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A New, Science-Based Gluten-Free Label Consumers Can Trust

Quality Assurance International and National Foundation for Celiac Awareness partner to help consumers choose bona fide gluten free foods

(SAN DIEGO, Calif. – June 13, 2011) -- Responding to profound growth and both consumer and industry demand, a new science-based gluten-free certification program is now available from the leading organic certifier Quality Assurance International (QAI), and the healthcare nonprofit National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA). In a sea of unsubstantiated claims, seals and logos, consumers need a certification that is science-based and verified through inspections and product testing. This new triple-verified gluten-free label brings transparency and trust to people who need gluten-free foods as part of maintaining their healthy diet.

QAI, with its parent company NSF International, an independent public health and safety organization, brings more than 66 years of food safety auditing and certification, and 20 years of organic certification experience, to this new consumer label. NFCA, a recognized healthcare leader in the gluten-free industry, is dedicated to achieving greater accessibility of gluten-free foods and health and food safety solutions for celiac and gluten-intolerant consumers.

Together, QAI and NFCA bring integrity and rigor to a gluten-free certification program that requires sensitive testing procedures, a stringent auditing and an independent application review process. The program uses feedback from consumers, manufacturers and retailers and includes:

- Product review
- Onsite inspection
- Testing to ensure compliance to 10ppm or less
- Ongoing compliance including random product testing



Widespread cross-contamination of source ingredients means that even manufacturers who singularly produce gluten-free products must incorporate adequate testing and verification protocols into their operating procedures. The stringent nature of the QAI certification protocols ensures prevention of contamination and co-mingling, critically important for those with allergies to gluten and gluten-intolerance. The QAI and NFCA “Gluten-Free” certification program requires companies to produce products at less than 10 parts per million (ppm) of gluten to receive certification.

“The profound growth in the marketplace has necessitated a stronger emphasis on food safety for the 17 million families looking for gluten-free foods,” said Alice Bast, NFCA Founder and President. “NFCA’s extensive

surveying confirms that consumers are seeking a gluten-free certification program that includes ongoing testing and transparency with strict standards that are verified through inspections. These consumers choose certified gluten-free to restore their health – it’s about food safety for them.”

By bringing certification rigor to the gluten-free category with science-based annual inspection, ingredient verification, random product testing and unannounced audits, this truly independent approval process will fill the gap between unsubstantiated claims and consumer demand for bona fide gluten-free products.

“QAI’s 20-year focus in organic certification has made us experts in the prevention of contamination and co-mingling of ingredients; two skills sets that are critical in verifying and assuring gluten-free status,” said QAI General Manager Jaclyn Bowen. “Nationally, food allergies and the diagnosis of Celiac Disease are on the rise and we want to help eliminate confusion for consumers by providing them with a label they can trust based on sound science.”

The QAI and NFCA new “Certified Gluten-Free” consumer label were officially unveiled to the grocery industry this past weekend at the KeHE Show in Chicago.

QAI offers manufacturers and retailers more than one certification by coupling its gluten-free certification with other QAI certification programs (organic, eco-social, non-GMO) as well as with food safety programs through QAI’s parent company, NSF International. For more information contact Kathleen Downey **541-341-1251**, **Kathleen@qai-inc.com**.

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About QAI

Founded in 1989, QAI is the leading provider of organic certification services worldwide verifying organic integrity throughout the supply chain (qai-inc.com). Additional certification services include gluten-free, kosher, non-GMO, natural personal care, and social responsibility. QAI remains dedicated to the environment, while providing educational outreach to the organic community, customers and consumers. Headquartered in San Diego, Calif., the company has grown to include operations in the U.S., Canada, Japan and the European Union.

About NSF International: NSF International, an independent organization, certifies products and writes standards for food, water and consumer goods to minimize adverse health effects and protect the environment (nsf.org). Founded in 1944, NSF is committed to protecting human health and safety worldwide and operates in more than 120 countries. NSF is a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Food and Water Safety and Indoor Environment.

[NSF’s Food Safety Programs](#) offer a total food safety solution to growers, processors, distributors, retailers and food-service operators, as well as food equipment manufacturers. Services include: NSF Foodservice Equipment certification; food safety and quality auditing and certification through NSF Agriculture, NSF Cook & Thurber and NSF-CMi; Global Food Safety Standards Certification (SQF, BRC, GlobalGAP, FSSC, IFS, Dutch HACCP); NSF Restaurant and Supermarket Food Safety programs; Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Aquaculture Certification Council (ACC), HACCP validation and inspection through NSF Surefish Seafood Safety; and bottled water/flavored beverage quality certification.

Additional services include Education and Training, drinking water certification and safety audits, management systems registrations (e.g. ISO 14001) delivered through NSF International Strategic Registrations; and sustainable business services through NSF Sustainability.

About NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR CELIAC AWARENESS

The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) drives diagnosis of celiac disease, improves quality of-life for children and families adhering to a gluten-free diet and advances science by facilitating collaborations within the healthcare community. NFCA is a leading resource for celiac information. NFCA's website (www.CeliacCentral.org) offers free, comprehensive information and support materials for celiac patients, their families and health care providers (including a comprehensive Symptoms Checklist and a Getting Started Guide), accredited training for healthcare and food industry professionals and the latest news, recipes, videos and blogs to promote quality of life without compromise.