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October 19, 2011**

Kansas City Food Circle and Kansas City CSA Coalition Statement Regarding Their Investigation of Bigg Blue Farm

Over the past few weeks, the Kansas City Food Circle (KCFC) and the Kansas City CSA Coalition (KCCSAC) have worked together to investigate the allegations against Bigg Blue Farm that questioned Stan and Carmen Biggs' farming practices and market sales practices. As part of the investigation, three experienced local farmers and three members of the KCFC and KCCSAC leadership visited the farm and interviewed the Biggses at different times. Stan and Carmen Biggs cooperated with the investigation and supplied requested documentation. Bigg Blue Farm's customers also provided valuable information.

Our conclusions are that Bigg Blue Farm is a legitimate vegetable farm and was growing a diverse variety of crops at least through the summer. The original allegations were raised too late in the season to provide conclusive evidence of an intent to mislead. However, in the course of the investigation, we did determine, through Stan Biggs' own account, that Bigg Blue Farm did distribute peaches that were not organically grown in its community supported agriculture (CSA) shares. This latter activity violated the spirit, if not the letter, of the KCFC's farmer pledge and the KCCSAC's standards.

As a result, the KCFC and KCCSAC are placing Bigg Blue Farm on probation and will be monitoring their growing practices more closely. We will consider ending the probation if Bigg Blue Farm addresses the outstanding issues and agrees to return to full compliance.

Allegations against producer members of both organizations are rare. KCFC and KCCSAC producer members take great pride in providing Kansas City local, healthy and sustainable food. They also work hard to develop open, honest communication between themselves and their customers. Although the Kansas City Food Circle and the Kansas City CSA Coalition are not regulatory bodies, they work hard to enhance that trusted relationship. Consumers should contact both organizations with any questions about how to eat locally and organically. A list of helpful questions consumers can ask farmers to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is grown is available on the Kansas City Food Circle website (www.kcfoodcircle.org) or by e-mailing coordinators@kcfoodcircle.org.

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A nonprofit, the Kansas City Food Circle has connected local eaters with local, organic, free-range food for over 20 years through events, education and public information. Please contact Dave Lawrence at 913-620-8427 for more information or visit us at www.kcfoodcircle.org.

The Kansas City CSA Coalition is a nonprofit organization that promotes Community Supported Agriculture initiatives in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Please contact Season Burnett at 816-237-8634 or csac.kc@gmail.com for more information, or visit us at www.kc-csac.org.