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Press releases are online at www.kerrcenter.com *Kerr Center is a non-profit educational foundation.* Contact: Maura McDermott, 918.231.0328 or mauramcdermot.kerrcenter@ecewb.com **ATTENTION: AGRICULTURE or BUSINESS EDITOR FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE USE UNTIL JUNE 31**

Report Looks at Past and Future of Organic Farming

Organic food sales are booming, even through the recent recession. But the meaning and origin of the USDA-certified organic label remain a mystery to many Americans.

A new, free online publication, “A Brief Overview of the History and Philosophy of Organic Agriculture,” from an Oklahoma non-profit foundation can help fill that knowledge gap.

The report offers valuable background for anyone seeking to understand the past – or potential future – of organic food, farming, and regulation.

“To better understand today’s organic phenomenon, it helps to know the origins of organic agriculture and its evolution to the present,” says George Kuepper of the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

Kuepper specializes in organic farming research at the center’s farm and ranch near Poteau.

Early organic farmers, he writes, attempted “to reverse the perennial problems of agriculture – erosion, soil depletion, decline of crop varieties, low quality food and livestock feed, and rural poverty.”

These organic pioneers believed that a nation’s health depends on the long-term vitality of its soil, he says.

The report traces some of the practices associated with today’s organic farming back for thousands of years. Some have appeared under different names, like “convertible husbandry” and “humus farming,” with the term “organic” only coming into use around 1940.

The report addresses common questions about the relationships between organic food and farming, health, pests, and genetic engineering.

It reviews the scientific research that gradually built organic farming’s credibility with academia and government, aiding the development of today’s federal organic standards.

The report is available free from the Kerr Center website, www.kerrcenter.com, along with a wide selection of other resources on organic farming and sustainable agriculture. Printed copies are available free by calling the center at 918.647.9123.