

Biological Farmers of Australia Media Release, 4 December 2009

Organic agriculture, practiced worldwide, could sequester nearly 40% of current CO2 emissions

**Learn more at the Australian Certified Organic information stand at Brisbane's
Walk Against Warming, Saturday 12 December**

*"Agriculture is an undervalued and underestimated climate change tool that could be one of the most powerful strategies in the fight against global warming." Rodale Institute**

**Organic farming's contribution to ameliorating global warming will be a focus of the
Brisbane's *Walk Against Warming* on Saturday 12th December.** *Walk Against Warming* is part of a global initiative hoping to influence leaders at the UN Climate Change Meeting in Copenhagen to agree on a safe climate future.

Organic farming has the potential to make a major contribution to reduction of greenhouse gases through natural carbon sequestration and reduction of nitrogen-based synthetic fertiliser use.

Australian Certified Organic (ACO), Australia's premier organic certification body and Wray Organic (organic retailer and winner of the 2009 National Organic Week's *Organic Retailer Award*) will host an information stand at King George Square, staffed by the Australian Certified Organic team, where people can learn about the global benefits of organic food and farming.

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) is the parent company for ACO. BFA General Manager, Ms Holly Vyner, says that organic farming is in the front line of defence against greenhouse emissions and that BFA has been lobbying with governments for several years for climate change deliberations to acknowledge the contribution made by organic farming.

"Discussions prior to and at Copenhagen must address the crucial role of organic farming and examine the potential role that it can play in helping stabilise the world's environment," she says.

Deborah Wray, owner of Wray Organic, agrees that there are several ways in which organic production contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"Countless studies have found that organic farming requires only about half the amount of energy required by non-organic farming to produce the same amount of food, because it uses organic matter for crop nutrition instead of energy-intensive synthetic fertilisers," she says.



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“As well, because one of the main principles of organic production is increasing the levels of organic matter in the soil, carbon sequestration takes place, locking carbon back into the soil and reducing the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.”

Ms Vyner says that research findings from the Rodale Institute in the USA indicate that a concerted effort to convert to organic farming could have a massive beneficial impact on reducing greenhouse gases.

“A nearly 30 year trial conducted by the Rodale Institute as reported last year has found that practical organic agriculture, if adopted for the planet’s 3.5 billion tillable acres, could sequester nearly 40 percent of current CO2 emissions.”

Ms Vyner adds “The agricultural sector is responsible for about seventeen per cent of Australia’s greenhouse gases, with fertilisers accounting for two-thirds of all cropping emissions. Organic certification prohibits the use of nitrogen-based and other synthetic fertilisers responsible for these emissions.”

Colman Ridge (director of Greenfest - Brisbane Walk Against Warming event organisers) says he is excited to have the support of BFA at this year’s event.

“When you boil it down, climate change is about health – individual, community and economic health, and the health of the planet. Organic food from fantastic, certified regional farmers provides the healthiest choice for those conscious about ‘eating for the environment’,” he says.

To learn more about these and the other environmental benefits of organic farming, visitors to King George Square on 12 December should seek out the Australian Certified Organic Team - just look for the ACO “Bud” logo, the Wray Organic sign - and the friendly folk in ACO bucket hats.

ENDS

References

Tim J. LaSalle, Ph.D., CEO & Paul Hepperly, Ph.D., Director of Research and Fulbright Scholar Rodale Institute Regenerative Organic Farming: A Solution to Global Warming
http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/files/Rodale_Research_Paper-07_30_08.pdf

Brisbane's Walk Against Warming

From 10am Saturday 12th December

The event will be centred in King George Square, with stalls, food, entertainment and addresses by eminent speakers.

The route of the walk will be across new Kurilpa Bridge and back to King George Square over Victoria Bridge (route maps are available).

More information at www.greenfest.com.au/walk_against_warming/ www.bfa.com.au



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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



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