

Biological Farmers of Australia Media Release Thursday 6th August 2009

Nationally Accredited Organic Auditor Training Course

The Biological Farmers of Australia's (BFA) National Organic Auditor Training Course is being held this September, offering nationally accredited professional training by qualified auditors from Australia's largest certification group – Australian Certified Organic (ACO).

The course will run from 1st – 5th September at the Riverina Institute of TAFE's Albury-based National Environment Centre (NEC) and is offered to anyone pursuing a career in organic auditing, looking to become certified organic, or interested in learning more about organic production and certification.

Australia's organic industry is one of the fastest growing in the world with retail sales in some sectors increasing by more than 30 percent and the number of certified organic operators rising by more than 5.2 percent over the last five years.

Continued healthy growth despite changes in the economy in recent months has increased the demand for qualified organic auditors and the number of people interested in learning about how to comply with organic certification standards says Akiko Nicholls, Managing Director of ACO.

"The industry is continuing to grow at a healthy rate both domestically and globally – and this means the sector requires more auditors who are multiskilled and qualified in organic certification, food safety and other regulated areas," Akiko says.

"Running for more than 10 years now, the course is beneficial to anyone interested in becoming a certified organic operator, organic industry consultant – particularly Quality Assurance professionals - and a great opportunity for relevant government departments to learn what organic certification entails."

Rob Fenton, course coordinator and teacher in organic production and sustainability for over 20 years says the course is a must for anyone with an interest in Australia's organic certification standards, organic auditing and practical 'hands on' learning at NEC's functioning ACO-certified organic farm.

"The course is almost 100 percent practical experience and provides a great overview of how the auditing process works for anyone interested in practical education in an action-learning environment," says Rob.

"The course has the distinct advantage of being held on a working certified organic farm, enabling attendees to step in and perform a range of audits while being trained and supervised by qualified auditors from the ACO."

On completion of the course students will receive two nationally accredited units of competency – '*Participating in a quality audit*' and '*Preparing an enterprise for organic accreditation*', and a *Certificate of Attainment* – a prerequisite for an auditing career with ACO and Organic Growers of Australia (OGA).

As the first and only course of its kind in Australia, classes will address topics such as principles of organics, national and international certification systems, organic quality assurance, and auditing of organic systems.



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For more information about the course or to register your interest in attending please contact the BFA on Ph: 07 3350 5716 / E: info@bfa.com.au.

Course details

When: Tuesday 1st – Saturday 5th Sep 2009 (5 day course)

Where: TAFE NSW, Riverina Institute National Environment Centre, Ettamogah Road, Thurgoona 2640 (PO Box 827, Albury, NSW, 2640)

Phone: 02 6043 6700 **Fax:** 02 6043 6721

Cost: \$1250 incl GST which includes course materials, morning and afternoon tea and lunches

To apply: An application is available online at www.bfa.com.au > Events >

Training Courses > BFA Training Courses or contact the BFA office on Ph: 07 3350 5716 / E: info@bfa.com.au.

ENDS

Media images and interviews are available—contact BFA publicity officer Madeline Cooper ph: (07) 3350 5716 ext. 225; email madeline.cooper@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 industry is achieving its goals! More information is available at http://www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=260.



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