



Biological Farmers of Australia Media Release Wednesday 17th June 2009

BIOLOGICAL FARMERS OF AUSTRALIA

APPLAUDS CAT FOOD IRRADIATION BAN

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) applauds the recent move to ban the irradiation of imported cat food into Australia.

The ban, implemented by Agriculture Minister Tony Burke, was put in place following overseas evidence and 87 reported cases in Australia of cats suffering neurological damage, fatal in some cases, after ingesting irradiated imported dry cat food.

The link between the illness and the diet was made by Dr Georgina Child, of the Small Animal Specialist Hospital, North Ryde, NSW, who specialises in neurology and dealt with many of the affected pets.

Australia's quarantine laws, administered by AQIS, required irradiation of imported pet food containing fresh meat that has not been sufficiently heat treated in manufacture. Australia is the only country that had this requirement, which still applies to dry dog food.

The BFA supported moves by concerned groups to address the problem, calling for relevant authorities to invest in and reference current national and international research to inform their policies and processes accordingly. Irradiation is banned for certified organic food.

"The organic industry operates on the precautionary principle – if you don't know for certain that a food process is safe, don't use it," says Dr Andrew Monk, BFA Director and Standards Convenor.

"BFA responds to significant consumer concerns about potential hazards that a food process may present, while also taking note of scientific research that has revealed the potential denaturing of fats and oils and potential destruction of vitamins through ionizing irradiation.

"No Australian should unknowingly feed their pets food that will cause them harm."

Irradiated dry dog food is not covered by the ban and while the problems affect only cats there is concern that cats may access food in dogs' bowls.

"We would suggest that clear and unambiguous labelling become a requirement for intending pet food importers whose products are currently subjected to irradiation," says Dr Monk.

"Detailed information with comprehensive and clear labelling is necessary to allow all Australians to make an informed choice."



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Join the BFA and others at this year's Organic Expo in Melbourne 24th – 26th July 2009 to discover a new range of exciting products and services that will delight your senses and tantalise your taste buds. More information is available at www.organicexpo.com.au.

The BFA Organic Roadshow - a line-up of fascinating speakers on many aspects of organic production and marketing –will be coming to centres across NSW, Qld and WA between August and November this year.

For more information on Organic Expo or Organic Roadshows;

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