

BFA Media Release, Monday 2nd March 2009

Success in the Falkland Islands

Forty per cent of agricultural land in the Falkland Islands (FIs) is in the process of obtaining organic certification with the Australian certification company ACO.

Ten Falkland Island farms are going through the conversion process Australian Certified Organic status with ACO.

Of the 1.1 million hectares of agricultural land in the Falkland Islands, approximately 40 per cent of the area is currently under audit to become certified 'in-conversion' organic, following an interest from the FI Government in organic agriculture.

Mac McArthur, Falkland Islands Senior Agricultural Advisor, says the FIs offer a distinct advantage for organic agriculture.

"The Islands have a marginal and unspoiled farming environment which is host to some of the world's most spectacular and rare wildlife.

"This environment lends itself to a more natural production system – perfect for organic farming," says Mr. McArthur.

The Falklands Department of Agriculture recognised the greater need for farms to become certified organic and along with ACO formed a successful partnership.

Dr. Andrew Monk, BFA Director and standards committee convenor, says the Falkland's Department of Agriculture chose ACO in major part on merit of its standard (Australian Organic Standard).

"This was due to the market access opportunities it provides and its suitability to the Falkland Islands' rangeland environment (similar to some Australian rangeland areas)," he says.

Two Agricultural Advisors of the Falklands Islands recently completed training courses in Australia in order for the Falklands to conduct their own certification audits that will comply only with ACO standards.

"This is fantastic news for ACO, as the Falkland Islands Government is currently active in promoting organic certification as a step towards marketing their produce internationally," says Dr. Monk.

Mr. McArthur says the FIs are aiming to become certified organic to add value to quality products.

"We are also hoping that, through forming a strong relationship with ACO, it will increase our chances of building trading relationships on an international front."

Currently, the FIs only export certified organic wool.



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“Once ACO organic accreditation comes through, the Falkland Islands are planning to export their certified organic wool to new and current international markets,” says Mr. McArthur.

“Organic lamb and beef may potentially be able to be marketed to European countries and other export markets in the mid to long term future.”

ACO is a subsidiary company of the Biological Farmers of Australia group (BFA) and is internationally accredited with the International Foundation for Organic Agriculture (IFOAM), the US Department of Agriculture, Japan MAFF, AQIS and other agencies for international market access.

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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 is achieving its goals! More information is available at http://www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=260.



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