

SA Positioned for Organic Growth

New research highlights South Australia's "hidden" potential

By PIRSA

South Australia is in a good position to take advantage of the rapid growth in demand for organic food says Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister, Paul Holloway.

"Organic agriculture is expanding rapidly with SA currently having most of its organic production in the horticulture and viticulture industries."

"Organic beef is now being produced from Australia's extensive rangelands which has helped boost the nation's overall organic production to almost half of the 22 million hectares farmed worldwide. The domestic market is currently growing at 25% annually," Mr Holloway said.

"There's clearly enormous scope for the industry to further develop and we need to ensure SA is well placed to capitalise on this phenomenal and sustained level of growth."

"Wine and seafood, for example, are two areas where SA could lead the way in organic production."

Mr Holloway made these comments when releasing a strategy paper "The Market Opportunity for Organic Products" prepared by

the Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA).

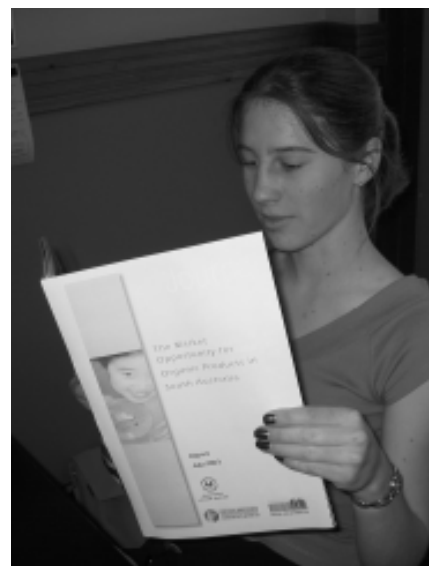
"The comprehensive report provides the government and industry with a framework to begin developing a strategic plan for the organics industry in this state."

"It's also a starting point for the SA industry to assess its current strengths and weaknesses, so it can continue to grow and develop."

"The report identifies SA industry development opportunities in several areas including horticulture (particularly in citrus and juices), dairy, meat and other value added products across these sectors."

"However, it also identifies the national domestic market as being fragile and still relatively unorganised. An undersupply of organic produce is limiting the ability to meet export demand and shortfalls in the domestic market have occurred as product is redirected to export markets."

"The industry's current set-up is likely to impede future growth and producers may need to consider establishing a peak industry body to address those structural issues, as well as



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providing them with a consolidated voice and direction," Mr Holloway said. ■

For further information

For more information the report is available on the website: www.pir.sa.gov.au

Organic Industry 'Pioneer' Turns 20

Victoria's Organic Agriculture Association Still Going Strong

In recognition of achieving its '20-year milestone' promoting conservation farming methods, the Organic Agriculture Association is holding a 'Celebration of Organics' over the weekend of March 13 and 14, 2004.

This celebration will coincide with the very successful 'Grow Organic' biennial weekend seminar, which will feature interesting speakers, workshops, demonstrations, delicious organic food, and showcase organic product and services.

Topics will include successful marketing and value adding of organic product, maintain-

ing healthy soils, ecological farming practices, and lots more.

The Organic Agriculture Association is one of the early pioneers in the organic industry and over the past 20 years, members have initiated ground-breaking industry development.

Amongst the many achievements include writing the first organic standards in Australia; leading the way in education with the award winning and TAFE accredited Diploma in Organic Agriculture Systems course; presenting a series of farm-based workshops; and

the establishment of an organic agriculture resource centre and library in Bairnsdale.

The 'Celebration of Organics' event, bringing together broad-scale farmers, small landholders, and consumers to enjoy, learn and swap ideas, will be held at Camp Coolamatong on the Banksia Peninsula near Bairnsdale in East Gippsland. ■

For further information

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