

**Biological Farmers of Australia Media Release, Tuesday 01st
December 2009**

Market Update – Organic Beef and Lamb

Lamb quality exceeds expectations during short supply

Organic lamb prices are sitting at 520c/kg (emergency deliveries) over the hook dressed weight (domestic).

Note: Cleavers Organic Meat are offering bonuses above the spot rate to growers who are able to deliver lambs at very short notice if the need arises.

Toby Scales, Senior Buyer for Cleavers Organic Meat, says the market has continued to improve, however livestock supply has tightened. "This is mostly due to the recent hot conditions slowing growth rates and in many cases forcing growers to market earlier with lighter lambs."

However, the quality of lamb is still fantastic. "This is largely a result of better farm management practices and genetic selection."

Sales wise, the festive season does traditionally see a reduction in terms of shelf space for lamb at leading supermarkets. "Seasonal buying habits see a replacement of red meat shelf space to white meat (ham, turkey, chicken). It doesn't mean that demand has stopped; interest in organic lamb is still as strong as ever."

US export market holds strong

Organic beef prices on the East Coast are at 380c/kg - 400c/kg for milk and two tooth domestic (220-260kg beast) and export (260kg and over).

Due to the poor seasonal conditions, finished cattle are in short supply. "The land desperately needs rain. We have noticed our carcass weights are much lighter than this time last year and this is due to the dry conditions and the lack of USDA NOP feed around," says Peter Gall, Livestock Manager with The Organic Meat Company (subsidiary of Sanger Australia).

However, even with the dry conditions and lack of feed, quality remains high. "It is a credit to our suppliers that they can still turn off a quality article under these poor weather conditions," says Peter.

The export market, especially that of the US is still strong. "I have just come back from a business trip to the States. Demand for Australian organic beef is huge and still growing. Our only deterrence is the rising Australian dollar, which is giving us a hiding; otherwise the US market continues to accelerate."



Quality
Endorsed
Company

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

ABN 75 699 664 781

HEAD OFFICE · BRISBANE

PO Box 530 766 Gympie Rd
CHERMESIDE QLD 4032
Ph: +61 (0)7 3350 5716
Fax: +61 (0)7 3350 5996

info@bfa.com.au

SOUTHERN DIVISION OFFICE

PO Box 503
NURIOOTPA SA 5355
Ph: + 61 (0)8 8562 2769
Fax: + 61 (0)8 8562 3034

info@bfa.com.au

www.bfa.com.au

Verdict for vegetarians – zero cattle is not a ‘healthy’ option

In a recent article published by The Land newspaper, it was reported that livestock producers were under pressure from vegetarian lobbyists, as they appealed to people to make the shift to a plant-based diet following concerns that it would help ease food security and climate change issues.

The argument is - by making the switch to a vegetarian diet, the world will produce less greenhouse gas emissions and we will have more available land and water, as vegetables require less of both for production compared to livestock.

This vegetarian argument is one that many in the agriculture industry do not entirely agree with.

Greg Paynter, a soil health advisor from Gatton, says “cattle are an important part of the carbon cycle. Cows eat grass which sloughs the roots into the soil - which adds to the organic matter in the soil - all leading to increases of carbon sequestered in the soil.

“I believe that just because we have the capacity to measure the amounts of methane or other green house gases emitted by various animals, we need to have a more comprehensive understanding of how they fit within the context of the whole carbon cycle.”

Backing up this viewpoint is research by Dr Christine Jones, an internationally renowned soil ecologist. Her study shows that the use of perennial grasses and grazing management techniques to sequester carbon in the soil, are ways of developing an understanding of animals’ involvement with the carbon cycle and the level of their worth.

Organic farming, which follows holistic management practices and is supportive of both horticulture and livestock practices, is based on the principle that the key to healthy land is increasing the carbon content of soil – an overall benefit for both horticulture and livestock production.

Related to this is research by Professor Tim Flannery, an Australian mammalogist, palaeontologist, environmental and global warming action lobbyist, who also values the use of cell or holistic grazing methods and its virtues in relation to the Carbon Cycle. “Holistic management is one of the key tools at our disposal. Where holistic management is practiced, increases of up to 3% in soil carbon are being achieved. This happens largely because the soil is protected from erosion and grass cover, allowing more root growth.”

Greg Paynter adds: “Vegetarians have the right to choose whatever they believe is best to for their own diet; however, using the fact that animals emit greenhouse gases to argue against animal production without taking into account the positive role they play in carbon sequestration, does not add to the credence of a vegetarian’s position.”



Quality
Endorsed
Company

**BIOLOGICAL FARMERS OF
AUSTRALIA CO-OP LTD**
ABN 75 699 664 781

HEAD OFFICE · BRISBANE

PO Box 530 766 Gympie Rd
CHERMESIDE QLD 4032
Ph: +61 (0)7 3350 5716
Fax: +61 (0)7 3350 5996

info@bfa.com.au

SOUTHERN DIVISION OFFICE

PO Box 503
NURIOOTPA SA 5355
Ph: + 61 (0)8 8562 2769
Fax: + 61 (0)8 8562 3034

info@bfa.com.au

www.bfa.com.au



ENDS

For more information contact:

Cleavers, Organic Meat Company, Toby Scales, (02) 4322 4528
The Organic Meat Company, Peter Gall, (07) 4654 5082
BFA Media Department, Sarah Wooldrage, (07) 3350 5716 ext 232 / E:
sarah.wooldrage@bfa.com.au

Organic Buy/ Sell Classifieds (livestock, grains, agistment, employment, real estate, seeds etc): www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=251

Recent related news:

[19-Nov: Major food brands commit to GE-free; Under loose labelling laws, organic remains the best guarantee](#)

[9-Oct: NEW ORGANIC STANDARDS: Clarifying the claim](#)



Quality
Endorsed
Company

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

ABN 75 699 664 781

HEAD OFFICE · BRISBANE

PO Box 530 766 Gympie Rd
CHERMESIDE QLD 4032
Ph: +61 (0)7 3350 5716
Fax: +61 (0)7 3350 5996

info@bfa.com.au

SOUTHERN DIVISION OFFICE

PO Box 503
NURIOOTPA SA 5355
Ph: + 61 (0)8 8562 2769
Fax: + 61 (0)8 8562 3034

info@bfa.com.au

www.bfa.com.au

THE VOICE OF AUSTRALIAN ORGANICS