

Media Release: Biological Farmers of Australia, 31 January 2011

New initiative encourages Australian primary school students to ‘Adopt a Farmer’

Organic farmers will help educate the nation’s primary school students about organic food and farming under a new initiative supported by the Victorian Government.

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) and Regional Development Victoria will officially launch the ‘Adopt-a-Farmer’ program at Ladybird Organics farm on Wednesday, 23 February.

Part of the BFA’s Organic School Gardens Program, the ‘Adopt-a-Farmer’ initiative aims to help bridge the ‘urban-rural divide’ and provide school children with firsthand experience of primary production, with the opportunity for farm excursions.

Organic farmer Steve Skopilianos of Ladybird Organics - the initiative’s first ‘adopted farmer’ - said he is looking forward to educating the children about organic fruit and vegetables and teaching them that they can feel confident what they are eating is truly good for them.

Steve is a third generation farmer and part of one of Melbourne’s oldest vegetable growing businesses, which converted to organic production in 2005.

"As a father of three children I had concerns for the lack of taste as well as the chemicals in food, and the impact they have on our environment," he said.

"I look forward to teaching children the importance of putting people and the environment first, starting with caring for our soils."

As an ‘adopted farmer’, Steve will be making visits to Coburg Primary School, as well as hosting farm tours and educational days for the students.

‘Adopt-a-Farmer’ is one of several initiatives connected to the BFA’s Organic School Gardens Program. With nearly 600 Australian primary schools registered to the program and over 2000 certified organic farmers in Australia, BFA Organic School Gardens Program Manager Jane Burns says Adopt-a-Farmer “has the potential to add to the gardening experience and educate thousands of Australian primary school children about where their food comes from”.

“The Adopt-a-Farmer initiative is the perfect opportunity for schools taking part in the BFA Organic School Gardens Program to experience life on a real organic farm and to discover how healthy and environmentally sustainable food is produced.”

Event Details:

Join industry members, organic primary producers, participating schools, Victorian government representatives and guests for the official launch of the Adopt-a-Farmer initiative. View the official invitation [here](#).

Date: Wednesday 23rd February 2011

Time: 9:45am - 12.00pm

Venue: Ladybird Organics farm: 175 Arundel Road, Keilor, Victoria, 3036 (Melways Ref: 14 H2)

Cost: Free and includes light refreshments

RSVP: By 14 February 2011 to organicschools@bfa.com.au or ph: **0408 485 585**

About the BFA Organic School Gardens Program

Schools all across Australia are discovering the wonders of organic gardening following the introduction of BFA's Organic School Gardens program in mid-2010. The program is available free to all Australian schools and is designed for students aged eight to 12 years. Written in line with Australian organic standards, the program provides written materials for lessons taking place both inside and outside the classroom (along with comprehensive notes for supervisors and educators).

The program is available to view and download now at: www.organicschools.com.au.

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