

BFA Media Release 14 August 2009

ORGANIC FARMING KICKS THE CAGE

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) applauds moves by Woolworths to reduce the number of cage eggs on their shelves but far more needs to be done in terms of the broader marketplace. BFA is the parent company of Australia's best-known organic certification body, ACO (Australian Certified Organic), which certifies eggs that have been produced to strict organic standards.

The BFA's Standards Convenor and Board Director Dr Andrew Monk says it is encouraging to see that a major Australian retailer is taking the lead on the issue of animal welfare.

"This move is a direct reflection of consumer demands for greater importance to be placed on animal welfare in food production.

"Consumers need to be sure that labeling claims on eggs can be trusted and now with a code of practice adopted by Woolworths they can have some assurance.

He says that an organic certification logo is one of the only guarantees available in the broader marketplace for consumers looking for products produced to strict animal welfare standards.

"The market value of organic eggs was estimated to be \$1.8 million in 2008 and along with free-range, the demand for organic eggs is tipped to increase significantly in the next four years.

"This is a further indication that consumers are looking for a guarantee that eggs are produced to the strictest of standards with relation to animal welfare."

Dr Monk says that organic animal welfare standards are not limited in their definition to being just free-range.

"Looking for a logo such as the Australian Certified Organic 'Bud' logo guarantees that birds have access to greenpick, shade, shelter and protection from predators; flock sizes are limited and de-beaking is prohibited. Artificial lighting to extend daylight hours is prohibited. In addition, certified organic chickens cannot be fed antibiotics - an area of increasing concern for many consumers."

Dr Monk says that it is heartening to see that consumers have exercised their power in the marketplace to bring about change in retailer attitudes.

"Shoppers wield real power through their purchasing decisions and we look forward to seeing further improvements made by retailers.

"Surveys indicate that more people are buying organic and that is a trend we expect to continue. Retailers may need to prepare for a wave of organic demand as consumers become increasingly aware of how their food is produced and the welfare of the animals that provide it."



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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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