

8 December 2010

World first: Australian Certified Organic becomes first international body accredited to Korean organic standards

Australian Certified Organic (ACO) has become the first international certification body to gain accreditation to the South Korean organic standard following the negotiation of a landmark deal.

ACO, a subsidiary of Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA), is now the first certification body outside of South Korea to hold accreditation for both raw and processed food certification.

The accreditation means ACO can provide organic certification in accordance with the Korean regulations administered by the South Korean Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MFAFF).

Akiko Nicholls, Managing Director of ACO says the agreement with MFAFF and the Director of the National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service (Korea) is an excellent step for ACO clients who wish to expand into or are already exporting to Asian markets.

“As the first group outside of Korea to hold this accreditation ACO is in a unique position to facilitate an improved and more efficient process for export of certified organic products to Korea,” Akiko says.

“From late-November 2010, Australian Certified Organic can certify ‘organic agricultural and forest products’, ‘organic livestock products’, the ‘repacking process’ and ‘organically processed foods’ to South Korean government standards.”

ACO already holds similar accreditation with the Japanese government for the Japanese Agriculture Standard (JAS), and the United States Department of Agriculture National Organic Program (USDA NOP) among others.

And while gaining ACO certification does not automatically guarantee certification to the Korean standard, the agreement will simplify the existing process, increasing trade opportunities between Australia and Korea.

“It will remain a separate process from the normal ACO certification process; however operators in Australia no longer need to go through Korean certification bodies or have auditors come all the way from Korea.

“Once ACO’s auditors are trained for the Korean regulations, our auditors will be able to carry out the Korean audit process at the same time as the annual ACO audit – which is more cost and time efficient!” says Akiko.

Further details and information on the Korean certification process will be available shortly from the ACO website www.aco.net.au.

All enquiries should be directed to Akiko Nicholls on 07 3350 5706 or email certification@aco.net.au.

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Media Contact:

Desta Itote

07 3350 5716 ext 232

desta.itote@bfa.com.au



766 Gympie Road (PO Box 530) Chermside 4032 QLD ABN: 75 699 664 781

 +61 (0)7 3350 5716  +61 (0)7 3350 5996  info@bfa.com.au

The BFA Group:

