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Find out how organic primary producers are building a new future for food and fibres – learn the latest, every three months.



AUSTRALIAN ORGANIC PRODUCER

...the quarterly magazine for those wanting to learn about biological production and the organic market as well as solutions to almost every agricultural & environmental problem affecting your production.

While the outlook for agriculture and the environment seems grim - with real threats to food security from scarce resources, soil depletion, climate change, and other issues - organic and biological production is providing an alternative, more resilient way forward for future food and fibre production.

Learning a healthier way forward

Organic and biological agriculture uses a combination of new, old and cutting-edge tools. Based on the principle of building soil health, this industry is contributing to restoration of arable lands, healthier eco-systems and more nutrient dense food.

Organic farming is fast becoming recognised as a form of primary production that is financially as well as environmentally sustainable.

A growing number of pioneering producers have developed the road for others looking to use eco-resources most effectively, and are realising short and long-term benefits.

These include greater yields (particularly in times of drought); a reduction in input expenditure; greater water retention; and higher quality produce.

A healthy, vibrant organic food sector is being driven by increasing consumer demand for food that is unadulterated, environmentally sound, animal-friendly and research is increasingly showing it is healthier for both adults and children. These developing markets offer significant opportunity for committed sustainable producers and value-adders.

By skilfully combining the food production wisdom of centuries with state-of-the-art technology and ongoing research, organic producers are providing a healthy and ethical consumer choice in food and fibre products.

Welcome to their magazine. We hope you'll enjoy it.



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

HEAD OFFICE · BRISBANE

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

info@bfa.com.au

SOUTHERN DIVISION OFFICE

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

info@bfa.com.au

www.bfa.com.au

Some highlights from the Summer 2009 issue of *Australian Organic Producer*;

Waste not want not... with Natural Dietary Zeolite *by Jaime Newborn*

Zeolites (minerals found in some volcanic rock formations, useful in agriculture as absorbers and carriers of nutrients) are proving to be invaluable in nutrient recycling on Ken Crawford's Gowrie EcoFarm.

Ken -researcher, consultant and farmer in Boggabri, NSW – has spent the past 10 years observing the effects of Zeolite as an additive to both animal feed and effluent, using his own farm as a trial basis. His results, published in a thesis this year, found adding zeolite to his pigs' diet increased the animals' weight and productivity, and reduced levels of environmentally-harmful nitrate in their effluent. Further addition of Zeolite to slurry ponds converts their potentially hazardous manure into a valuable, soil-enriching fertiliser which produces record crop yields and is capable of saving big dollars. Ken's findings could alter the approach taken on traditional intensive farms in the pork, dairy and chicken meat industries.

Steering sheep along the organic country road *by Sarah Wooldrage*

In the last five years Mac Drysdale has converted his 35,000 acre Augathella property *Perola Park* in south west Queensland to organic production. Mac shifted his emphasis from wool to lamb production, focussing on hardier, more productive stock (Merino infused with South African Dohne) and introducing a stringent breeding selection program that has brought improvements in genetic traits, clip, body weight, lambing rates and blowfly resistance. In a market that requires hard-headed business acumen, Mac has drawn on his extensive experience (32 years) as a board director and chairman with some of Australia's most prestigious organisations and companies.

Finding and maintaining markets: the battle for hearts, minds and \$\$\$ *by Jan Nary*

Producing premium organic food is the first step – the next major step is marketing it. Organic produce must be accessible, identifiable and differentiated from non-organic, and consumers need to be educated and convinced that the benefits justify the extra cost. Successful marketing is a quantum leap from successful growing but some certified organic producers have taken the challenge in their stride. Rob Bauer of Bauer's Organic Farms and Steve Skopilianos of Ladybird Organics share the wisdom and experience of years in the business.

Organic Farming – An Early Champion *by Jan Nary*

Organic produce is fast becoming a staple in many Australian shopping baskets but it wasn't always that way. Eighty-three year-old Bill a'Beckett was an "organic pioneer", an early convert who became concerned about the destructive impact that conventional methods were having on his father's family farm. Retirement has provided Bill the opportunity to reflect on the early days and changes that he has seen.

Added value: BD Dairy secures Premier's award

In November the ACO-certified biodynamic dairy BD Farm Paris Creek were awarded a South Australian Premier's Food Award, the Rabobank Value Adding Award, in recognition of their sustainable and efficient operating practises. Paris Creek's Ulli Spranz has implemented a unique system which supports local dairies in becoming biodynamic, assisting them through the first few years of production and ensuring that they have a market.



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Organic coffee worth a (double) shot for Hightrees Estate *by Jaime Newborn*

Philipp Kreutzer and his wife Lynne were aware of a developing market for organic coffee in Australia when they bought farming acreage near Byron Bay, NSW, ten years ago. Now cultivating 10,000 certified organic coffee trees, Philipp says demand for Hightrees Estate Coffee is currently beyond what he is physically capable of producing – they are roasting all they grow, and selling all they roast. Their organic crop resisted a fungal infestation that caused major losses to other growers in the area and their processing is enhanced by traditional sun-drying and pulping by-product of processed beans as compost for crops. They're obviously doing something right; Hightrees have won regular awards at the Sydney Fine Food Show, including Espresso Show Champion in 2007.

Media Contact; Jaime Newborn ph 07 3350 5716 ext. 222

For more information or to receive a copy of **Australian Organic Producer** magazine, [click here](#), or contact the BFA on ph 07 3350 5716; email comms@bfa.com.au.

The BFA is working to improve organic industry growth and education in Australia. Ask about your copy of the Australian Organic Market Report 2008 to see how the organic industry is achieving its goals. More information is available at http://www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=260.

Recent related news:

- 19-11-09: [Major food brands commit to GE-free; Under loose labelling laws, organic remains the best guarantee](#)
- 22-10-09: [First-time National Organic Retailer Award - Queensland Retail Chain Sweeps the Field](#)
- 09-10-09: [NEW ORGANIC STANDARDS: Clarifying the claim](#)



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