

# Vigilance is required to ensure organic standards remain in industry's hands, says BFA

The BFA Group has restated the need for organic industry members to remain engaged in developing new organic standards to ensure ongoing delivery of practical, meaningful regulation as demanded by industry and consumers alike.

A draft base standard via Standards Australia has been released for comment on 21st July.

While this base standard is planned to be finalised by the end of 2008, there remain some critical issues to resolve says BFA Director and Standards Chair, Dr. Andrew Monk.

"The industry is yet to determine how a new scheme will operate to deliver more effective regulation outside current industry self-regulated certification arrangements which have seen Australia develop high quality, internationally recognised standards" he says.

"There are ever-present pressures to hand over the control of standards setting to those with little interest in the organic movement itself, or those without the expertise to manage it.

"The BFA is not willing to let interests outside of the industry water down core technical requirements of the standard and the stringent organic certification processes built by industry over decades.

"The BFA remains focused on the protection of organic industry stakeholders and consumers and believes organic certification – currently not mandated in the new draft standard – is key to continually delivering this."

"Certification is a core component of self-regulation of the organic industry worldwide and especially in Australia where there is no legislation for the term organic."

Dr. Monk says the BFA is awaiting legal word from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) in coming months to confirm additional benefits this new draft standard may bring to industry in relation to enabling prosecution of those operations not certified to a recognized industry standard.

"From our perspective, the standard must ensure all affected organic sectors operate from an informed, practical and "real world"



base which delivers on animal welfare, balanced nutrition, food quality and safety, prohibition of GMOs, etc. These points are non-negotiable to the BFA as representatives of the organic industry's interests" says Dr. Monk.

Dr. Monk notes that regardless of the outcome of standards discussion, organic certification bodies such as Australian Certified Organic will continue to operate with their own standards, building upon the base standard. Consumers looking for organic certification marks like the Bud will continue to be assured that products comply with one of the most stringent agricultural and food standards in the world.

The new base standard, if approved at the end of this year, could act as a legal lever for the ACCC to use, in addition to standards currently available, to prosecute operators found not to be complying with industry standards and certification.

The BFA Australian Organic Standard, plus a link to the draft proposed base standard, and other supporting documents can be found at [www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au) for free download as a service to the organic industry and its broader stakeholders.

Stakeholders are encouraged to read and comment on those sections which apply to their business. The close out date for written submissions for changes to the draft standard is the end of September 2008. Submissions may be forwarded direct to Dr Andrew Monk by email [standards@bfa.com.au](mailto:standards@bfa.com.au) or to BFA, PO Box 530, Chermside Qld 4032.

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Four Leaf Milling this year celebrates its national presence as one of Australia's biggest distributors of organic products including spelt and rye flours, Egyptian gold flour, rolled oats & bran as well as chickpeas, muesli and a range of baby food.

To celebrate its 40th year in the organic industry, Four Leaf has designed a special commemorative tin filled with 800 grams of their most popular line, original rolled oats. Five-thousand tins will be distributed at all their regular outlets, which include Health Food Shop and independent grocers such as selected Foodland and IGA outlets.