

**AUTUMN EDITION OUT NOW!**

**BFA Media Notice, Wednesday 25th March, 2009**

**Find out how organic primary producers are building a new future for food and fibres – Learn the latest, every four months.**

**We'd like you to meet the**



## **AUSTRALIAN ORGANIC PRODUCER**

***...the quarterly magazine for certified organic producers and people who want to know more about real agricultural & environmental issues.***

While the outlook for agriculture and the environment seems grim - with real threats to food security from scarce resources, soil depletion, climate change, and other issues - organic farming is providing an alternative and more resilient way forward for food and fibre production.

### **Learn how.**

Organic agriculture uses a combination of new, old and cutting edge tools. Based on the principle of building of soil health, the organic industry is contributing to restoration of healthy arable lands, healthier eco-systems, and more nutrient dense food. Organic farming is fast becoming recognised as a form primary production that is both financially and environmentally sustainable.

A growing number of pioneering producers have developed the road for others looking to use eco-resources most effectively, and are realising short and long-term benefits.

These include greater yields; a reduction in input expenditure; greater water retention; and higher quality produce.

A healthy, vibrant organic food sector is also being driven by high consumer demand for food that is unadulterated, environmentally and animal-friendly and healthier for both adults and children. These developing markets offer significant opportunity for committed sustainable producers and value-adders.

By skilfully combining the food production wisdom of centuries with state-of-the-art technology and ongoing research, organic farmers are building a new future for food and fibres. The Biological Farmers of Australia is proud to be allied with them.



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**BIOLOGICAL FARMERS OF  
AUSTRALIA CO-OP LTD**  
ABN 75 699 664 781

HEAD OFFICE · BRISBANE

PO Box 530 766 Gympie Rd  
CHERMESIDE QLD 4032  
Ph: +61 (0)7 3350 5716  
Fax: +61 (0)7 3350 5996

[info@bfa.com.au](mailto:info@bfa.com.au)

SOUTHERN DIVISION OFFICE

PO Box 503  
NURIOTPA SA 5355  
Ph: + 61 (0)8 8562 2769  
Fax: + 61 (0)8 8562 3034

[info@bfa.com.au](mailto:info@bfa.com.au)

[www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au)

Welcome to their magazine. We hope you'll enjoy it.

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Some highlights from the Autumn 2009 issue of **Australian Organic Producer**;

**Where Have All The Bees Gone?** *by Sarah Wooldrage*

In the current climate situation, water shortage is the biggest problem facing Australian agriculture; our second biggest problem is the threat to bee populations. The shortage of honeybees is due to several factors; drought, the lack of government funding support for agriculture research and - most importantly - the overuse of pesticides. In Australia maximum allowed pesticide residue levels in most cases do not factor in effects on animals, including pesticide-sensitive bees.

Neonicotinoid pesticides used on crops attack the nervous system of bees, upset their ability to navigate and impair their enzyme activity, leading to impairment of their memory and brain metabolism. Its residue will still cause trouble for insects 12 months after application. Following the deaths of billions of honeybees worldwide, neonicotinoid pesticides have been banned in several parts of Europe, with Germany calling for the pesticide to be banned across all of Europe. An investigation into colony collapse disorder in honeybee colonies in the USA has found neonicotinoids to be strongly suspected.

However, there is some light at the end of the tunnel – an increase in organic and biological farming production. The Australian Organic Standard does not permit any synthetic pesticides and specifies practices which promote biodiversity including use of beneficial insects and bees for healthy crop production.

**The Biochemical Sequence** *by Hugh Lovel*

Hugh Lovel developed the Biochemical Sequence as an explanation of the interplay and cycles of biochemicals in living organisms. Concerned by soil testing that did not automatically include tests for silicon, Lovel was led on a discovery tour of the importance of different elements at different stages of plant development arriving to the realisation there was an obvious hierarchy of how elements work in living organisms; one thing has to occur before the next thing can happen, and on down the line in a sequence.

The fascinating roles of boron, silicon and calcium in sap pressure, nutrient delivery, successful fruiting and amino acid production are carefully unravelled. The interplays of nitrogen, magnesium, trace elements, phosphorus, sulphur and magnesium are revealed and the reader is given a new and practical insight into the role of nutrients.



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Fax: +61 (0)7 3350 5996

info@bfa.com.au

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Fax: + 61 (0)8 8562 3034

info@bfa.com.au

**www.bfa.com.au**

**Dropping Urea, Building Humus & Utilising Local Resources** *by Adam Willson*

For any producer considering certified organic production, the thought of leaving nitrogen fertilisers behind can be daunting, if not a little frightening. The fear of experiencing reduced yields, declining gross margins and problematic cash flows are real. Robyn and Ged Plunkett took the step to organic production with their Tamborine dairy farm and this is a case study of their transition.

The story looks at the challenges of turning around an operation where cows were unwell, pastures unpalatable, there were poor conception rates, an increasing incidence of mastitis and nutrient deficiencies in the soil. Rebuilding the soil was the first step and conventional programs were enhanced by introducing humus building processes.

The Plunkett's cows are now maintaining high production, there are more cows in calf, the incidence of mastitis has decreased, pasture quality and silage are enhanced and farm costs have reduced –a heartening rural success story.

**ENDS**

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For more information or to receive a copy of [Australian Organic Producer](#) magazine, [click here](#), or contact the BFA on ph 07 3350 5716 or email [comms@bfa.com.au](mailto:comms@bfa.com.au).

The BFA is working to improve organic industry growth and education in Australia. Ask about your copy of the Australian Organic Market Report 2008 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](http://www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=260)



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