

BFA GETS THE SHOW ON THE ROAD...

AUSTRALIAN ORGANIC ROADSHOWS 2009 ROLL INTO VICTORIA!

Organic food is the flavour of the future and the latest news on organic industry developments and opportunities will be on show at the Biological Farmers of Australia Organic Roadshows 2009.

The Roadshows will start in Victoria on 13th May, with presentations held in Daylesford and Swan Hill offering inspiring talks by leading organic researchers and A-grade organic farmers; the latest news on innovation, information, national and international regulations and a chance to rub shoulders with like-minded people.

Victoria is a fitting State for the start of the Roadshows 2009; According to Australian Certified Organic (ACO), Victoria has more pre-certification acreage (preparing for organic certification) than any other State, and Victorian fruit, vegetable and nut growers rank second in the number of survey respondents for the BFA commissioned Australian Organic Market Report 2008.

Presentations at the Victorian Roadshows will cover a wide range of subjects, including the latest on eco-friendly packaging for organic foodstuffs, increasing profit and production through wise soil management, insights into how and why biodynamic production works, using the ocean to feed the soil and designing food production systems for the greatest resilience to climate extremes.

Organic produce is holding its own and even increasing its market share in spite of the current economic downturn. Hot-from-the press survey results indicate a growing consumer awareness about organics – organic produce is found in one in six supermarket shopper's baskets and the Australian Certified Organic "bud" logo is the most widely recognised organic certification logo, increasing its identification with shoppers by 20% over the past year, according to a March 2009 survey by Mobium Group.

Organic operators are responding to increased consumer demand and accessing Organic Roadshows as an effective means of networking, gathering and sharing information, keeping up-to-date with latest consumer and industry trends and changes in regulations that impact the organic industry.



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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

SOUTHERN DIVISION OFFICE

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

info@bfa.com.au

www.bfa.com.au



General Manager Holly Vyner says the organic industry is providing an alternative way forward for agriculture, addressing large and growing issues facing the rural sector and environment.

“With many organic producers now with some decades of experience behind them and a maturing of the industry supply chain, the organic industry is all the time gaining ground, proving to be at the cutting edge of food and fibre technology,” she says.

“It is encouraging to see in the BFA’s 2008 market research that the average age of organic farmers in Australia is significantly lower than the average farmer and that the average size of organic farms has increased. This latter result highlights long-term success in utilising organic systems and a trend towards professional farming at a larger scale.

“We encourage all with an interest to come along to the organic roadshows. The events receive brilliant feedback each year from organic and non-organic producers and others. Attendees gain great benefit from the information but also enjoy the way the day is run and speak about it for weeks afterwards.”

All media are welcome at the roadshows!

Media images and interviews will be available for both events. Post event information will also be available.

Victoria:

Roadshow Daylesford, Vic

When: 13 May 09, 8:30am - 4:00pm

**Where: Captains Creek Organic Wines,
160 Mays Road, Blampied, Vic**

Roadshow Swan Hill, Vic

When: 14 May 09, 9:30am – 5:00pm

**Where: The Grain Shed Conference
Centre, 2-8 King St Swan Hill**

SA:

Roadshow: Adelaide, SA

When: 16 May 09, 8:30 – 4:00pm

Where: Comfort Hotel, Adelaide

Riveria 31-34 North Terrace, Adelaide



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VICTORIAN ROADSHOW GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Dr Maarten Staaper

BioLogic AgFood; former principal research scientist, CSIRO

Topic: Managing healthy soils for viable agriculture

Dr. Stapper, who began a career in science and agriculture more than forty years ago, is an expert across a wide spectrum of agricultural areas including wheat agronomy and the use of information technology in farming. He says soil health is not just about the environment - it is also about profitable farming; lowering inputs and associated costs, making plants and land more resilient and efficient and utilising natural resources for increased productivity. Dr. Stapper will share his knowledge on how to make the most of soils using alternative farm methods to 'hard chemical' applications.

Hugh Level

Biodynamic farmer and AgPhysics Adviser

Topic: Overview of Biodynamic Production

Hugh Level, with a background in maths, physics, chemistry, biology and psychology, applies science to the subject of biodynamic agriculture, demystifying it and rescuing it from a cultish past. Hugh has more than three decades farming experience in all areas of agriculture, from market gardening to grazing and dairy. His presentation incorporates a memorable slide show, while he loves to answer questions and solve problems.

Rob Fenton

Natural Environment Centre (NEC), Riverina Institute of TAFE, Albury

Topic: Designing Food Production Systems in times of Uncertainty

Rob's background is in education, ecological agriculture and sustainable landscapes design. Rob and the NEC team have established a 400-acre organic farm designed specifically to explore organic farming in times of climate uncertainty. The impact of climate change is like introducing chaos theory to agriculture and Rob's charter is to develop strategies, within organic farming guidelines, for coping with the unexpected. Rob's presentation will include crop selection, managing organic matter in soil, working with the seasons and rotational grazing in times of climate uncertainty.



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Dr Andrew Monk

BFA Director and Standards Committee Convenor

Topic: Organic Standards and Organic Certification; where to from here?

For more than 20 years the members of the organic industry have enjoyed ownership of and consultation with standards setting processes via their representative body, the BFA. BFA is an industry leader in formulating and formalising organic standards and in establishing organic certification processes via subsidiary programs such as Australian Certified Organic and Organic Growers of Australia. BFA's work in these areas assists in maintaining the integrity of organic market claims, while establishing a strong base of consumer trust in the value and reliability of certified organic produce.

The essence of organic production, which includes animal welfare, prohibition of the use of synthetic additives, GMOs, hormones and antibiotics, etc, is under constant threat of dilution and change. Changes in government and policies, exclusively dollar- driven imperatives and fraud all add to the cocktail of challenges BFA manages to ensure the protection of the organic pedigree.

Dr Monk's talk will explore the steps BFA takes in its unrelenting crusade to ensure the integrity of the organic marketplace, industry ownership of standards and most importantly, the protection of the interests of the growing number of satisfied consumers committed to the organic cause.

ENDS

For more information contact:

Sarah Wooldrage BFA Media Department Ph: (07) 3350 5716 ext.232

E: comms@bfa.com.au

To obtain images or find out contact details for organic operations in your area contact BFA media officer Jaime Newborn ph: (07) 3350 5716 ext. 222; email marketing@bfa.com.au

The BFA is working to improve organic industry growth and education in Australia. Ask about your complimentary copy of the Australian Organic Market Report to see how the organic industry is achieving its goals! More information is available at www.bfa.com.au



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