

From the chairman

Major gains in a year of growth



Doug Haas, BFA Group chairman

I AM A FIRM BELIEVER IN COMMERCIAL viability/ reality, whether for small or larger operations, and also service and integrity (not necessarily in that order). This year has been an excellent mix of all, delivering major gains to members, clients and the overall industry.

This has been achieved through several major changes to the management structure of the group. In February of this year BFA established a senior working group made up of people who I had worked with for many years and I knew would deliver in full, no matter how steep the slope. These people include Howard Rubin (chief financial officer, BFA), Holly Vyner (general manager, BFA), Akiko Nicholls (managing director, ACO), Graeme Stratford (BFA company secretary), Dr Andrew Monk (BFA standards convenor) and Greg Blakeney (organic client support officer).

With the assistance of these key people working together, we have a great formula for delivering the best results for both service and bottom line profit and loss. BFA this year returned the greatest profit in the history of the group without any real increases in charges, and in some cases these have actually been reduced.

This demonstrates what may be achieved if the group is to stay focused, fully energised and all working for the same goals.

A full compliment of roadshows across five states has once again been delivered to members and interested parties from Cairns to Perth. There is no doubt that these events are appreciated and give our grassroots members and stakeholders the opportunity to listen to very informative speakers while mixing with like-minded people from within industry. An emerging trend has become very clear, and that is that a large portion of non-organic farmers are seeking more knowledge of biological farming methods. I believe there is an excellent opportunity for the BFA to take this opportunity and fill this space.

The Organic Growers of Australia (OGA) moving into the BFA Group was an excellent decision by both BFA and OGA. OGA is actually a scheme for small growers and has continued to fill that very important gap in the supply chain recognising the important role that the smaller grower plays both in supplying niche markets and also attracting new people to the industry. A big thanks goes to

Howard Rubin, who oversaw the successful transition. The OGA is growing just as fast as the rapidly expanding ACO and plays a very strategic role in educating newcomers to organics at farmers' markets. OGA is now ISO 65-accredited to the IOAS (IFOAM) Group, once again leading the way in accredited organic certification specific for the Australian marketplace and compliant to the new base AS 6000.

A resounding 94% of voting members approved the recent rollover of the 'co-operative' to a 'limited by guarantee' entity. This will continue to strengthen accountability and corporate governance provisions. It is simply another step in the ongoing development and evolution of the BFA.

The important point to remember is that if you are using the Bud then your business has the advantage of the trusted branding having nearly double the recognition of any other Australian organic certification mark, and about 80% of organic products now on retail shelves carrying the logo.

This is an inspiring effort for a group of farmers and their wives who had this great idea some 20-plus years ago.

The next few years are years in which to begin reaping the rewards, which will include a greater capacity to reach the mainstream consumer and media to promote our message and the objects that the BFA Co-operative was founded on some 22 years ago. With your ongoing assistance and support this will be made all that much easier and more successful.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'D Haas', written in a cursive style.



YLAD Humus Compost contains more

YLAD Living Soils over the past eight years have advocated managing soils in a more natural and environmentally sustainable manner by building soil fertility with humus soil amendments that put life back into tired depleted soils.

YLAD Living Soils have been pioneers in this area by bringing Humus Soil Technology™ to Australia as well as the system that produces high quality Humus Compost from local waste residues.

Outstanding improvements in production from the use of Humus Compost have occurred in broadacre cropping, pastures and gardens.

“If you look at the Young Shire Council gardens and ovals the benefits of Humus Compost is evident! Having a ‘green’ safe product locally produced is a bonus for the people of Young and district,” says Rhonda Daly, owner of YLAD Living Soils.

She says growing vegetables in Humus Compost improves the



Aeromaster PT-170 Compost Turner on the YLAD Compost Site at Young NSW.

nutritional value of produce by supplying necessary minerals, deficient in much of our commercially grown produce.

“Healthier plants resist insect and disease attacks reducing the need for harmful chemicals. **Humus Compost has the ability to hold four times its weight in water ... and is indispensable in the production or gardening cycle when water is scarce,**” says Rhonda.

“Healthier soils equal healthier food and healthier people.”

She adds that localising fertiliser – “for example in the form of compost” and food production is seen as a way of transforming agricultural systems to ensure the future of farmers; as well as a way of being able to produce enough nutritional food to feed a growing world population.

“Industrial agricultural systems dependent on fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources such as mineral fertilisers will be replaced (in the future) with low input systems that rely on natural capital available to us within our soils and nature,” says Rhonda.

“Humus Compost has the ability to fit into this system from an environmental point of view and soil health perspective.”

Rhonda says Humus Compost puts farmer’s one step ahead because of its ability to restore or enhance biological activity in the soil. “It is the ‘glue’ that holds the pieces of a sustainable soil fertility system together. **There is no more nutrient lock-up and leaching of expensive minerals when humus is added to fertiliser programs,**” she says.

Rhonda explains the value of products like YLAD Humus Compost comes after breakdown when long chain polymers of humus are produced by microbes that are supplemented to the compost by inoculation. “Organic matter is not humus unless it has been through the body of a microbe,” she says.

She says Humus Compost (or compost with humus) is the only product she knows that positively enhances all three aspects of the soil – “Namely, the biological, physical and chemical nutrition. These are truly the keystones to balancing soil nutrition, building a diverse population of soil biology and improving soil structure – and are the foundations of all compost mineral blends”.

Humus Compost is available in 25kg bags, 1 tonne bags, Bulk Trailer loads or Bulk Truck loads.

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