

**Biological Farmers of Australia Media Release, 13th August 2009**

## **Healthy, profitable, sustainable – BIOLOGICAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTION ONE-DAY WORKSHOP ARRIVES IN ALBURY**

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 Albury on the 29<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

"Our independent 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."

Robert Fenton, roadshow host and guest speaker, is a teacher from the Natural Environment Centre at the TAFE Riverina Institute. Rob and the NEC team have established a 400-acre organic farm designed specifically to explore organic farming in times of climate uncertainty. A highlight of the day will be a tour of the Natural Environment Centre's 400-acre organic farm. Rob will demonstrate the innovative techniques that he and the Centre have developed, creating sustainable landscapes for an environment that is facing unprecedented pressures. The research they are undertaking,



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vital to the future security of food production in Australia, is a natural extension of organic farming, a holistic discipline Rob has been teaching for more than two decades.

“Drought and the threat of global warming prompted us to develop a course that would deal with uncertain, radically changing climatic conditions,” he says.

“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.”

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) with a networking dinner taking place in Sydney(27/8)\*.

### **Albury Roadshow**

**Location: Riverina TAFE, Natural Environment Centre, 97 Ettamogah Rd, Thurgoona**

**Time: 9:00am – 4:00pm**

For a full program and details about the day visit [www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au) or contact the BFA office on ph 07 3350 5716 ext 221; email [info@bfa.com.au](mailto:info@bfa.com.au).

### **ENDS**

#### **Media information:**

Profiles of guest speakers can be read below.

A full program can be downloaded from the BFA website: [www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au)

#### ALBURY Roadshow guest speakers:

**Robert Fenton** *TAFE Riverina Institute, Natural Environment Centre (NEC)*

**Chris Timms** *Manager, Baileys of Glenrowan Vineyard*

**Neil Druce** *Green Grove Organics*

**Viv Burnett** *Research Scientist DPI Victoria*

#### **Robert 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, rotational grazing and other management tools.

Rob is a guest speaker at all three NSW Organic Roadshows.

#### **Chris Timms**

Manager, Baileys of Glenrowan Vineyard (Fosters Group)

Viticulture has always been Chris Timms' passion. His viticulture career began in the Yarra Valley in 1993; Chris returned to Victoria from SA in 2007 to take up his current position as Vineyard Manager of the Fosters Group-owned Baileys of Glenrowan Vineyard.



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Converting the property to organic presented many challenges. Chris designed an Organic Management Plan combining the respective requirements of the Organic Standard and Fosters' Wine Group to produce a "super-document". Chris' talk will be about his experiences in converting to organic and developing an organic management plan that works to meet various demands.

#### **Neil Druce**

Managing Director, Green Grove Organics

Neil Druce, a man inspired by the concept of value-adding, took over a disused flour mill with the aim of making organic licorice. He started with a small budget, a big building – and passion. Despite many predicting the worse, the business succeeded. Neil says that he learned from the mistakes he made along the way and developed a unique approach to marketing. Neil contends that all people are capable of succeeding, and conducts his business accordingly. An inspiring presentation.

#### **Viv Burnett**

Research Scientist with DPI Victoria

Viv Burnett has worked in organic production since 1995. Viv's work began originally in the field of horticulture but some years ago she moved into lamb production research. Viv's talk will cover the various breeds of lamb best suited to organic breeding (the hardy Dorper, which requires no shearing, is a favourite) - where they are bred, the types of markets available, market access, and availability of abattoirs. Viv will also present recent research into the effectiveness and appropriateness of treatments to combat intestinal parasites in different regions.

#### **Roadshows in September:**

##### **Qld Roadshow**

17 Sept 09' Roadshow Toowoomba, Qld  
17 Sept 09' Networking dinner Brisbane, Qld  
19 Sept 09' Roadshow Cairns Qld

##### **WA Roadshow**

14 Nov 09' Roadshow Perth, WA

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 [pr@bfa.com.au](mailto:pr@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](http://www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=260)



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