

BFA Media Release, Friday 4th September 2009

Healthy, profitable, sustainable –

BIOLOGICAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTION ONE-DAY WORKSHOP IN CAIRNS

Bringing the best of biological farming and organic market knowledge to regional centres, BFA's Organic Roadshow is travelling nationally and arrives at **Cairns on the 19th September.** The Roadshows are one-day overviews of biological and organic farming practices and market knowledge – beneficial for all food producers.

Biological and organic production techniques are continuing to increase in popularity as they focus on maximising the sustainable use of ecological resources, decreasing reliance on outsourced inputs and increasing the overall resilience of pastures and crops.

Cairns keynote speaker, Dr Maarten Stapper, is an iconic soil and agriculture scientist whose vast expertise has been built over more than forty years in science and agriculture.

A former CSIRO scientist and now Director of Biologic Agfood, Dr Stapper is passionate about sharing his knowledge of the advantages of biological agriculture and maintaining soil health by reducing chemical use and inputs.

"The real key to our life on planet earth is the soil. The soil is the skin of planet earth, and that skin, that soil, provides us with the living plants that give us the food," he says.

"The past two years have seen an increase in interest from people on soil health, with many of my talks filled with conventional farmers looking for an alternative way of maintaining their soil.

"I am dedicating the next 10 years of my life to keep teaching and talking about these issues to stimulate people, also in the cities. In 2000 we had a ripple - biological farming was a ripple, that ripple is now a wave, and that wave will be a flood, and that flood is coming."*

BFA's General Manager Holly Vyner says that roadshow presenters provide practical, down-to-earth talks, with speakers being able to pass on first-hand knowledge having owned or managed successful commercially-focused organic farming and other businesses in the region.



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**BIOLOGICAL FARMERS OF
AUSTRALIA CO-OP LTD**

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“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. 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 occasionally.

“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, and biodiversity benefits.”

The Cairns Roadshow will feature presentations from successful producers and others on broadacre, cattle and vegetable farming, organic regulation, standards and marketing, market entry, processing and value adding. Trade displays will be available with information on products and services including farming inputs, consultants’ advice and more.

**Dr Stapper’s quotes sourced from Australian Organic Producer and ABC Australian Story*

CAIRNS ROADSHOW DETAILS

When: 8:30 – 4:00pm, 19 September ‘09

Where: Quality Hotel Sheridan Plaza, 295 Sheridan Street, Cairns QLD

Cost: PREPAID: \$35 BFA members / \$45 non-members or ON THE DAY: \$40 members / \$50 non-members. Price includes full organic catering for the day.

For more 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.

ENDS

A selection of Cairns Roadshow speakers:

Dr Maarten Stapper - former senior CSIRO scientist and recent debut on ABC TV’s Australian Story

Dr Maarten Stapper, Director of Biologic AgFood, has been working in the field of science and agriculture for more than 40 years. The former senior CSIRO scientist has a passion for biological agriculture and the science which supports it, and now dedicates much of his time to consulting farmers on the benefits and practicalities of biological farming.



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Dr Stapper travels Australia providing workshops for groups of producers on-farm, and providing practical advice for achieving and maintaining soil health profitably, by lowering inputs, chemical use, and associated costs.

Dr Stapper will present at the BFA's Organic Roadshow providing something from which both experienced and inexperienced producers in biological farming can learn from.

Kerry Jonsson – Co-owner, Jervoise Organic Meats; accredited meat inspector

The Jonssons began producing organic cattle in 1979 but the difficulty of their geographical distance from certified abattoirs has seen them take control of processing their own product to maintain their organic status and premiums. Jervoise has now grown to a full-system meat supply chain and is now North Queensland's only 100% Australian certified organic meat abattoir.

Kerry's team is predominantly female, with qualified butcher daughter Kristine also in charge of marketing. The company now runs around 7,000 head of certified organic cattle and has found that Santa Gertrudis Brahman cross perform best in their region. From January next year Jervoise Organic Meats' products will be distributed nationally.

Doug Haas - BFA Chairman; owner-operator Red Country Produce; Chairman of the Yeppoon District Farmers Co-op.

Doug Haas has been involved with BFA since 1992 and has held the position of Chairman of the BFA Board since 1997. With his partner Anne he owns and operates Red Country Produce, a commercial vegetable farm north of Yeppoon, which has both ACO and SQF 2000 certification with SGS. (SQF 2000 qualifies the farm both for Food Safety and Quality of Product.)

Doug's extensive experience in the organic industry and working with governments and their representatives has enabled him to move the BFA (including subsidiary companies ACO and OGA) to its present position of underpinning and driving the certified organic industry in Australia.

Doug's presentation will cover certification and organic standards, benefits of certification, necessary preparation for certification, and updates and mooted changes to Australian organic standards.

Paul Strike – Director, Strike Consulting and Auditing Services

Paul is now a professional food safety auditor, covering the whole food chain from primary production to restaurants, working all over Australia. Paul works as an environmental auditor for *Freshcare* and has been an organic auditor with Australian Certified Organic for three years. Paul's expertise covers compliance with national food safety regulations, environmental regulations and organic standards.



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ORGANIC ROADSHOW DATES SEPT – DEC 2009*

Qld

17 Sept. 09 Roadshow Toowoomba, Qld

17 Sept. 09 Organic Networking Dinner, Brisbane, Qld

19 Sept. 09 Roadshow Cairns, Qld

WA

14 Nov 09 Roadshow Perth, WA

(*dates/ locations are subject to change)

Media images and interviews are available on request – to arrange a specific interview in advance contact BFA media officer Jan Nary ph: (07) 3350 5716 ext. 275; email jan.nary@bfa.com.au

The BFA has a vision for organic industry growth and education in Australia. Ask about your copy of the Australian Organic Market 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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