

BFA Media Release NSW Roadshows 12 August 2009

Healthy, profitable, sustainable –

BIOLOGICAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTION ONE-DAY WORKSHOP ARRIVES IN DUBBO

Finding your pasture and crops are not coping with the climate? Finding your cost of production and farm inputs are eating away at your profits?

Bringing the best of biological farming and organic market knowledge to regional centres, BFA's Organic Roadshow is travelling nationally and arrives at Dubbo on the 28th August. The day will serve as a one-day overview of biological and organic farming practices and market knowledge – beneficial for all food producers.

BFA's General Manager Holly Vyner says the Roadshow has a practical focus, providing the opportunity to hear the advice of successful commercially-focused organic and biological producers from the region as well as advice from marketers and others.

"Biological and organic production techniques focus on maximising the sustainable use of ecological resources, decreasing reliance on outsourced inputs and increasing the overall resilience of pastures and crops among many other benefits.

"The BFA Roadshow for years has received great feedback on its practical and regionally relevant advice for producers and others in the industry. The day is also a good chance to network with others who are growing biologically or working in the organic industry, as well as to gather information on biological farm inputs and other trade display products and services. In addition, Doug Haas is an excellent facilitator making these days most enjoyable to attend for anyone with an interest," says Holly.

Robert Fenton, organic course manager and teacher from the Natural Environment Centre at the TAFE Riverina Institute, is a guest speaker. Rob and the NEC team have established a 400-acre organic farm designed specifically to explore organic farming in times of climate uncertainty.

Drought and the threat of global warming prompted Rob to develop a course that would deal with uncertain, radically changing climatic conditions.

"The impact of climate change is like introducing chaos theory to agriculture; we are developing strategies, within organic farming guidelines, for coping with the unexpected," he says.

Holly says that at a time of economic downturn organic produce is holding its own and even increasing its market share. An independent survey from March this year has found that there is growing consumer awareness about organics with over half of Australians now choosing organic at least on one occasion.



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“Our research shows that consumers are recognising the benefits of purchasing organic foods – in particular the health advantages, including no synthetic chemicals, no harmful food additives and antioxidant/ nutritional benefits – but also environmental, animal welfare, sustainable farming, biodiversity, and others.”

The Organic Roadshow is being held in eleven locations nationwide over 2009 and NSW workshops include Lismore (26/8), Dubbo(28/8), Albury(29/8) and a networking dinner in Sydney(27/8) *.

Location: WARATAH / Peak Hill NSW. Time: 8:30am - 4pm

For a full program and details about the day visit www.bfa.com.au or contact the BFA office on ph 07 3350 5716 ext 221; email info@bfa.com.au.

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Media information:

For a full program including short profiles of guest speakers, see below, or download the program from the BFA website: www.bfa.com.au.

DUBBO Roadshow guest speakers include:

Rob Fenton TAFE Riverina Institute, Natural Environment Centre (NEC)

Bruce Brown Mt Frome Vineyard

Rob Lennon Gundooee Organics

Kerry Cochrane Ecological Agricultural Course Coordinator, Charles Sturt University

Kevin Karstrom Botobolar Vineyard

Rob Fenton, TAFE Riverina Institute, Natural Environment Centre (NEC)

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 and other management tools.

Bruce Brown, Mt Frome Vineyard

Bruce Browne worked for fifteen years with the DPI in NSW then took on a senior management role with Southcorp Winery (now Fosters), managing their vineyards and grower services in NSW and northern Victoria. He left in late 1999 to operate his own vineyard and consulting business. His decision to grow organic was for purely business reasons, as was his later decision to take the extra step into biodynamics.

Bruce is now a committed biodynamic producer and will talk about the process of his conversion and how pragmatism became a passion for him.



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Rob Lennon , Gundooee Organics

Rob and Nita Lennon initially ran Angus cattle on their property near Mudgee but having the Australian Wagyu Association President as a neighbour and a lifelong interest in organics propelled them into organic Wagyu. They encountered difficulties in selling at a premium to organic and Wagyu markets so targeted both simultaneously with tailored promotions through selected retail outlets.

Overcoming western consumer resistance to fat-marbled beef, and the development of the Wagyu Burger by renowned chef Justin North helped further market penetration. Rob's talk will cover the history of their business, production issues, market peaks, troughs and tips.

Kerry Cochrane, Ecological Agriculture course coordinator, Charles Sturt University

Kerry Cochrane has a background in dairy farming at Candelo on the far south coast of NSW. Kerry designed the course which he now coordinates - the Bachelor of Ecological Agriculture at Charles Sturt University – in addition to teaching Human Ecology. He has been heavily involved in developing Ecological Agriculture Australia (EAA), a group designed to provide leadership in food & fibre, farming, education, ethics & ecology. Kerry's topic is a practical approach to Holism and Agriculture: How we can create one, to influence the other.

Kevin Karstrom, Botobolar Vineyard

Kevin Karstrom has owned and managed Botobolar Vineyard since 1994. Kevin uses biodynamic methods and specializes in producing low-preservative and no-preservative wines, combining Gil Wahlquist's (Australian organic wine pioneer) eight years of research with sixteen of his own. Botobolar Vineyard makes an average of nine different wines with an annual output of 4,000 cases. Botobolar exports to Denmark and Japan though finds the domestic market a more valuable outlet. Kevin will talk about organic viticulture, organic farming in general and marketing of organic wines.

Ray and Judy Unger

Roadshow Hosts at their property Waratah, Peak Hill

The BFA Dubbo Roadshow will be hosted by Ray and Judi Unger at their farm, where they breed organic cattle and grow organic winter cereals; oats, wheat, spelt, and barley. Ray has been a farmer since he left school, originally working on his parents conventional mixed farm. His interest in organics started when he heard a talk given by an organic farmer.

"It all made perfect sense to me," Ray says; "Conventional farming fights nature all the way whereas organic works with it." Ray and Judi's property became A-Grade Certified Organic in 1996 and they took the further step into Biodynamic Certification in 2000.

Despite the battle with drought, the labour-intensive nature of organic farming and the additional paper work it entails, Ray and Judi love their undulating, green-tinged property 23km north-west of Peak Hill and are looking forward to sharing their stories with Roadshow participants.



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Networking dinner, Sydney, NSW

Date: 27th August 09' Time: 6:30pm

Where: Peasants Feast Restaurant 121A King St, Newtown, Sydney NSW 2042

Special Guest Speaker: Nici McClean (Andronicus) former tri-athlete, mum of five and owner of Organicus

Cost: \$55 pp for a three course organic meal and red/ white organic wine

Other Roadshows still to come:

NSW

29 Aug. 09 Roadshow Albury, NSW

Qld

17 Sept. 09 Roadshow Toowoomba, Qld

17 Sept. 09 Networking dinner Brisbane

19 Sept. 09 Roadshow Cairns Qld

WA

14 Nov 09 Roadshow Perth, WA

(*dates/ locations are subject to change)

Media images and interviews will be available for both events – to arrange a specific interview in advance contact BFA media officer Jaime Newborn ph: (07) 3350 5716 ext. 222; email marketing@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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