

## Media Release: Biological Farmers of Australia, 18 February 2011

### BFA Organic School Gardens' *Adopt-a-Farmer* Program to star on Channel 31's *Vasili's Garden*

#### *Photo/media opportunity*

The BFA Organic School Garden's **Adopt-a-Farmer Program** launch will take place with the formal 'adoption' of the program's first organic farmer next week - an induction that will be broadcast as part of popular Channel 31 program *Vasili's Garden*.

Coburg Primary School students will meet their adopted farmer Steve Skopilianos, of Ladybird Organics, at the Keilor-based farm on Wednesday 23 February for an on-farm induction, and to celebrate the launch of the Adopt-a-Farmer Program.

Television gardening guru, and special guest on the day, Vasili Kanidiadis will assist with the launch, including filming for episodes of his popular television series *Vasili's Garden* to air on Wednesday 2 and Friday 4 March.

Vasili said the formal connection with a farm and experience of meeting a farmer and on-farm activities would be highly influential on children's understanding of how healthy and sustainable food is produced.

"It is so important that we get children involved in gardening and learning the basics of where their food comes from," said Vasili.

"Programs such as this [Adopt-a-Farmer] give kids firsthand experience and appreciation of what it takes to produce the food on their tables. By bringing it back to basics, and sharing this knowledge and wisdom with the younger generations we hope that they will adopt this into their own garden on a small scale."

Vasili said the Adopt-a-Farmer program is a perfect fit for his TV show, which aims to pass on the knowledge and wisdom of gardening to future generations, and Vasili hopes the episodes will encourage more schools to become involved with the program.

"We hope the viewers and teachers out there will be inspired to adopt a local farmer themselves and maybe even adopt Vasili!"

Supported by Regional Development Victoria's Future Farming initiative, the program will be formally launched by Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Education, Inga Peulich on the day.

Jane Burns, BFA Organic School Gardens Program Manager, says the program aims to bridge the 'urban-rural divide' and secure the future of farming by "providing the next generation with the opportunity to learn about the basis for healthy farming through farm excursions, on-farm activities, and farmer visits to schools.



“Children will be provided an understanding of the importance of maintaining biodiversity in our soils and the environment for food security, nutrition and long-term viability of our farming sector,” she said.

**Adopt-a-Farmer** is one of several initiatives connected with the BFA’s Organic School Gardens Program. With nearly 800 Australian primary schools registered to the program and over 2000 certified organic farmers in Australia, Jane says Adopt-a-Farmer “has the potential to add to schools’ gardening programs and educate thousands of Australian primary school children about where their food comes from.”

**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 21 February 2011 to [organicschools@bfa.com.au](mailto:organicschools@bfa.com.au) or ph: 0408 485 585

To register for the BFA Organic School Gardens Adopt-a-Farmer Program, or to learn more, visit: [www.organicschools.com.au](http://www.organicschools.com.au).

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