

Media Release, Biological Farmers of Australia 12 August 2009

Organics enlisted in the fight against Alzheimer's

Organic food production and processing, which prohibits the use of all synthetic nitrogenous compounds in horticulture, livestock feeds and cured meats, has gained further evidence of its health benefits further to the release of research findings that link nitrate intake through foods to increased deaths from such diseases as diabetes mellitus, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.

Nitrites and nitrates belong to a class of chemical compounds that have been found to be harmful to humans and animals, with more than 90 percent of tested compounds declared carcinogenic in various organs.

Now a new study by researchers at Rhode Island Hospital has found a substantial link between increased levels of nitrates in our environment and food. The study found that the period between 1960 and 1980, when nitrogen-containing fertiliser use in the US doubled, immediately preceded an epidemic of insulin-resistant diseases. Nitrogen fertilizer consumption has since increased by 230 percent between 1955 and 2005. In Australia, nitrogen fertiliser use has also escalated and nitrogenous fertiliser consumption has more than tripled since 1985. The study was published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease (Volume 17:3 July 2009)*.

One of the world's leading Alzheimer's researchers, Professor Suzanne de la Monte, has warned of the dangers of becoming an 'nitrosamine generation,' with mounting exposure to the dangerous compounds through increasing use of processed and preserved foods and the abundant application of nitrate-containing fertilizers for agriculture.

Holly Vyner, BFA General Manager says certified organic food is currently one of the only alternatives to consumers as a means of avoiding consumption of nitrogenous compounds.

"Nitrogenous compounds are commonly added to non-organic processed foods such as bacon and cured meats, as well as some cheese products and beers, but are banned from use in organic equivalents. Nitrites and nitrates can also be found in water, as a result of chemical run-off from non-organic farming practices which means that the whole population is exposed to some degree."

Shane Heaton, nutritionist spokesperson and researcher for the BFA says that these findings are a just one more attestation of the fact that organic food has health advantages over non-organic, among other benefits including environmental, animal welfare and restoring arable lands.



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“The recently released research from the UK* has confirmed that organic food has lower nitrogen levels than non-organic food, which is a real advantage for organic consumers,” he says.

For more information on the research visit:

<http://www.jalz.com/press/2009/20090706.html>

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Who are the Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA)?

The BFA, constituted formally in 1987, is Australia’s largest member-based organic organisation, representing and servicing sectors as varied as cosmetics, fertilisers, almost every farming sector, value adders and retailers.

The BFA has two subsidiary certification agencies which regulate the organic marketplace both for export as well as domestic sale. They are Australian Certified Organic and for smaller operations, Organic Growers of Australia (OGA Certified).

To be sent a comprehensive list of media spokespeople in all areas of organic production – livestock, agriculture, Standards, marketing, cosmetics etc, please phone us or send an email.

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

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