aina, which has held the Body and Soil Farm Health conference on Maui for the past eight years. This year the Maui event will be January 16 and 17 at Kumulani Organic Vegetable Farm.

The conference is sponsored by Hawaii Farmers Union, ACRES USA, Sam Vessel, NRCS Maui, The Kohala Center, and Volcano Art Center.