

BFA Media Release 12th November 2008

Organic interest ignites in Armidale and Coffs Harbour

– Armidale Friday 28th November 2008

Two organic roadshows in Armidale and Coffs Harbour this month show an escalating interest from northern NSW in growing and eating chemical free.

Organic in Armidale is being driven by a hunger from farmers for sustainable alternatives to fertilisers, herbicide and pesticides, because of price and a national emphasis on the environment, says Dr. Paul Kristiansen, from the New England University's School of Environmental and Rural Sciences.

"Currently it's a difficult climate for agriculture, but right now there is undoubtedly a drive, even amongst big commercial producers, to brush up on their biological basics," he says.

"Particularly with the Australian dollar hitting a low, farmers are being outpriced by the cost of their imported chemicals and are starting to ask questions."

He says the first rule to remember is – there is no silver bullet.

"You do not just swap one bag of input for another when you switch to organic".

He says the number of producers looking at going organic around Armidale is rising – "particularly in meat - organic wool, prime lambs and beef" – but says support will be needed to assist newcomers through the critical conversion away from hard chemicals.

"Consistent demonstration plots, awareness raising events like roadshows, and places where farmers can come to interact are critical," he says.

He says the limitations of organic in the region remain on the supply side and that – even in Armidale – organic is being pushed by consumer demand.

"There's a very popular interest in lifestyle, food quality and sustainability here."

He says the Armidale region may attract organic wine producers in the future.

"There's a small but very strong amount of interest growing in organic viticulture locally.

"The New England region has a great climate for very high quality organic grape production - we don't get big grapes, but they've got fantastic flavour!"

Hear more on organic farming in Armidale at the BFA Armidale Organic Road show!

Dates:

When? *Armidale:* Friday 28th November 8.30am – 3.30pm

Coffs Harbour: Saturday 29th November, 8.30am – 3.30pm

Where? *Armidale:* New England Regional Art Museum, Kentucky St, Armidale, NSW

Coffs Harbour: Coffs Harbour Racing Club, Howard St, Coffs Harbour

RSVP: Contact BFA on (07) 3350 5716 email info@bfa.com.au to register interest

Visit http://www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=150 for more information.



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To obtain images or find out contact details for organic farmers in your area contact BFA media officer Jaime Newborn ph: (07) 3350 5716 ext. 222; email marketing@bfa.com.au
The BFA has a vision for organic industry growth and education in Australia. Ask about your copy of the Organic Industry Market Research Report to see how the organic industry in NSW is achieving its goals! More information is available at http://www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=260



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