



MEDIA RELEASE

12 August 2010

Organic certification workshop tours the NSW East Coast

With the growing awareness of consumers to look for an organic certification logo as a guarantee of true organics as well as new base standards in Australia, there is increasing pressure on market stall holders as well as businesses, both small and large, to comply with an organic standard.

The Organic Growers of Australia Small Producers Program (OGA), a non-profit organization is hosting free half-day workshops along the NSW East Coast starting in Wauchope and travelling to Coffs Harbour and Lismore in order to answer the questions of growers and others interested in the certification process.

OGA Chairman Doug Haas will facilitate the workshops and says that smaller market gardeners and local retail suppliers are often wary about certification which is sometimes wrongly perceived as being expensive and time consuming.

“Smaller growers often believe that organic certification doesn’t apply to them however it does not need to be difficult or expensive and adds a great amount of credibility for consumers seeking truly organic produce.”

Mr Haas says the program has evolved over more than 20 years and from three years ago began offering a highly cost effective program which specifically caters to the needs of smaller growers.

Marc Percival, Director of Agrisense, speaker at the Coffs Harbour workshop and consultant to many small growers in that region says that the OGA Small Producer Program is not difficult to follow once growers have had some basic support in understanding biological methods and organic growing.

“The OGA Small Producers Program is excellent for growers, not only for giving customer’s the assurance that you are a genuine organic grower, but also for helping to integrate quality control and food safety measures. It does not involve an overwhelming amount of paperwork and provides a good guide to growing organically.”

The OGA workshop will assist to answer questions of growers as well as other business types who are curious about or have an interest in the organic market, and especially growers who want to sell produce at markets, local stores or other outlets.

Key speakers include:

Doug Haas OGA Chairman/ vegetable producer, Red Country Produce (all workshops); **Chris Eggert**, dairy/ compost farmer, Redbank Farms (Wauchope); **Marc Percival**, organic consultant, Agrisense (Coffs Harbour); **Dave Forrest**, organic farming lecturer, Wollongbar TAFE (Lismore); **Howard Rubin**, Koala Teas/ OGA former chair (Lismore)

3 half-day certification workshops:

Wauchope

When: Monday August 23, 1.00pm to 5.00pm

Where: Redbank Farm - 41 Redbank Road, Wauchope

Coffs Harbour

When: Tuesday August 24, Registration 8.30am; Workshop: 9.00am - 1.00pm
Where: Coffs Harbour Education Campus (TAFE NSW) Hogbin Drive, Coffs Harbour

Lismore

When: Wednesday August 25, Registration 8:30; Workshop 9.00am - 1.00pm
Where: Wollongbar TAFE - Cnr Bruxner, Highway and Sneaths Road, Wollongbar

For full details visit the BFA website www.bfa.com.au or phone 1300 331 309 or email events@bfa.com.au.