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## **CHOICE ORGANIC TEAS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF SUCCESS**

***Venerable Tea Company Proves that Innovation, Quality, and Dedication to Core Business is Key to Success and Weathering Economic Climate***

Seattle, WA (January 2009) — Choice Organic Teas, the leading purveyor of exclusively organic teas and the first company to introduce Fair Trade Certified™ teas in the U.S., is proud to celebrate 20 years of tea-making this year. The company created a successful business model in 1989, built on a staunch commitment to sourcing the highest quality teas through close relationships with international tea gardens and providing delicious, innovative, and sustainably produced products to its consumers. That model has proven to be a formula for success up to now, and it will be the key to keeping Choice Organic Teas flourishing through current worldwide economic challenges.

“We are exceptionally proud of what we’ve accomplished in the past 20 years,” says Ray Lacorte, Head of Operations for Choice Organic Teas. “We set a basic foundation and solid course based on core values, and essentially we have not wavered from that course. Our excellent team embodies a variety of talents that allows us to keep producing and selling the highest quality, best-tasting, and most innovative teas in a conscientious, environmentally friendly manner. Our plan, to weather the economic climate we all face right now, is to stay this course, focus on top quality at an affordable price, and look forward to continued success.”

### **A Variety of “Firsts”**

Choice Organic Teas’ milestones are vast, the most prominent being its pioneering position in 1989 as the first exclusively certified organic tea company in the United States. Demonstrating a continued commitment to environmental and social responsibility, Choice Organic Teas became the first Fair Trade Certified U.S. tea maker in 2000. Fair Trade Certified products directly support a better life for workers on estates and plantations committed to social responsibility, community development, and environmental stewardship. For every kilo of tea it purchases from Fair Trade Certified gardens, Choice Organic Teas pays an additional premium directly to worker-managed funds, empowering workers to improve their own lives and their community. Keeping pace at the head of the pack, the company is one of the few tea companies in the U.S. with HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point systems) Certification.

### **Giving Back**

Community giving is also an important part of Choice Organic Teas’ business model. For every box of Himalayan Green Tea purchased, the company donates 10¢ to Save the Himalayan Kingdom, a non-profit organization that focuses on environmental, health, and literacy issues in Nepal. Community support is broadened further through partnerships with distributors and retailers. For every box of Choice Organic Teas purchased at PCC Natural Markets, the company donates 5¢ to the PCC Farmland Fund to help protect and promote organic farmland in Washington State. Additionally, 5¢ per box purchased by Pura Vida Coffee is donated to Pura Vida Partners, to benefit at-risk children in coffee growing regions through health, education, and business development programs.

### **A Commitment to Our Planet**

Since the brand's inception, the general company policy has always been about minimizing the environmental footprint of the business. Choice Organic Teas' packaging currently exceeds the U.S. National Organic Program requirements by using recycled and unbleached materials and eliminating Polyvinyl Chloride (PVdC). Wind-generated power is purchased to offset 100% of the electricity use of their manufacturing facility and company employees are rewarded for using alternative, clean-air forms of transportation. Choice Organic Teas has come a long way since 1989, and yet they remain leaders at the forefront of the tea industry.

### **More Than 75 Tea Varieties: Something for Everyone**

Choice Organic Teas' proudly offers more varieties of certified organic, Fair Trade Certified tea than any other tea company in the U.S., with a tea for every taste bud and budget. Recently Kosher certified, Choice Organic Teas continues to expand its range of value-added products to remain competitive in the tea industry. Offerings include their Original line, featuring classic teas and traditional blends available in biodegradable tea bags; the Gourmet line featuring new favorites and classics with a twist in tea bags; Loose Leaf teas available in bulk grocery and via the company's web-site, and its newest addition, Whole Leaf Organics, which are whole leaf teas in biodegradable tea pyramids.

*A brand of Granum, Inc. of Seattle, Choice Organic Teas made its debut in 1989. As North America's #1 selling exclusively certified organic tea line, Choice Organic Teas has promoted the growth and development of organic agriculture in tea estates worldwide and offers more than seventy-five varieties of teas and herbal infusions available in tea bags, tea pyramids, and loose leaf. In 2000, Choice Organic Teas became the first tea crafter in the United States to offer Fair Trade Certified™ tea. Visit [www.choiceorganict teas.com](http://www.choiceorganict teas.com) for more information.*

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